

**First Session - Fortieth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Daryl Reid  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	PC
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
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ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
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ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
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WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 22, 2012

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill 34—The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), that Bill 34, The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Struthers:** This act will improve transparency and accountability in P3 procurement of major capital projects for the public sector. This bill takes a balanced approach to assuring that P3s are undertaken in a transparent and accountable manner while taking steps to ensure value for money for Manitoba taxpayers.

The legislation will make mandatory many requirements that have been identified by experts as best practice in the P3 field, including P3 Canada, the federal government's Crown corporation responsible for P3s. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Any further bills?

#### PETITIONS

##### Cellular Phone Service in Southeastern Manitoba

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And this is the background to this petition:

During early October 2011, parts of southeastern Manitoba were hard hit by wildfires. Thanks to the swift action of provincial and municipal officials, including 27 different fire departments and countless volunteers, no lives were lost and property damage was limited.

However, the fight against the wildfires reinforced the shortcomings with the

communications system in the region, specifically the gaps in cellular phone service.

These gaps made it difficult to co-ordinate firefighting efforts and to notify people that they had to be evacuated. The situation would've made it difficult for people to call for immediate medical assistance if it had been required.

Local governments, businesses, industries, and area residents have for years sought a solution to this very serious communication challenge.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the appropriate provincial government departments to consider working with all stakeholders to develop a strategy to swiftly address the serious challenges posed by limited cellular phone service in southern–southeastern Manitoba in order to ensure that people and property can be better protected in the future.

And this petition has been signed by A. Hatt and E. Lasechuk and A. McGuirk and hundreds of other fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to have been received by the House.

##### Personal Care Homes and Long-Term Care—Steinbach

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The city of Steinbach is one of the fastest growing communities in Manitoba and one of the largest cities in the province.

The growth has resulted in pressure on a number of important services, including personal care homes and long-term care space in the city.

Many long-time residents of the city of Steinbach have been forced to live out their final years outside of Steinbach because of the shortage of personal care homes and long-term care facilities.

Individuals who have lived in, worked in and contributed to the city of Steinbach their entire lives should not be forced to spend their final years in a place far from friends and from family.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health ensure additional personal care homes and long-term care spaces are made available in the city of Steinbach on a priority basis.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by E. Reimer, L. Gosselin, M. Dupas and thousands of other Manitobans.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education):** I'm pleased to table the 2011 annual report of the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I have a number of guests in our gallery here today I'd like to introduce to members.

And I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today members of the Winkler & District Multi-Purpose Seniors Centre, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Housing and Community Development (Ms. Irvin-Ross).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And also we have seated in the public gallery from the Winkler's senior centre 13 visitors who are under the direction of Ms. Sherri Goertzen. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen) and are also guests of the honourable Minister of Housing and Community Development.

And also we have seated in the public gallery from Rosenort School 10 grade 12 students who are under the direction Mr. Arlin Scharfenberger-Scharfenberg, pardon me. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome all—you all here this afternoon.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Photo Radar

#### Grant and Nathaniel Intersection Review

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, I join with you in welcoming all of our guests from southern Manitoba.

It's important that Manitobans have faith in the laws that govern them and the motives behind those laws. Increasingly, Manitobans are coming to believe that photo radar is more about cash than it is about safety. Over the past several months, there's been doubt raised and concern raised regarding tickets that've been given out at the Grant and Nathaniel intersection. That doubt only grew on Friday when a Crown attorney suddenly stayed a ticket from this location because they were unable to refute expert testimony.

Will this government today determine whether or not they will stay the remaining tickets and conduct a review into all the tickets that were given out at the Grant and Nathaniel intersection?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I thank the member for the question, Mr. Speaker, and want to indicate that a stay was issued in the instance, I believe, that the member's referring to, a stay being a stay of proceedings in law, which means that there's no finding of fact and, in fact, there's no finding of precedent setting, et cetera, and that that was the matter that was resolved or dealt with last week by virtue of a stay.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the minister who answered is the same minister who refused to refund tickets that were deemed illegal by the court several months ago.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, what happened on Friday was the Crown decided to stay the proceedings because, I believe, that they were concerned—that they were concerned that a precedent would be set if the ticket was found to be not valid, and if, in fact, the court would've overturned that ticket, there would've been thousands of others that would've been impacted and a precedent would've been set.

If this government is truly concerned about photo radar as a safety measure, it would want Manitobans to have confidence in the photo radar system. What happened on Friday does nothing to bring confidence to the photo radar system for Manitobans.

Will they conduct a review into the tickets that've been given out at the Grant and Nathaniel intersection so confidence can be returned to Manitobans regarding the photo radar system?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question—who will do anything for a headline and, in fact, raise—*[interjection]*—and, in fact, will, in fact—*[interjection]*—well, you know, raised in the Legislature an issue that he came across February and was so concerned about the issue that he waited from February to raise in the Legislature now in May and will raise any issue and, in fact, made the point that I said earlier: there was a stay of proceeding; therefore no precedent was entered into.

And the member, I think, went to law school and knows that, Mr. Speaker, and we know what the reason behind and the rationale is for the member's particular issue that he's raising. A stay was *[inaudible]* into. There is no finding of fact. There is no precedence. There's no precedent that was set by virtue of that matter.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the Minister of Energy has gotten his energy back, and I hope, in fact, that he'll direct some of that energy into answering the next question.

Manitobans are concerned, Mr. Speaker, that photo radar has become simply about cash and not about safety. They are losing confidence in this system, and they lost more confidence on Friday when the Crown attorney stayed the case rather than risk having the case overturned and having thousands of other tickets go the same way that previous tickets happened here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this government hung on to the money then. They refused to refund money when illegal tickets were issued before, and they were concerned about the same thing happening now. Manitobans have reason to be skeptical. They have reason to be skeptical that photo radar is about cash and it's not about safety. They can alleviate—this government can alleviate some of that skepticism by ensuring there's a review into the tickets at Grant and Nathaniel.

Will they do that today, Mr. Speaker?

\* (13:40)

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. When photo radar was brought in to enable municipalities to utilize photo radar in construction zones and school areas, it was supported by members opposite. In fact, the

members opposite—the member opposite for Lac du Bonnet said, I support this 'vill'—bill for obvious reasons. The use of photo radar, red light cameras across the province is not just for limited purposes. I would urge, of course, all members of the House to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, they supported the introduction of the legislation. They went to municipalities, who then enforced it. He ought to talk to the municipalities instead of raising issues months and months later just for the attention getting and attention seeking that the member opposite does on his questions.

### Photo Radar

#### Grant and Nathaniel Intersection Review

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** During the last election, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) was asked where he stood on photo radar. After discussing it with himself, he stated that, and I quote: If the city wants to scrap the program once its contract runs out in two years, I won't stand in the way. We would be open to that.

So where, exactly, does the Premier stand on the review of the photo radar tickets at Grant and Nathaniel?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** As I indicated earlier in the previous question raised by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), there was a ticket that was stayed on Friday, Mr. Speaker, which sets no precedent and which is stayed. *[interjection]*

And, well, you know, the members are chirping from their seats as usual. Perhaps they will listen to the response and indicate that a stay means that the matter has been—is not proceeding. No finding of fact has been made; no precedent has been set. And if the member wants a specific information on or legal interpretation of that, he could talk to one of the Crown attorneys with respect to that.

**Mr. Schuler:** Clearly, for this government and this minister, it's a cut and run. My question is—last year the Premier was asked where he stood on photo radar and he said, and I quote: "We were very concerned about the cash grab component of it." Direct quote, Mr. Speaker. So before the election, candidate Premier says it's a cash grab, and post-election Premier wants to, in his own words, stick it to Manitobans.

Is this just another one of this Premier's that-was-then-and-this-is-now approaches on the review of the photo radar tickets at Grant and Nathaniel?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking of that was then and this is now, when the legislation establishing photo radar was introduced in this House, the Conservatives had one major concern: that it didn't go far enough. They wanted unlimited photo radar. They did not want the targeted approach that we had in the legislation, which we still have today, which 'targouts'—targets, by the way, protecting people in terms of intersections, deals with people running red light cameras, the rest of it.

So, you know, let's talk about that was then and this is now. Where do the Conservatives stand? Because our approach is to use photo radar for safety; it has been for 10 years. It's making a difference, Mr. Speaker. They're being completely hypocritical in their stand today.

**Mr. Schuler:** I'm pleased it's taking two ministers to answer this question.

It's very clear. We stand—we would like to see review. But the question is—last year the Premier stated, and I quote: "We were very concerned about the cash grab component of it."

Perhaps this minister should ask his Premier. So candidate Premier was very concerned that Manitobans not be gouged with 'photar' radar; that was in 2011. Yet now, 2012, post-election Premier is not troubled with, as he puts it, the cash grab component of it.

Where does this Premier stand? Where does this government stand? Where does this minister stand on the review of photo radar tickets at Grant and Nathaniel, Mr. Speaker? We're clear we would like to see it. Where do they stand?

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record, once again—in fact, the member knows; he was part of the caucus, the Conservative caucus, that wanted unlimited, unfettered 'photar' radar when it was introduced in 2002. And what we said is, it makes sense to use photo radar, but not as a substitute for normal traffic enforcement but as a supplement to normal traffic enforcement. And I think everybody in this Legislature knows that one of the greatest areas of potential threat has been with people running red lights.

And, Mr. Speaker, our goal has always been in terms of safety. We also have the TIRF report. We reviewed it. We reviewed it in terms of some of the safety issues. We have adjusted over time in terms of its application, including in construction zones. We use it for safety, and when it comes to any particular set of traffic tickets that are issued in particular, we have court processes for that. But either you're in favour of safety or you're not. Ten years ago, they were in favour of unfettered photo radar—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

### **Domestic Violence Provincial Rate Increase**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Every year in Manitoba, women suffer violence at the hands of their partners, and tragically, since 2006 at least 40 have lost their lives. Today we learn from Statistics Canada that Manitoba's domestic violence rate has grown to second highest in the country, well above the national average.

Can the minister explain what has caused Manitoba's domestic violence rate to grow from sixth in the country in 1999 to second in 2010?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** I thank the member for the question. I know this is an issue that she is very interested in and has brought forward to this House many pieces of legislation, I think, that have furthered the action on this issue, and I thank her for that.

Of course, we know that any victim of domestic violence suffers greatly. Their family suffers greatly, and society suffers greatly. And it pains all of us when those victims die—they are killed by family members—and it's something that's felt, I think, throughout society.

We have put in place procedures through the court system, victim services, prevention, campaigns that are targeted at different types of violence. We've taken a look, for example, at cyberstalking, which is, unfortunately, technology gives people new methods to harass and violate people, and we'll continue to put those things in place to try to prevent domestic violence wherever possible.

### **Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Review and Report Availability**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Unfortunately, the minister's family violence

prevention initiatives don't seem to be hitting the mark. Already this year, Manitoba has had more domestic violence deaths than last year.

Given that we're No. 2 in the country for domestic violence incidents, can the minister explain why the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee has only reviewed one death since it was established in 2010 and has yet to submit an annual report?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** I know the member opposite had a great deal of interest in the establishment of that Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, and I know in establishing it, she will understand that one of the considerations in making sure that committee can do its work is to make sure that the confidentiality and privacy of those families who've already had their lives overturned tragically by the deaths of their loved ones, that we don't further compromise their privacy.

And, so, there will be reports issued, but we need to wait until such a time as we can make sure there are enough—there's enough for the committee to have looked at, that, in releasing a report, it doesn't become clear who they're talking about and they don't compromise the privacy of those families.

That committee, of course, is made up of experts in the field. They are doing their work. They're doing it considerately. They want to do it in a way that doesn't compromise any court proceedings. I think that the work that they will do will provide us with recommendations to further strengthen the systems that are in place. And I believe the committee is doing good work and that it's going to serve Manitobans well, but it's going to serve them well in a way that we don't further victimize families who've already been through so much.

#### **Osborne House Funding Need**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Ontario manages very nicely to review a lot of deaths without compromising patient confidentiality, so I don't see that that needs to be an issue if this government just put the right process in place.

Mr. Speaker, as Manitoba's domestic violence rate has grown to second highest in the country, Manitoba's largest women shelter has been struggling to keep its doors opened. Osborne House has an infrastructure crisis with a facility that can't

meet the needs of women and children who turn to them in crisis.

So I'd like to ask the minister: What is she going to do to ensure that Osborne House does not have to turn women and children away?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** I want to be very, very clear because I would not want any—anyone to not seek help or to not report violence because they don't think they'll be received. We will not, in this province, turn any woman, any child away who is seeking protection from violence. We're very clear; shelters all over the province are very clear about that. There are many backup systems in place should a shelter find itself overtaxed, and backup services are in place.

\* (13:50)

We're working with Osborne House. I've asked the chair of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, Marlene Bertrand, who knows this area very well, to work specifically with the board and management of Osborne House.

We have put in place a domestic violence review that is ongoing, that is looking at how we fund shelters. It's looking at that model that includes an infrastructure review of shelters, but it's also looking at a full strategy that includes prevention, includes treatment and includes support for victims of violence.

#### **Office of the Fire Commissioner Criminal Investigation**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, a year ago, the Fire Commissioner, the deputy fire commissioner and another staff were terminated following a probe into alleged financial irregularities. Another person took early retirement.

Now, a year later, this minister states on the public record that criminal charges could be laid, but haven't been laid, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister tell us when she first became aware with—about the situation within the Fire Commissioner's office and whether or not this may warrant a criminal investigation?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** I want to say from the outset that this has been a very challenging situation for the Office of the Fire Commissioner, and a lot of very good people who work in that office, I think, have

suffered as a result of the very regrettable actions of some of the staff there.

The way this came to light was through the internal audit process in government that became aware of the irregularities there. That awareness was acted upon by the Labour Relations Secretariat and the Civil Service Commission. It's at that point that I became aware of what had happened, when those irregularities were found.

The action was swift and it was appropriate. We have referred, through the previous Finance minister, have referred the matter to the Auditor General and asked for her help in doing a forensic review. And in that letter that we sent to her we were specific that we would base our proceedings, in terms of criminal charges or civil charges, on the findings of her forensic review, and when that is completed we'll be able to move forward.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the member, during Estimates process, it did say that charges were a distinct possibility, and she says she that has referred it the Auditor General and they want to wait and see what happens there.

But, Mr. Speaker, we know that, from Estimates, that that report will not be done until this fall, 15 months after the fact, after these alleged financial irregularities surfaced.

Mr. Speaker, if there's any question there may have been criminal activity and the minister knew about it then, why has she not called in the RCMP? Can the minister tell us why is she stalling on calling in the RCMP? What is she hiding here?

**Ms. Howard:** I think, in this situation, as difficult as it has been, the reaction was swift and appropriate. The people who were in question, there was findings of—through the Civil Service Commission. Those people's jobs were terminated; people retired as a result of that.

That office has now been through biweekly reviews with the comptroller's office and Finance. They've put in place a new system of financial checks and balances. The comptroller has noted the progress that they've made and will be doing some final checks with them this summer.

At the time, in July of 2011, the former Finance minister referred the matter to the Auditor General's office and was very clear that we were asking the Auditor General to do a forensic review on which we

would base a decision to go forward with either criminal or civil charges.

It would not—I do not make the decision and members opposite know this. I don't make the decision whether or not to lay charges. That's based on evidence that the police brings forward and that's based on evidence that the Crown decides merits charges, and we're in the process—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it would seem that the appropriate people to conduct an investigation and gather evidence would be the RCMP.

Last week, the minister responsible for the Office of the Fire Commissioner repeatedly told MLAs in other Estimates it is their duty to pass on information for thorough investigation. The minister said, in Estimates, and I quote: Responsibility is to bring forward the specifics of that information, and if he wants to provide that to me privately, I can make sure that it's investigated. End quote.

This minister has done nothing to further any RCMP investigation almost a year later. In fact, she is stalling an RCMP investigation.

Does the minister agree that if she has any knowledge of potential criminal activity, that she should call in the RCMP? Yes or no, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Howard:** I want to be very, very clear. This was found—these irregularities were found internally by government through the normal processes of government. And I think it is testament to those processes, how strong they are, that they found these irregularities, that action happened immediately in terms of terminating the individuals involved.

Then action was further taken to refer the matter to the Auditor General, and in that referral letter to the Auditor General, it's very specific that we ask the Auditor General to do her work, to do a forensic review of the books in order to inform government whether or not there are grounds to proceed with criminal or civil charges. That is the work that needs to happen before those further decisions would be taken. That's the responsible way to go about doing this.

It's very possible that criminal or civil charges could be laid, but at this point, that forensic review has to take place, and it will be on the basis of evidence decisions will be made.

**Budget**  
**Asset Valuation and Writeoffs**

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Prior to the election, the Minister of Finance told us the deficit was on track. Since then, we've ballooned to a \$1.12-billion deficit. Obviously, we've gone off track somewhere. And that's still not including the numbers for the fourth quarter, so we obviously can't trust anything that the Minister of Finance says.

Asset valuation is an area on which the minister continues to make misleading statements. The Minister of Finance told us in committee that they revalue assets every year. The Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) told us in committee that the Province does not write down assets that they're going to replace.

Which are—which is it, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** And, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. We told Manitobans a couple of years ago that we were going to respond to an economic downturn globally here in Manitoba with a multi-year approach, and that's what we have done.

That's what we ran on the election, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're continuing to do now, and that's what we will have the determination to follow through with.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite make a big deal of a \$1.12-billion deficit, yet they don't tell us what they would have done differently except to say that they would cut deeply into health care and education and infrastructure, services for kids. That's what they brought into this Legislature in the form of a resolution. I believe what they put in writing rather than what they say in an election.

**Mr. Helwer:** Mr. Speaker, again we've missed the question here, obviously.

The Minister of Finance told this House that the Province follows the generally accepted accounting practices. GAAP isn't like paying back Jets tickets, you know, months after you use them. You don't have a choice. Under GAAP rules, you must write down or write off the assets in the year of loss, in the flood loss, so—or when there's a permanent impairment, not when you think it might look good, you know, when it might feel best for you.

How many hundreds of millions of dollars are the provincial assets overvalued by, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Struthers:** And, Mr. Speaker, in the year—in the budget year '11-12, to get to that deficit that they keep talking about, that's when the flood occurred, that's when the claims were made, that's when the bridges were inspected, that's when roads were inspected. According to the generally accepted accounting principles, that's when we booked that spending.

That is absolutely clear, and we've been very clear that this is an ongoing process that we do every year. We look at the writing down of any of the infrastructure that we have in this province. It's normal routine business. That's the way it has always been done, especially since the years in which we accepted the GAAP principle.

**Mr. Helwer:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Finance Minister is a little, you know, confused here between spending and assets. They are different.

If a business were to follow the Province's lead, the owners would be charged with fraud. They'd probably be convicted of fraud. Loans would be recalled. Bankruptcy would be likely. Here we have the Province misleading Manitobans yet again, but this time it's much higher stakes than hiding Jets tickets.

\* (14:00)

Is it \$800 million? Is it 10 per cent of the assets on the books? When will the Finance Minister come clean and show us the true value of Manitoba's financial situation? Or is the number in that second set of books he continues to hide under the desk?

**Mr. Struthers:** Talk about confusion over there, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't even going to mention that second set of books that they used to keep underneath the desk. That was common knowledge in the 1990s with members opposite having one set above the desk and one below, but if he wants me to keep talking about that, he should keep working it into his preamble like he did, I guess.

Mr. Speaker, this government is going to do what—the routine, normal practice that has been done year after year. It's the same practice that happened the year before last and the year before last. We will follow the generally accepted accounting principles, as we've done for several years. There's nothing out of the ordinary in terms of the way we approach that part of the budget, that part of the budgeting process, and we will follow those generally—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

### **Flooding (Delta Beach) Financial Compensation Claim Delays**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, last May the Premier (Mr. Selinger) said he was giving flood victims his word—his word—that they would not face the flood alone, yet many residents of Delta Beach are now marking one year out of their homes and cottages due to this man-made flood on Lake Manitoba. Many still don't know when they can return to their properties for good, when they'll be compensated, when or if the debris will be clean—will finally be cleaned up.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier explain why he broke his word and has left flood victims like those at Delta Beach with more questions than answers about how they'll recover from this devastating flood?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Well, Mr. Speaker, and if the member will think back to May of last year and June and July, one of the key messages from people in around Lake Manitoba and around Lake St. Martin was—they asked for a number of things, but one thing they asked for more than anything else, and that was to build an outlet out of Lake St. Martin to allow for further water be drained out of Lake Manitoba. I'm pleased to put on the record that that was built November 1st. It was built on time. It was built on budget and has made a significant difference on the level of both Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

But just as we met the challenge of fighting the flood last year, Mr. Speaker, a flood that continues to have impacts this year, we've indicated very clearly that we're committed to reconstruction and rebuilding around Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin and other flood-affected areas. And we already paid out \$650 million towards that, but we won't rest until we get everybody back to normal. That's our goal.

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, last May the Finance Minister, at a Langruth, Manitoba, meeting, said that his government expected to flow support for flood victims within a matter of weeks. Flood victim Cindy Clarkson has been on—out of her Delta Beach home for a year. She told a Winnipeg radio station this morning that the situation has been very frustrating and that there doesn't seem to be any kind of leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Why did he make promises to flood victims that he knew he

couldn't keep? Why are we still in limbo a year or more later?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, indeed, Mr. Speaker, there are many Manitobans still away from home, and I would note that over 2,400 Manitobans still away from their homes. The vast majority are First Nations people, particularly in and around Lake St. Martin. And I do want to put on the record that it was the people in around Lake St. Martin were a key part of building that project that benefited all Lake St. Martin to Lake Manitoba.

And I want to put on the record as well, Mr. Speaker, that we're dealing with many circumstances throughout the flood-affected areas. In fact, we have over 30,000 claims. That compares, in the Flood of the Century, 1997, to 10,000 claims. We're dealing with all sorts of situation in terms of reconstruction, compensation, flood assistance.

But I want to put on the record again, Mr. Speaker, our commitment. Just as it was to flight the 'fud' together last year, working with our partners in municipalities and many people in the flood-affected areas, that's our goal. I believe we've made significant progress, but we will not rest until everybody is back to normal.

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, last May this NDP government made many promises to flood victims. They promised to make programs efficient and effective so people could get up and running as soon as possible. They have failed miserably.

Today, Delta Beach resident Cindy Clarkson voiced those concerns shared by many, many Manitoba flood victims. They are concerned about delays in compensation, following delays in getting permission to rebuild, delays in clean up, and the list goes on.

Mr. Speaker, will this government finally demonstrate some leadership and deliver the long overdue compensation so flood victims can begin the recovery process?

**Mr. Ashton:** I want to repeat, Mr. Speaker, so the member will have some sense of the immense challenge here, 30,000 claims, but I want to put on the record that we've already processed over \$650 million, but we're going to continue to work with each situation.

And I do want to also hope that the member's not being critical of the many people in the various municipalities who are a key part of that response.

It's—put on the record, it was a one-in-a-400-year flood. And many parts of the province, including Lake Manitoba, Lake St. Martin, on the Assiniboine River, on the Souris, we had 'unprecedented' flooding, 'unprecedented' damage, but our commitment from day one has been to get people back to normal.

Mr. Speaker, are we making progress? Yes. Is there a lot more to be done? Absolutely, and we're going to meet the challenge of that historic reconstruction.

### **Flood Review Task Force Independence of Review**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, in February the Premier (Mr. Selinger) appointed David Farlinger as the chair of the 2011 Flood Review Task Force.

Today, the CBC revealed that Mr. Farlinger, his company, the Farlinger Consulting Group, and the company Energy Consultants International, of which he's a principal, have received more than \$2 million in provincial government contracts over the last number of years.

The government was obviously aware of Mr. Farlinger's past government contracts when he was appointed, and I ask the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation: Did he not realize that the government was putting Mr. Farlinger in a compromised position because of his past frequent contracts with this government?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that Mr. Farlinger is a professional engineer, a civil engineer, and, you know, we hire engineers to work for government. We also hire consulting engineers, and I can tell you one thing about engineers in this province: they have a high code when it comes to professional integrity. I know, my son's one, I don't mean to be biased.

I work with engineers in the department, but I can tell you, the fact that he's done work for this province since 1997, going back to that flood, shows his competence, Mr. Speaker, and those kind of competent engineers are one of the key ingredients that we had last year in fighting the flood.

So I would hope the member's not in any way impugning the professional integrity of Mr. Farlinger. He's a fine engineer, a fine Manitoban.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Farlinger is an honourable man and a professional, but this government has put him in a very awkward, compromising position.

It is important for all Manitobans that this review is independent, and clearly independent, and that it's chaired by somebody who is independent.

The problem is that people's views need to be heard and those that are contrary to the government's view also need to be heard and considered.

I ask the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation: Will he continue to give David Farlinger government contracts after the supposed independent review of 2011 is completed, and might such contracts be actually dependent on the way the review is written?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I—you know, I just cannot believe the question from the member opposite.

First of all, I want to point out that the task force contains many representatives, many stakeholder groups, will bring a broad representation to the task force. We're talking about the chair, who is a civil engineer, but the task force has representation from many Manitobans. We're also going to be having public hearings, they are setting a schedule, my understanding it will start very shortly. So Manitobans will have every opportunity to make a difference.

But, you know, we have experience with this; it's called 1997. After the flood of 1997, we had the IGC report, the KGS report. It recommended what led to the diking in the Red River Valley and the expanded floodway. It meant that in 2009, with the flood worse than 1950, we had better impacts. We had no homes flooded in the Red River. Who was involved with that, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Farlinger. He served the province well then; he will serve the province well now.

\*(14:10)

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, never in the history of our province has there ever been such an extensive and costly flood as that in 2011. Never in the history of our province has there ever been such a flood which is steeped in such controversy as the flood of 2011. There is a huge argument between this government and many on Lake Manitoba over whether there was artificial flooding or not. It is vital that there is somebody who can really stand independent of government.

I ask the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation: Will he now replace David Farlinger as chair with somebody who is truly independent from outside the province so that not only do we have independence, we have the perception of independence and we can be assured then that this person won't be receiving government contracts which were dependent on what's written in the 2011 flood report?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the member opposite would stoop so low as to criticize and question the professional integrity of someone who's served this province well, and I want to repeat that it hadn't been—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Gerrard:** I stand on a point of order because the comments of this minister are outrageous. I never questioned the professional integrity of Mr. Farlinger. David Farlinger is an honourable gentleman. The problem is in this government. They have put Mr. Farlinger in untenable position as chair when he's receiving contracts and could be receiving contracts in the future.

**Mr. Speaker:** Well, on point of order raised by the member for River Heights, I have to indicate to the member that's—it appears to be a dispute over the facts that are occurring during question period here this afternoon. So there is no point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, to conclude his remarks.

**Mr. Ashton:** And last year during the flood, we had unprecedented response from our engineers. The engineers worked for this department, in fact, incredible mounts of overtime. The professional expertise that we had is that—but we also did—we also went to the consulting engineers, and if it hadn't been for the consulting engineers at KGS and AKON, for example, we'd never completed the outlet from Lake Manitoba. We relied on engineers because in this province we have some of the best engineers in the world, and you know what? And the member opposite—he may ask for Mr. Farlinger to be removed, but he has every confidence of this government. He's a competent engineer. He knows what professionalism is about and we need exactly

that kind of expertise to help the recovery in this province.

#### Bill 34

#### Government Intent

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, public-private partnerships can provide an opportunity for the public sector to build projects. Manitobans deserve to know if public-private partnerships are the best approach to building a building or an asset.

Can the Finance Minister tell the House what steps the government is taking to ensure that these projects follow a process that is clear and transparent?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** Yes, and I thank my friend for that question.

First of all, the—Manitobans, I think, require their government to take a—an approach that reflects through fiscal responsibility in terms of disclosure of plans, and when it comes to contract agreements, when it comes to public-private partnerships, Mr. Speaker, that's why we've proposed legislation that, I think, combines best practices with some of the guidelines of the—from the federal government, to put in place an open, transparent, accountable process by which we make these decisions.

And specific what this legislation does, is three things: It—it's a preparation of risk and value for money analysis, it's a—it provides for the consultation with public, and it appoints an independent fairness monitor that can oversee their—and review—the procurement process.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're very clear that we want to be open—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

#### Lyme Disease

#### Diagnoses and Patient Services

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, Holly Driedger suffers from Lyme disease. Lyme disease is transmitted through deer ticks and is a very much treatable ailment if diagnosed in time. In Manitoba, Holly could not get a proper diagnosis and her condition kept deteriorating. She told medical staff in this province to check for Lyme disease and was ignored and discounted. After Holly travelled to New York state to see a specialist at a great financial cost, she was finally diagnosed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health: Can the doctors in Manitoba properly diagnose Lyme disease?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, they can. Indeed, there has been extensive work done specifically on the subject of Lyme disease here in Manitoba. There's been a public forum that has been hosted. There has been an exchange of information among our health-care professionals concerning signs and symptoms of Lyme disease. We know that with the marvellous spring that we had there was increased risk earlier on of the ticks that carry Lyme disease, and so earlier than usual warnings have gone out to affected areas.

So we're taking a comprehensive approach. We know that we rely on the expertise of our medical professionals to make appropriate diagnoses and, indeed, to create a course of treatment, and we believe our professionals here in Manitoba are very equipped to do that.

**Mr. Graydon:** Well, with an improper diagnosis and time to infiltrate the body, Lyme disease can do a great deal of damage. Late-stage Lyme disease can manifest in the body with similar symptoms to congestive heart failure, including physical disability and high levels of fatigue.

Mr. Speaker, Holly Driedger is in that position right now. She's unable to speak, she's unable to work, and has been rejected for long-term disability.

I ask this Minister of Health today: What will this government do for the sufferers of Lyme disease?

**Ms. Oswald:** And, indeed, in many ways the member opposite makes the point that the diagnosis of Lyme disease is very complex, and our health-care professionals here in Manitoba are working very, very hard to develop their knowledge even further and to do—to use best practice in the diagnosis and analysis. We know that there was an international conference hosted right here in Manitoba where experts got together to share information to enable them to make more accurate diagnoses.

And, indeed, we want to be able to support Manitobans at all times, whether they've been diagnosed with Lyme disease or other circumstances that may present in a similar way. We want to ensure that we have broad options for them within the health-care system and, indeed, we want to have supports for them outside of the health-care system

so that we can do everything we can to assist them on their journey to wellness.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Time for oral questions has expired.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** I'd like to draw the honourable members' attention to the public gallery where we have with us today a Member of Parliament for Surrey North, Mr. Jasbir Sandhu, who is the guest of the honourable member for Maples (Mr. Saran).

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

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Beausejour 100th Anniversary

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** I rise today to honour the town of Beausejour which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Beausejour is thriving—is a thriving rural community located about 45 minutes east of Winnipeg with a population of approximately 3,200 residents.

Beausejour is situated on the edge of Manitoba's incredible cottage country, and plays host to many visitors from all over who like to head to the lake to pass their summers, and go ice fishing or snowmobiling on our beautiful trails in the winter.

In fact, Beausejour is probably best known for hosting the Canadian Power Toboggan Championship races, a yearly national event that also celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. Beausejour began much like any—like many small rural settlements in Manitoba. With the establishment of the railway in the late 19th century, families from Poland, Germany and Russia came and settled, and a lot of those families still reside there today.

Even though Beausejour's main industry has always been agriculture, it has shown economic diversity over the years. In 1906, a local man named Joseph Kielback, whose family still resides in the Beausejour area, established the first glass container factory in western Canada, and has since been designated a provincial historic site.

Beausejour was also the home of Polaris Industries and the Beausejour creamery that supplied grocery stores around the province with Beausejour butter. Industries have come and gone over the years, but the families remain. The reason for that may be in the name itself, since Beausejour means a beautiful resting place.

In lieu of Beausejour's centennial celebrations, I invite all Manitobans to attend the broken head–Broken-Beau Historical Society's heritage day festival on Sunday, August 5th, 2012, and take a walk through Beausejour's history as–at the Pioneer Village Museum, which this year will include the addition of Schreyer house, the home of former Manitoba premier and Canadian Governor General, Ed Schreyer.

As the member from Lac du Bonnet, it is with great pride and privilege that I serve my community, tell their story and I–and that I represent the residents of Beausejour, and rise to honour their 100th-year anniversary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:20)

#### **Vision Quest Conference and Trade Show**

**Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas):** On May 16th, I had the opportunity to attend and speak at the 16th annual Vision Quest Conference and Trade Show at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. This event brings together Aboriginal business owners, youth, community leaders, government representatives and many others. Here they discuss Aboriginal issues, business, community and economic development in Manitoba.

This event helps foster vision, further dialogue and opens people's eyes to different possibilities. It also builds cultural awareness for a broad audience. Over the past 15 years, more than 10,000 people have participated in this unique conference. Many youth from OCN, who have gone to Vision Quest in the past, have told me about the friendships they formed and the employment opportunities they learned at that conference.

The keynote speaker was former Olympian, Waneek Horn-Miller, who shared an excellent message of hope, hard work and perseverance. And, as a 14-year-old Mohawk girl at the Oka crisis, she was stabbed during the standoff. But years later, she went to the 2000 Olympics as the co-captain of the women's water polo team. Now she is trying to improve health and wellness for First Nations Canadians through a program on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. She's an outstanding role model and an inspiring speaker.

Aboriginal people are increasingly taking leadership positions in every sector of society, including the business world. This is great news for

Manitoba. The future success of this province is, in many ways, dependent upon the future success of Aboriginal people. In fact, over the next 10 years, one in three new entrants to our labour force will be Aboriginal. Events like Vision Quest 2012 help people, young and old, build the skills and partnerships they need to succeed.

I would like to congratulate everyone who works hard every year to make Vision Quest happen.

Thank you.

#### **Tribal Councils Investment Group**

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honour of the Tribal Councils Investment Group of Manitoba Ltd., which is the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce 2012 recipient of the Lieutenant-Governor's Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Community by a business. The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce honour a prominent business each year that provides an exceptional contribution to the prosperity of their community.

The Tribal Councils Investment Group was founded in 1990 by seven tribal councils in Manitoba, representing 55 First Nation communities and more than a hundred thousand people. The Tribal Council Investment Group was created to act as the investment arm of its shareholders by combining the investment capacity of the individual tribal councils. Therefore, the Tribal Council Investment Group pooled the resources of their First Nations communities and created a substantial wealth management and investment strategy, as well as financial service industries opportunities for Aboriginal people. The Tribal Council Investment Group is designed to contribute financially to Aboriginal communities by using their dividends to create positive impacts on the quality of life of Aboriginal people and communities.

The Tribal Council Investment Group's key objectives are to achieve double-digit growth, be financially independent and to become a credible and prominent member of the Manitoba business community. We can clearly see how the Tribal Council Investment Group has achieved its latter objective through the accolades they have been given by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. The Tribal Council Investment Group has, in fact, exceeded all of its initial objectives within their mandate and successfully financed the National First Nations

School Breakfast Program which, in 2011, served over 257,000 breakfasts to over 1,500 children.

The Tribal Council Investment Group is a pioneer for the Aboriginal community and fits within the successful business paradigm of Manitoba's co-operative organizations. The Tribal Council Investment Group serves as an important function for the pride and self-determination of the First Nations communities in Manitoba and Canada, and it's truly an honour to bring to their incredible achievements in our Assembly today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Snow Lake Mining Museum**

**Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon):** On the heels of National Mining Week, I would like to speak about a true gem that is located in Snow Lake, Manitoba, the Snow Lake Mining Museum. A 14,000 square-foot museum serves as a testament to the importance of mining to the community of Snow Lake. This area has been a prolific mining powerhouse for the last century, producing metals such as silver, gold, copper and zinc. Snow Lake traces its history to 1927, when local prospector C.R. Parres staked a gold claim on the site that would later become the town of Snow Lake. His find would become a fully operating gold mine when in 1943 the Howe Sound Exploration Company began developing it. This mine is still in operation today, nearly 70 years later.

The Snow Lake Mining Museum itself opened in 1996 and has since become a significant tourist destination for Snow Lake. Gaining Star Attraction status in 2006, it features many displays and types of equipment that give visitors a fuller understanding of mining operations and their place in Snow Lake's history and future. Visitors learn of the difficult work that miners face and the technological advances that have been—made prospecting and exploration, diamond drilling, shaft sinking and underground mining methods easier. With a mandate to preserve and present the exploration and mining way of life which opened up the north, the museum is a reflection of life in Snow Lake and northern resource communities more generally.

Mr. Speaker, mining has a long history and a bright future in Snow Lake. The world-class Lalor mine is currently under development and many other mines are still in operation. Mining has allowed towns like Snow Lake and others in my constituency

to flourish and sustain themselves, often in remote locations. As such, I commend the Snow Lake Mining Museum for serving as a source of the history of mining in the area, and I hope all members will join me in celebrating the role as a educational institution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further members' statements?

\* (14:30)

### **Marnie Erb**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** I would just like to make a statement today in regard to Mrs. Marnie Erb that—she passed away on Mother's Day. She was a very good friend and well-known person within the Red River School Division. She was a teacher at J.A. Cuddy School in Sanford for over 30 years, a wonderful person in the community, always was there for every student that she saw through elementary and when they further went on to Sanford Collegiate. She later went on to become a member of the Red River Valley school board and served as the chair in most recent years. She was a person that was always at every event. She was very well-known in the community, and in small communities like that people are very interrelated, lots of friends and relatives close by.

I did attend a memorial service for her last Thursday and, just to say how many people were there, the church was overflowing with people that wanted to come and pay their respects to this wonderful woman who had served so well.

She was a sports fan, Mr. Speaker. She was avidly, as I said, avidly involved with her students at every level, even to the point where she wanted to go and be with them in later things that they did in life. She was also a talented baker, I understand, and we learned this at the service for her, that everything that she did she would get up early and she would bake fresh buns or fresh baking to take either to the school, to a meeting or to some sporting event.

She and her husband, Lorne, who I know personally—have known Lorne for many, many years—were involved with international—the Scouts international; Lorne was a scoutmaster. They attended many, many events. She attended with him to many events, Mr. Speaker. In—later on in years they did some travelling, and it's very, very unfortunate, the untimely death of Marnie Erb who

passed away all too soon and with a very relatively short illness, but ultimately it did take her life. And so we are all very sorry for that and she will be very missed by all of her family and friends.

Thank you very much.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### House Business

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Deputy Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might resolve the House into Committee of Supply.

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will you please take the Chair.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

*(Concurrent Sections)*

#### HEALTHY LIVING, SENIORS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

\* (14:40)

**Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran):** Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

Before we begin, I would like to remind members to ensure their electronic devices are in silent mode and to also speak more closely into the microphones.

Now, this section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs):** I'm pleased to present the 2012-13 Estimate expenditures for Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs. It's an honour to lead this new department that is dedicated to prevention measures, health promotion, seniors' issues and services, and a fair marketplace for consumers and businesses 'bose' landlords and tenants.

We are committed to working with Manitobans to provide support across a broad spectrum of healthy living, seniors services and consumer

protection. Healthy living focuses on wellness and prevention. We are working to create healthy living opportunities that are meaningful to every Manitoban, of every age, in every community. This year we are proud to have introduced legislation that would further protect children by expanding the use of booster seats through a higher age, weight and height requirements. That was just introduced just a short while ago. In addition to booster seats, we're interested in ensuring Manitobans are protected from catastrophic head injuries while they're riding bicycles, and we will continue to work with stakeholders on this important topic and move this issue forward.

We have also introduced legislation that would reduce the points of sale of tobacco products starting in the pharmacies and health-care facilities, because we know this has a positive impact on youth access to tobacco and helps support smokers with quitting and staying quit.

We are also the first province in Canada to have a caregiver recognition act, which was last announced—which was announced last year. Since then, we have begun an extensive consultation process with Manitoba's informal caregivers, hosted Manitoba's first Caregiver Recognition Day, appointed members to the Manitoba caregiver council and actually gotten a lot of correspondence in this issue.

We are also very busy on the consumer protection front with many new initiatives designed to assist Manitoba consumers. For example, we have introduced amendments to The Consumer Protection Act that will ensure fair treatment of consumers when they get their cars repair, and we have introduced cellphone legislation, which comes to effect September 15th to ensure cellphone contracts are fair and clear.

Enforcing Manitoba's tough payday lending rules also continues to be a key element of our consumer protection strategy, and we are further amending legislation to ensure the best possible protection for payday loan consumers in Manitoba. This year, we'll also provide funding for—from a payday borrowers' financial literacy fund towards a two-day conference creating community options for financial services that will be held in Winnipeg in June.

We're proud to be undertaking all of these important initiatives at a time when our department budget has been held to the same level as last year, to

assist our government's commitment to return to balance by 2014. We are committed to carefully reviewing our in-year expenditures, as well as remaining innovative in our programming to ensure our funds are to be used to the utmost benefit to Manitobans.

In the Healthy Living side of my portfolio, we continue to develop and promote ways to improve health status in Manitobans, and create environments where healthy choice is the easy choice. This includes our in motion program, that now has 70 per cent of all schools in the province registered and over 150 companies participating. I am pleased to report that over 75 per cent of Manitobans now live in an in motion community. Another example of our important community-based programming is Healthy Together Now, which is being implemented in 83 communities including 21 First Nations and seven Métis communities.

Our government has invested in a number of food security and nutrition initiatives such as the extremely popular Farm to School healthy food fundraiser, and we continue to provide ongoing support for the nutrition policy, trans fat legislation related to schools, Northern Healthy Foods Initiative. We will also renew our efforts to reduce tobacco use through the expansion of our school-based programming, which will add another 20 SWAT teams—that's students working against tobacco—in the upcoming year. We also worked on a Create and Rate program, where kids are developing their own commercials or ads.

Manitoba's continued investment in addictions has contributed to an increased in the number of Manitobans who receive care. Manitoba agencies have been work together to manage wait times and there have been improvements. In addition, a central intake pilot will begin and enhanced training opportunities will mean earlier detection of problematic substance abuse among youth. River Point Centre is also expected to be ready for occupancy in June 2013.

The addition of policy and prevention and promotion of mental health and spiritual health is an important new responsibility for our department. In 2011, Manitoba released a provincial mental health strategic plan and hosted a national mental health summit. Three hundred officials from across North America attended this very successful event and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

Our Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat continues to support communities with the Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative. I'm happy to report, Mr. Chair, that 85 communities representing approximately 80 per cent of Manitoba's population are currently committed to becoming more age-friendly.

This year we continue to work with many partner organizations such as the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, Good Neighbours Active Living Centre to further enhance the age-friendly initiative and support age-friendly communities in the Milestone Recognition Program and the availability of age-friendly resource team to help provide community supports.

Also, this past year we introduced a 24 hour, seven–24 hour a day, seven days a week senior abuse support line that provides counselling information and follow-up support to older adults and others concerned that an older adult may be experiencing abuse. And our department is increasingly ongoing to–support to Age and Opportunity to allow universal availability of the SafetyAid program which has been wonderful on falls prevention.

This winter we brought in new regulations to address a new form of debt services, known as debt settlement. We responded quickly with new rules to the 'chairging' of upfront fees for the services. In addition, the Consumer and Corporate Affairs division in our department has been an exciting welcome change as they work for each and every Manitoban.

We have introduced a number of measures to address the strong demand for rental accommodation, to better manage conversion of apartments to condos. Municipalities will now be able to control condo conversions when vacancy rates are low to allowing tenants more time to find alternative accommodation. We have also implemented the longer notice periods for those tenancies that are necessary due to building renovations. In addition, changes that have taken effect in June this year will lengthen the time landlords have to recover the cost of some capital expenditures, therefore, lowering rent increases in some cases. Tenants and landlords, also, now have access to independent adviser services. This service is a pilot project that enables both parties to bring forward their specific issues with greater confidence and understanding the process.

I'm pleased to advise the property registry is currently a—has a multi-year client service improvement initiative under way. Important pieces of the project such as online surveys and documents have already been implemented. We're also working on a service improvement project at the company's office that will provide clients with an online filing option by the year end.

These are just some of the many programs we're undertaking to assist Manitobans who work in our department rely on the services. It's indeed a pleasure to oversee the portfolio for the broad range of important responsibilities, and it's been a pleasure to work with a good group of professionals who really care about Manitobans, care about their jobs and make a difference every day.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** I don't have a whole lot to say in opening statements, other than to say I look forward as a new critic in this area, newly assigned to me in the last go around of changes. So I will certainly be looking at getting an understanding of what is happening within Healthy Living and Seniors, and I look forward to asking the minister questions in those areas and to get a better sense of how the department has been reorganized.

And I just want to say that I know with Healthy Living there is certainly a number of challenges that I'm sure the department faces in addressing this issue with the larger public, and I look forward to hearing what the minister has to say in terms of some of the efforts that are being made to take on some of the challenges that are coming down the road.

And I just want to indicate that I am very appreciative of all the work that—and all the effort that staff put into developing programs and evaluating programs and looking for opportunities to improve.

I think that there are a number of good things that do happen in Manitoba and I—sometimes when I'm looking across the country, I don't think sometimes in Manitoba we acknowledge the innovative opportunities that are going on here.

And some of the, you know, the leadership that we see in a lot of areas, whether it's in Healthy

Living or Health or any number of departments, I think within the civil service, I think we have some incredible talent, and it's always interesting to look at what we're doing. And, you know, as I do research and look across Canada and look at some of the innovations here, I'm really pleased to see some of those new initiatives. And I think it's really exciting and I think it's good to be a leader, and I think, you know, being a model for what can help improve in this area, within the province and across country, is certainly something that we should be striving for, and I look forward to asking the minister questions throughout the day. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the critic from the official opposition for her remarks.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered by a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 34.1(a) contained in resolution 34.1.

At this time, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table, and we ask that the minister introduce the staff in attendance.

**Mr. Rondeau:** The staff that I have with me right now are—is Cindy Stevens, who's the deputy minister; Dave Paton, who's the executive director of finance and administration; Jennifer Hibbert, who's director of financial services; Marcia, where's Marcia? Oh there, sorry, who's the assistant deputy minister of Healthy Living.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you. Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of the department chronologically or have a global discussion?

**Mrs. Driedger:** I think we'll get through it all faster if we just have a global discussion.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you.

**Mr. Rondeau:** Just for clarification, let's keep to the Healthy Living part of the department today, and then we'll do Consumer Affairs another day, right? So, we'll just do Healthy Living and Seniors today.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Member for Charleswood, agreed?

**Mrs. Driedger:** That's exactly the intent for today that's been negotiated, yes.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you. It is agreed that—then that the questions for the department will proceed in a global manner with all resolutions to be passed

once questioning has concluded. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mrs. Driedger:** In looking at the supplementary information and the Estimates book, I am looking at page 5 and I have some questions for the minister, in terms of the organizational chart.

When we look at administration and finance and then going across that whole section, Seniors and Healthy Living, there's names attached to all these people across but no titles, and I've actually never seen that before, where we've not seen a title attached to the person's name.

Wonder if the minister could go across and indicate the titles for David Paton, Patti Chiappetta, Alex Morton, Tina Sinclair, Marcia Thomson, and Fran Schellenberg?

**Mr. Rondeau:** And for the honourable member, what I usually do is say the finance person or the seniors person, et cetera, so I'm not good on titles, so I apologize to that.

\* (14:50)

Finance and administration: Dave Paton's the executive director of finance and admin; Seniors and Healthy Aging: Patti Chiappetta is the executive director of that branch; Consumer and Corporate Affairs: Alex Morton is the assistant deputy minister; Addictions policy and support is Tina Leclair: she's the executive director; Healthy Living and Populations: I believe Marcia is called the assistant deputy minister for Healthy Living and Populations; and Fran Schellenberg is the executive director of Mental Health and Spiritual Health.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister give an overview of how the Council on Aging is set up, and how people are appointed to that council and who that council reports to?

**Mr. Rondeau:** The Manitoba Council on Aging is a advisory body to government. It's through the Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs, and what they are is they're appointed through an OIC, order-in-council, and they provide me, as the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors, advice on a number of topics; it could be on housing, could be on pensions, could be on health issues or issues on seniors, and they provide me that as an open discussion and an ongoing discussion. But it's through an order-in-council that's provided through the normal processes. We try to have it so that all areas the provinces are represented, different

demographic groups are represented, different groups from everywhere.

**Mrs. Driedger:** How many people are on the council and how often do they meet?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Right now there's 14 people who are serving on it, and they meet four to five times a year. They—and one of those is, basically, outside of—out of Winnipeg. They call it the road trip, and so last year they went to two rural communities, and this year I believe they're also trying to go to one or two rural communities to hear what the issues are outside the city too.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister provide a list of who's on that Council on Aging?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I assume there'll be a list of stuff that we can provide at the end. Is that okay if I can get it all to you in a package at the end?

**Mrs. Driedger:** Certainly, we can do that, as long as the minister follows through.

Can the minister tell us where the previous deputy minister, Jan Sanderson, went?

**Mr. Rondeau:** When the two ministries were separated, she went with the Children and Youth Opportunities department—or ministry, so, she's over there right now. We thought it was more appropriate, because she's had a long and very positive experience with children as far as the Healthy Child Committee and the secretariat there. So she went with the Children and Youth Opportunities ministry.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate why he does not have a deputy minister that's just specific to this department; why there is a sharing? That must be quite a huge job for the deputy to have to carry on Healthy Living, Seniors, Consumer Affairs, Culture, Heritage, Tourism and whatever else. Why would the deputy minister be carrying such a heavy load?

**Mr. Rondeau:** First, I'd like to compliment my deputy, because she's very good at what she does. She's almost as active as me, which is kind of scary, because we have a reputation for being active. So she's very good on communications. I have to say that she's been very, very good at the communications, at the dialogue with the different communities and we thought there was a lot of synergies with the Culture department and Seniors and Healthy Living, and so we thought it was a good

fit. And I have to admit that I really enjoy working with her. She's a very, very intelligent person and a professional and has been able to manage the transition very, very well.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I don't have any doubt about that. Certainly, you know, had an opportunity over the years to, you know, hear her, you know, involved at various levels throughout, you know, Estimates and committees.

But certainly, it just—and this isn't so much about the deputy minister, but about the government's decision as to why they felt that—you know, if they're saying that healthy living is a significant aspect of health care, why would the NDP government then not choose to have a full-time deputy minister, looking just at this? So it's more—my question isn't about the qualifications of the deputy or not; it's about the government's decision to do what they did.

**Mr. Rondeau:** The one advantage we have is, in this ministry, we have a lot of very, very good people who are very passionate about what they do. Whether it's the director of Healthy Living and Populations branch, whether it's the in motion staff, whether it's the chronic disease people, they're very passionate. And what we've chosen to do is to be very, very lean on the administration, and put the money into the hands of people who are actually making the healthy living changes or supporting seniors or doing the seniors abuse programs, all that.

So, rather than put a lot of money in administration, we're being very, very frugal, as Dave would put it, and putting the money into the community, into organizations that are making a difference, and into the hands of people who are actually delivering the programs. And it's a conscious decision. I believe, if memory serves me correctly, well over 60 per cent of our budget goes directly as grants, and we want to keep on getting the programs and delivery out there. And whether it's the addictions programs, lots in grants to direct programs; healthy living, same thing; all the mental health, same thing. We have lots of programs delivered by there. And so we're not focusing on a big bureaucracy; you're—we're focusing on creating partnerships out in the community and getting money out there and delivering real programs.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, I guess we're probably going to just end up agreeing to disagree on this one, because it would just seem to me that if the government really was focused as sincerely as they say they are on healthy living that I would think that

there could be a role to be played by a full-time deputy minister.

Because the challenges certainly are coming our way in terms of the demographics, in terms of the challenges that are out there, and we're not seeing the successes that we should be seeing in Manitoba in terms of addressing some of those challenges. And there are some significant areas where Manitoba could certainly be moving much further ahead, but if you're going to, you know, diminish, I think, the opportunity for a full-time deputy to get involved and really get aggressive in looking at some of these things—perhaps there would be an opportunity to move some of the outcomes so that we do see better successes.

I can't imagine a deputy having to change hats that many times in a day. It just does seem to be quite a lot, especially since I was also the critic for Culture, Heritage, Tourism, and Multiculturalism at one point, and I know, you know, certainly, how busy that can be and, certainly, in this area. So that is like wearing, what, 10 different hats in a day, and that must be a lot of juggling for a deputy minister. So I'm sure, you know, kudos to her, and she must walk on water some days in order to accomplish all of this too—wears sandals in order to try to keep a lot of bosses happy along the way.

\* (15:00)

On page 6 of the Estimates book, I notice that administration and finance, the minister was indicating that he was lean on administration, and I have been looking across the book in terms of where we do see changes. And certainly with programing there might be, you know, a slight improvement in some funding or it was at least flat.

But the one area where there has been some increase in spending is in administration and finance. If we look at that first line on page 6, administration and finance, comparing estimates to estimates, we see an increase—not a huge one, but an increase. I wonder if the minister could give some indication of why administration and finance went up.

**Mr. Rondeau:** I'd like to say a few of the successful successes that we've had, and I'd like to also compliment Cindy. She tells me—the deputy minister, she tells me she's full time and she's definitely full time.

But whether it's food where we're actually spearheading a lot of the food initiatives throughout the government where, you know, we've been named

as one of the most sustainable healthy food programs in the world by the United Nations through the Northern Healthy Food Initiative. As far as the school policies where a number of years ago it used to be french fries and Coke used to be No. 1 and 2, now they're not on the top 20 list. Whether it's actually getting out there and raising money by selling vegetables rather than selling chocolates, whether it's activity—like I really am excited about how many schools are *in motion* and how many people are out there using the paths, using the recreational facilities, who are out there increasing activity. So those are all important, and I think those are all successes. But they have to be measured over time, and as you know it takes a while to change behaviour, and that's what this is all about.

As far as admin and finance, it's about 4 per cent of our budget for the admin and finance and the—moving from 638 to 646 was normal salary increases because the people just got their normal steps in their careers, and that's what that is. If you note, though, the actual at the end of administration operating 2011-12 was 57.862 million, and this year because of some trims it was \$57.862 million overall, remained flat. And so we wish to continue to remain lean and we'll be creative. But again we're trying to push the money out to the organizations that are delivering the services.

**Mrs. Driedger:** And we'll certainly get into some of those questions because I note that I'm sure some of them are going to be struggling as well with the funding that they have been given.

Can the minister explain the interrelationship between Healthy Living and Health? Like, how do the two departments coexist? How do they relate? Do they meet? Do they share information? Is there a forum in place where the ministers talk or the deputy ministers talk? Like, how does it work or are you all just totally separate?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I'm pleased to say that we're not in our own silos. We do work together and there's many interdepartmental working committees. They work on various topics. We also have a regular committee meeting between my deputy and senior staff and Health deputy and senior Health staff. We're also part of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, which deals with things on a global basis, such as FASD and activity and mental health and other issues. And then we also have some contracts with RHAs, et cetera, such as the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative, et cetera.

But we also work with RHAs on discussing the supports for seniors that are delivered through RHAs, et cetera. We work with other health issues out there, tobacco cessation, things like that, and, of course, with two mental healths and spiritual health, they're intertwined between the two departments. And, of course, through addictions agencies, we deliver a lot of the addiction services. However, detox, et cetera, are delivered through RHAs because it's more a health issue.

**Mrs. Driedger:** The minister indicated that there were many interdepartmental committees. Can he tell me what those committees are?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Sure: there's the Aging in Place Working Group; there's the RHAs health and senior health organizations; there's the addiction discussions that we often meet together and they meet on a regular basis; there's a whole thing on new food and nutrition, obesity, activity, Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative, and that's just with Health.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate—he also said that the staff in his department meet with the staff in Health. Is it on a regular basis or on an as-needed-to basis?

**Mr. Rondeau:** It depends on the issue. Some issues would be on a regular basis, others on as needed or as a project basis. So a lot of it depends on what we're talking about. One of the other examples of interdepartmental committee would be the issue on bedbugs where we are working with other departments on that and engaged with other departments on that.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Which department takes the lead on bedbugs?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Us.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Has a bedbug strategy been put in place?

**Mr. Rondeau:** We have a strategy that we're working throughout departments with. It's not a public strategy right now; we're just working through it. But one of the things I'm happy to say is it's got some components. I'll go through some of the components. One is the bug and scrub, which has been very, very positive. What it is—we found out that people are not capable of preparing their suites. So there's a group of people who can get referred, they prepare the suites and then put them back together again at the end. There's also the low—there's also a grant program so that non-profit groups can

deal with it. There's also the paraphernalia. I don't know what the name of the project is. It's the paraphernalia, trying to get it out cheap to landlords or non-profits. And, of course, then there's the information where we're trying to put lots of information out into the hands of public so that they know how to deal with the issue.

And so it is a departmental–interdepartmental program. We are co-ordinating it and it's been very, very positive. Actually, we're trying very, very hard to get the information out across jurisdictions, and that's an example of where it–this department becomes very important, because you have the Rentalsman and the property branch and all those working together with us in Healthy Living which can move the bedbug issue quickly forward.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate why it wouldn't be a public document if there was a strategy in place and why that would not be readily available?

**Mr. Rondeau:** We have our current plan on the website. It is public. The interesting part is that most provinces don't lead the jurisdiction, and it's something that everyone has the problem. And so we're just trying to co-ordinate the solution to it. So what we're trying to do is bring together the health experts, the bedbug experts, the property people, all these things together to deal with the problem as a royal we, and so we're trying to do that.

\* (15:10)

In most jurisdictions it's just left to either the city or it's just left. I think by co-ordinating it and providing some assistance to people who require it, it's a very positive thing. So we've been bringing people together, we've–I've actually attended a couple of meetings on–with this group, and I think it's very positive that we've been proactive. We've moved it forward and moved it forward as a collective we.

**Mrs. Driedger:** We don't seem to be hearing much about bedbugs lately. Can the minister indicate whether or not the problem is as serious as it was a year ago, and it's just that we're not hearing about it, or can he actually indicate that there have been successes and actually the numbers are down in terms of percentage of bedbug infestation?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I'm pleased to let the member know that we actually have been providing lots of factual information on the website. We've got lots of news–pamphlets out there; we got posters out there. We actually have a phone number there, and I love the

number. It's–yes, that's it–1-855-3MBUGS. And what's happening, is we're providing real information. So we get–we're getting rid of the urban myths; we're dealing with the problem with information. And I actually–I think it's interesting, because we've actually got some very, very innovative companies that have come to the fore. The heat treatment ones–we have a heat treatment vans, where they heat up all the person's possessions; we've got heat units that actually bring up the temperature for the whole building or for the whole apartment, which gets rid of the bedbugs. We actually have been really doing well on the prevention programs where we provide small grants to organizations to deal with them. And why we're–that's important, is because you don't want to get hold. And I think what we've managed to do is provide the information to the public–real information; we've actually gone and had some of our companies actually take advantage to create these heat systems–don't ask me the names of the companies right now–and I think what we also did was we engaged the City of Winnipeg and other municipalities to say how do we deal with this issue effectively.

And so, real information, bringing everyone together, having a few programs out there, providing the low-cost materials, has been very, very positive, and the small grant programs have been positive. But I think the website–I was surprised that people haven't done that in other jurisdictions, whether there's actually one place to go for real information on how to deal with it.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I know some people were wanting sites to be identified on a website and, you know, they were asking for public to be notified whenever there were bedbugs in a location. What was the discussion in the department about whether or not to do that?

**Mr. Rondeau:** We're not in favour of a registry for bedbugs, because what happens is an organization might have bedbugs; their job then is to get rid of them, and if they get rid of them, you know, that's a positive thing. So what we focused on is getting the information out there, telling people how to treat them effectively, getting all the information out there so that people can take proactive action, and I would rather spend money on a low-income grants program or the supplies or the information and all this, rather than on a registry which would be constantly changing. And I wouldn't want to be the person who updated it and changed it and all–so what we're

dealing with, is we're saying this is an issue that everyone needs to have the information on and the resources and ability to take action on it, and the information to take action on it. We thought that was better as a proactive strategy rather than blaming our issues, because as a former teacher, as a former nurse, you know, anything like lice or bedbugs can happen, and then it's not a question of if they happen; it's a question of how you take appropriate action and move it forward so that you deal with the issue.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Does the minister happen to know right now, according to what's been reported to him, how many sites there are right now in Manitoba infested with bedbugs?

**Mr. Rondeau:** We don't keep a record or running tally. Again, what we do is provide the information, do the programs and support. I think it would be crazy trying to have a person hired to count and to keep track and then—no, we don't do that. I personally believe it's probably more effective use of staff and resources to treat the issue and move it forward and educate, rather than running after a silly running tally of who's got bedbugs or lice or other issues.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister, then, indicate how he would measure success in, you know, that you're beating the problem or you're on top of it. If you're not tracking some of this, how do you know you're winning the battle?

**Mr. Rondeau:** A part of the way you learn whether you're winning the battle or not is if the program is growing by—the problem is growing by leaps and bounds, or whether people seem to have a handle on it.

I've met with the Property Managers Association. They've commented very positively on our strategy and they've commented that they've got the issue under more control.

And the other thing is is that, if you read the statistics around the world, there's some program—some parts in country—in other countries, that there's a huge problem and it's everywhere.

It seems to me as there's been less issues of it, less publicity on it, and I think that with what the property managers have said is that we have a strategy that seems to be working, that they're containing it, that they have the ability to move that forward expeditiously on theirs. And they actually made a very positive comment about the website and the fact that we're not blaming people, that we're just working co-operatively to address the situation and

problem. They were very worried about something like a registry. What they wanted was they wanted the assistance to deal with the problem.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I—it would just seem to me, as the minister, in order to know that you're on top of the battle or winning the battle, that you might want to know on a, sort of a somewhat regular basis how many sites there are. Otherwise, the minister hasn't really given me any confidence that we're winning the battle because, how do you know? Like, I don't think he can say that with any deal of credibility if you aren't tracking this, somehow. Like, you must have some form of tracking in order to know that it's not overtaking any place. Just because we're not hearing about it doesn't mean it's not a problem. People just aren't talking about it anymore because it's, sort of, like, old news.

So, you know, there has to be a way for the minister to know whether or not he's winning the battle.

**Mr. Rondeau:** One of the things we do keep control over is the amount of phone calls, emails, to the bug line. It gives an idea of the problem; it gives us idea of the location; it gives us an idea of the areas that we have to deal with. So we do keep some information on those. And it seems that the numbers are not going through the roof; they're pretty stable.

**Mrs. Driedger:** How do you—how does the minister advertise the bug line? Maybe they're—you're just not getting a lot of calls because nobody knows there is a bug line. Do you have an advertising program so that people know there's a number to call?

**Mr. Rondeau:** What we've done, Mr. Chair, is we've worked with the City of Winnipeg so that, on the 311 line, they refer to that, so if they have issues on that. We've informed groups like the Social Planning Council where we're working on, to communicate the information. We're working with the landlord association to deal with it, and they're probably the most positive group there. We've worked with the City—I can't say it—Taz—I don't know what Taz's title is, so, thank you.

\* (15:20)

We also did some posters. I can send you a set if you wanted a set. You can't—[interjection] Send it to your office. We have posters. We have pamphlets. We did two flights of advertising and layout and print ads. That cost us about \$64,492. We got some information in the seniors' and Aboriginal publications. So we tried to get the information out.

Now what we're doing is giving more and more of the pamphlets out, posters out, and we're working with the City of Winnipeg also to get the—more information out.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Is Manitoba Housing part of that advertising program?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Although there's—actually we are in communication with Manitoba Housing and staff and all that. They have their own people that deal with bedbugs or any issues that they would have through normal pest control. *[interjection]* Yes, they have a group that goes and deals with their own buildings.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Okay, that was—I was heading in that direction too, because when Osborne House had their infestation, they couldn't get Manitoba Housing there. They had to raise the issue a number of times, and the infestation was so bad, but, you know, they were having to make the discoveries themselves, and Manitoba Housing wasn't very on the ball in terms of coming down and dealing with that situation. So I think there were a couple of times when they had to vacate the place, which I can't even imagine, you know, what that would be like.

But I guess I don't need to ask this minister, seeing as it's not his department, and I guess I would ask him if there is, within his department, the opportunity to have leadership over the whole government here, to direct, you know, proper attention to be paid to bedbugs, or is Manitoba Housing just totally on their own and then the minister deals with everything else?

**Mr. Rondeau:** The education is for all people, whether it's non-profit, public housing, everyone. And so the information, we want to continue to get it out there because that's very, very important to know what people can and can't do. The grant program would be appropriate for all third-party non-profit groups. So we do have a lot of groups that have made access to the grant program, and so we have worked through that. I believe we're the only province that has a low-cost grant program for daycares or for other groups, school—for daycares or non-profit groups, et cetera.

And I think what the key is, is to have the information there. Now, we do communicate with Housing as well as other organizations that do deal with bedbugs and other 'infestations.' We want to continue to do that, but we try to work co-operatively with other departments. So when you asked the question on whether there's interdepartmental

committees that deal with issues, this would be a interdepartmental committee that deals with an issue because it's not just Healthy Living; it's not just Housing; it's everybody. So it's residential tenancy, it's everybody deals with this because it's like anything else. You want to deal with the issue as broadly as possible with the proper education. So we want to tell everybody about the issue so they know the proper behaviour.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I appreciate the information from the minister.

Now, on page 10 of the Estimates book and back to looking at position summaries, under executive support, I would note that there are five positions there. And can the minister tell us who those five people are in those positions and their titles?

**Mr. Rondeau:** There's me; I'm the minister. There's Huguette Lacroix, who is the correspondence secretary; Janean McInnes, who is the admin secretary level 3; Esther Hiebert, who is my executive assistant; Marina Portz, admin secretary; and Sinda Cathcart, who's my special assistant.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us how long his EA and SA have been with him?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Yes. My executive assistant's been with me for a little while, November 2003 she started. *[interjection]* Very efficient. And Sinda Cathcart hasn't quite been with me as long as that; she was appointed February 2012 and is still recovering.

**Mrs. Driedger:** And can the minister indicate who his SA was prior to that?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Tiffany Creaghe-Harder was my previous SA. To save you the next question, she is now working with Minister Chief and also transferred over to the new Children and Youth Opportunities when that ministry was formed. So we saved you a question.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Not quite; what role does she have in the new ministry's office?

**Mr. Rondeau:** When she moved over she was special assistant. I assume she's there, but you'll have to confirm that with Mr. Chief.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate whether there are any project managers in Healthy Living?

I would note that in the Department of Health they now have six political staff, and a number of them have morphed into these positions called

project managers. Can the minister indicate whether he has any political staff that are in the position of project manager?

**Mr. Rondeau:** The answer is there's no political staff who are project managers. But I'd like to say the whole department does run a lot of projects and manages a lot of projects, but as civil service.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate there have been any salaries frozen in his department over the past year?

**An Honourable Member:** Besides mine?

**Mrs. Driedger:** Besides yours. And in the ongoing year are there any frozen salaries?

**Mr. Rondeau:** The short answer is no, but the longer answer is that there was a—the normal collective bargaining went through, and we were part of the normal collective bargaining with all the members. The only person who seems to take a salary freeze or deduction was myself, and that was part of the system.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us or indicate the total number of staff in his department?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I am told it's 167.91, and please don't ask why .91. I think it's a collection of part-times and different pieces.

**Mrs. Driedger:** And can the minister indicate what the vacancy rate is within his department, and if that's specifically determined as a cost-saving measure?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Can we get that to you, because I don't think they have it right at the tips of their fingers?

**Mrs. Driedger:** Certainly.

**Mr. Rondeau:** They'll get you the vacancy rate as exists, okay?

**Mrs. Driedger:** And the next question is: Is there any direction from the minister to his department towards, you know, saving some money by setting a certain vacancy rate and keeping one in place?

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Rondeau:** We always look forward to savings. We try to run a very, very efficient ship, and—but I have not specifically set a specific target for vacancy management.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate whether or not all positions hired within his department have

been through competition, or have some of them been appointments?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Of the competitions, there was seven open competitions, no closed competitions, no internal competitions, for a total of seven competitions.

As far as direct appointments: there's one acting status; no lateral transfers; there's two terms that have been converted to regular; three temporary appointments; one order-in-council; and direct appointments, there's been two, that's more like employment equity and stuff like that, for a total of nine—sorry.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate whether or not contracts are awarded directly, or if contracts are tendered?

**Mr. Rondeau:** The vast majority of contracts are tendered. If not, they're the sole supplier, and then they're posted as per normal policy.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Is there a certain dollar value that the department sets where then you have to tender a project?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Generally, when something's over \$5,000 we tender it. Sometimes it's under \$5,000; we still tender it, and then there's some sole-sourced contracts, depending on expertise, et cetera.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate whether or not there was any travel by the Premier (Mr. Selinger), or a delegation led by the Premier, that was paid for by his department?

**Mr. Rondeau:** No.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate the total number of hours of overtime worked by his staff in last year's flood?

**Mr. Rondeau:** It would be recorded centrally by Finance. I don't have that. If that could be part of the package, that would be amiable; we'd send it to you with the rest of the package.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, if the minister is willing to do that, I would be interested in the total number of hours of overtime worked by staff, the dollar value of the overtime worked by staff, and the number of temporary or contract staff hired by the department in relationship to the flood, and the dollar value of bills submitted by his department for payment to the Department of Finance in relation to the 2011 flood, broken out by month for the period ending March 31st, 2012, and a list of any projects or

initiatives the department had to defer as a result of the 2011 flood—if he could provide me all of those answers related to the flood, that would be great.

**Mr. Rondeau:** I believe, Mr. Chair, that the—there's going to be a central response to this through Finance on all the flood questions, so I understand that Finance is compiling the costs, and that would be able to be provided to the member.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I'm just curious; I guess if we were looking at overtime work by the staff, that would be, am I assuming correctly, job related? That they had to—because of Healthy Living or within that department, they were doing their job, it wasn't just going out and volunteering and helping. It was actually doing their job and that's why they were being paid overtime?

**Mr. Rondeau:** My officials tell me that it would have to be job related. We don't believe there's any costs there, but we'll dig for it and see. But it would have to be related and that's consumer affairs, seniors, addictions, mental health—I don't see it, but we will gather it and it will be part of the Finance submission about flood costs to the opposition.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate and he could, you know, verify, or not, my number crunching, can he indicate that if we break out healthy living and seniors, that the total amount of the budget for those two areas is around \$45 million? Is that an accurate number?

**Mr. Rondeau:** On page 7, there's a pie chart which shows that the healthy living component of the budget is about 40 per cent of the \$57.9 million; the seniors is about 3 per cent; the consumer corporate affairs is about 22 per cent; Addictions Foundation of Manitoba is 34 per cent, and admin and finance is about 1 per cent.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Considering the Health budget is so huge and over \$5 billion, \$45 million doesn't seem to be a lot to spend on prevention. Can the minister tell us why?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Basically because we didn't want to sit there in 2003-2004, when we were the first Healthy Living ministry, we had a decision whether we were going to take a certain chunk of each budget and say, we are the prevention budget.

I think it was a wise decision in hindsight and, currently, that we aren't the prevention department—in other words, own all prevention. What we do is we co-ordinate some prevention initiatives. We

co-ordinate things like food, injury prevention and other things, but we're not focused just on prevention. So an example is Health has a prevention component to it, and so they have people who are working on injuries, falls prevention and activity and all the rest, and chronic disease prevention, in addition to what we do.

\* (15:40)

If you look at Education, they have a prevention component; if you look at Healthy Child, they have a prevention component; if you look at—so what we have is we have prevention throughout government, so we're involved in those things but we don't have it directly in our budget. And I think that's better because if we were just the prevention department, then it wouldn't be integrated in everything we do. So, an example is activity; one of the things was the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force said that we needed a K to 12 phys ed every day. And, moving on that, well, that's prevention, but it wasn't in this budget; it's in the Education budget.

So I think, by looking at it and saying, we're not just prevention; we're co-ordinating a lot of initiatives, but it's throughout government, is much more appropriate because then you're—it's not saying that everyone—we want to make sure that everyone says that there's a role in prevention regardless of what area you're in.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us—and I'm on page 14—I would note that there's about four areas in terms of grant summary where there's no change at all. It's flat in terms of spending for Mental Health and Spiritual Health, Tobacco Control, Seniors and Healthy Aging, and Addictions Foundation. I would note that all of those which are pretty significant in terms of the programming and the needs. Can the minister indicate why they wouldn't have been given a bump up, and why they're being kept flat?

**Mr. Rondeau:** One of the things we have done this year is, without additional monies, we've introduced new programs, new initiatives like tobacco. Tobacco—we've now done a create and rate, in addition to the rate and view program. The rate and review program used to be, young students would watch the 10 best commercials and rate them and review them. It's been around for 10 years. So, this year, what we did was we worked with schools to actually develop their own ads and commercials. That didn't cost a lot of money. It's just we moved it forward.

The Students Working Against Tobacco, SWAT teams, we've expanded by 20 schools this year, and I think the staff have been very dedicated and got kids working with kids.

But there's other programs, like, we've expanded the drug formulary, in Health, on tobacco reduction, but that's, again, in Pharmacare, not in this department. It sort of goes with the last comment.

So I think there's certain areas that we have moved forward on. On the Healthy Living and Populations, we'll continue to move forward on food. You—I would hope that you ask—the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) is working on the healthy food initiative. I understand we have about 800 to 900 gardens in northern Manitoba this year. We might hit a thousand; that's very positive. We're working with companies on—sorry—individuals on how to have healthier food.

That's really the base of it, but we wouldn't have a ton of that in our budget. We would facilitate that; we'd work with others on it. It goes with the basic premise. We didn't want to say take 2 per cent of the Health budget or 5 per cent of the Health budget or this of the Education budget. What we wanted to do was have everyone focus on prevention in their areas, and us co-ordinate more of it. And so that goes with that.

As far as the addictions budget, I think what's happened is that we took a budget of about, just around \$10 million in 1999 and moved it to be about 27, \$28 million this year, overall, and I think that's moved it forward quite expeditiously. We've moved forward on other areas.

So, although there's some programs, we've been able to move some programs forward very 'expeditiously', very—with fiscal management and prudence. And I think we still have issues where we're moving forward very quickly, i.e., seniors abuse. We've got a 24-hour, 7-day line. We've got contracts with Age and Opportunity. We've got the safe suites program now. We're working with the federal government on getting the communications out there.

So I think it's where you want to work with multiple partners and different groups. We don't have the whole solution and all the prevention here in our budget, and we don't want it all in our budget. What we want to do is work with others.

**Mrs. Driedger:** On page 21, under salaries, and then under administrative support, it shows a change last

year being \$178,000 and this year, \$189,000. Can the minister indicate administrative support—is that for which particular staff in his office, or is it in the deputy's office?

**Mr. Rondeau:** That would be the regular salary 'increasements' for the support staff, not the political staff.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us where his deputy minister actually has her office?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Room 112, it's a very nice office.

**Mrs. Driedger:** And would it be co-located with Culture, Heritage and Tourism?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Yes.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Page 24, can the minister indicate who the chair is for Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet?

**Mr. Rondeau:** It used to be myself when I was Seniors, Healthy Living, et cetera. Now it's the Minister Kevin Chief because we thought it was—I guess the government thought it was more appropriate to have him there because of the—Children and Youth Opportunities was a focus and because the deputy used to be the vice-chair, or responsible to the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet and so it made sense to leave it in that ministry.

**Mrs. Driedger:** And is the minister still on that committee? Yes?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Yes.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate how often that committee meets?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I understand the ministers meet about five times a year, every two months. I think last year we met six times—that's from memory—but five or six times a year, about every two months. However, last year, I think we put in an extra planning meeting.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us how long the meetings lasts?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Some of them lasted all morning, like four or five hours. Some last a shorter time, two or three hours.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate whether there is a Youth Advisory Council that reports up to him?

**Mr. Rondeau:** No, there isn't. I do not have a Youth Advisory Council in this portfolio.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Was there a Youth Advisory Council in 2010-11? It's in the org chart from the annual report.

**Mr. Rondeau:** There was in the former department, yes.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I understand the minister was at a Youth Advisory Council meeting earlier this month. Can he indicate what type of a meeting that was?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I don't want to make an error on exactly what the topic was. It was a group of high school students from around the province that I went and spoke to. I don't know exactly the name of the actual topic. So I'll put that in the package because I know it was a bunch of high school students from around the province talking about issues, but I can't remember the title off by hand.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Was this something that the government set up, or was it something that the school set up and invited the minister and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to attend?

\*(15:50)

**Mr. Rondeau:** I don't know who exactly organized it. I'll get that into the package of material too. The trouble is is you go to about 20 to 30 events a week and, therefore, you don't remember off by hand exactly who organized it exactly, the title. So I'll get that, who organized it and I'll get the title of the event.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate whether it was a partisan event or whether it was a—more a school- related event that would have been non-partisan?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I do know that in any of my discussions, if I'm representing my ministry I do it as very non-partisan. I try to be very blunt and very open with my—the people who are listening, and what we try to do is provide information or facts. What I would do is try to provide information or facts. I don't try to push one agenda versus the other, and I also go back—all the way back to Linda McIntosh, who was my predecessor, who also had the same reputation, where she just represented government, and I think we do that very much.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I know I certainly do that. Whenever I'm meeting with any youth, I always keep it non-partisan. So I have to say I was a little bit surprised when some information came to me indicating that within that group, that this minister actually said to the Minister of Health, I'm sure you

want to dig your nails into your critic's neck and strangle her, and that was said in front of a group, that I'm sure the critic drives you crazy.

Does the minister recall saying that then, which is a very partisan comment, which bothered me, I have to say, you know, when, you know, a comment is made to very impressionable high school kids, and he's saying to the Minister of Health, I bet you can hardly wait—or how can you prevent yourself from, you know, digging your nails in your critic's neck and wanting to strangle her? Why would that kind of a conversation happen?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I don't remember the particular conversation. I do remember one of my discussions was talking about the whole difference between some legislatures which actually work on a more amiable situation—i.e., the Northwest Territories. et cetera—and us who have an advisory—where we try to sort of challenge each other and work in public on question period, where it looks like adversaries going at each other. I think that it would be much more appropriate if we were more civil on both sides, and I have often said that both publicly in front of kids, in front of adults, et cetera.

I have also said that we have a process by which we can actually have written questions, which I think we're starting to finally do, where we actually have written questions. It's part of the parliamentary privilege and process, where what we do is, instead of saying gotcha, we actually ask real questions, get real responses. And I think that would be very nice in the system if we started doing that. Why? It's because we're trying often to do gotchas, and if you've ever watched question period either federally or provincially in any of our systems, you look at the Northwest Territories model of government, it's very civil. It's very appropriate, and I think it looks much more distinguished versus our question period on both sides of the House.

And, if you look at it from the last 30 years, if you read *Hansard* it looks—as a kid, you look at it and it looks bad on both sides of the House, and I think that anything we did to make it more civil would be positive. And I look at—if you've ever wanted to watch the parliamentary channel and see how that they behave or us or anything else, I think it looks—sometimes I look and say, how would a person view that if they're looking in the visitor's gallery and see what we're doing, and I keep on getting comments from everyone in my schools that come here that it isn't appropriate and it would be nice to

clean it all up. And I'm sure the member opposite agrees because what happens is that we're trying to do gotcha versus look professional.

**Mrs. Driedger:** And I don't disagree with the minister at all because I think there is a higher purpose to being here, and I think a lot of us are here because we want to make a difference. That's why, I guess, with this youth group with these students, I was somewhat, well, more than somewhat, I was quite shocked to hear that this conversation happened between this minister and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), because I don't think that furthers this cause of—especially with impressionable young kids. And speaking of young kids—

**An Honourable Member:** Can I respond to the question?

**Mrs. Driedger:** Sure.

**Mr. Rondeau:** Well, I agree with you, and if there's apology, I can give you an apology if something was inappropriate.

The other thing is I truly believe that as a nurse, you'd make a heck of a lot more money as a nurse than you would as an MLA with less stress and frustration—sorry.

So I do believe on both sides of the House—have a role and responsibility, and I do appreciate the critic's role because it's a tough one. And I'll tell you, truthfully, if we could do anything that would clean up the question period to make it look a little bit more professional, even part of it, I think that would serve us all well because I think sometimes we go over the top. So it'd be nice to see.

And I, again, apologize to anything that was inadvertent or inappropriate, because I do have respect for you in your critic role and I do have respect to all my critics that I've had.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, thank you. In 1999, during the election, the NDP made a commitment on teen pregnancy and, at the time—according to the release put out by the NDP at the time—it says Manitoba has the fourth highest teen pregnancy rate in Canada. Our plan will provide intensive family life programs, preventative education programs in the schools and outreach for teens and teenage mothers through family planning clinics. The impact on that budget was going to be about \$125,000.

Can the minister tell us what focus his department has on addressing teen pregnancy in Manitoba?

**Mr. Rondeau:** That went to Children and Youth, that part of the budget, and so we don't have direct control or can respond to that one.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Is—can the minister indicate whether this is something that's being talked about at the—seeing as he's on the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, is that something that has been addressed there?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I haven't looked at the agenda, but it's not something that's on the agenda as far as I know. But different ministers, different organizations can bring things to the agenda.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, seeing as the minister was the minister in this area up until just this past election, while he was the minister was there any effort over the past number of years by his department to address the issue of teen pregnancy?

**Mr. Rondeau:** It's not in our Estimates, but I think that through Health or through other—through Children and Youth Opportunities there may be movement on this issue. But I don't have it in my Estimates this year.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I thought when I was looking at the mandate of the department—and maybe the minister will have to correct me—is this not part of Healthy Living to deal with this issue of teen pregnancy, or is that something that belongs in another portfolio?

**Mr. Rondeau:** There is two pieces to that answer. As far as the sexuality issues, HIV prevention, et cetera, we own some of that. However, for the core focus on youth for these—this area, it went to the new Ministry of Children and Youth. So they have a mandate to do a youth programming across the spectrum, and so that's why it went to there. But we have the sexuality part, so we do have one person working in that area.

**Mrs. Driedger:** In 2010-11, was teenage pregnancies addressed at all by Healthy Living?

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Rondeau:** There's been work going on it—with it for a number of years through the Healthy Children. It's one of the programs that we work in multi-departments, multi-ministries so that we can try to get a handle on the issue and move it in the appropriate direction.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, it's not moving in the right direction, because in fact it's gone up since 1999, when the NDP made it a significant election promise.

And we had the fourth worst teen pregnancy rate in Canada, and that's why Gary Doer at the time said we were going to take this on. And then in the ensuing years, up until probably just last fall, I had always thought—and I thought it was an active part of healthy living, children, youth and seniors, or whatever the name of the department was. And in that time—I know in '08-09, it's hit 2,000. Like, we have—in that year had 2,000 teenagers that have had babies.

We know what happens, and I'm sure the minister, especially in his department, would be well aware of what teen pregnancies, you know, what it leads to in terms of opportunities or no opportunities for those children.

So I am wondering, just in terms of some of the minister's answers right now, is this something that's just no longer on the radar? Has it fallen off the radar? Is it not a priority? Because we're not seeing any improvements in this.

In fact, since 1999, the numbers, year after year, have basically gone up. And I don't have the latest numbers, but certainly for 2008-09 when it hit the 2,000 mark, I mean, that's pretty startling. And I don't know in terms of whether that makes us still the fourth worst in Canada or where it sits anymore, but it certainly does not speak well to the future of some of these kids.

So can the minister give any indication in terms of what his department did with it up until the fall of 2011?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Right now, what we've tried to do is bring the discussion out into public. Children and Youth Opportunities is dealing with the file now because they have that, they have the Healthy Baby file, they have the healthy—the home visitors file. They have all those files that actually are working in that area, so I would refer the member there.

Prior to this, we've tried to deal with it in a multidisciplinary approach with all ministries. And that means that we try to bring it up and discuss the issue openly and try to come to a common solution. But the solution is in Education. The solution is in Health. The solution is in Healthy Living. It's in Youth. It's everywhere.

And so it's something that we have to—we, as the royal we, have to continue to push and continue to make sure that people have the information necessary and the resources necessary to make appropriate decisions.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can I ask the minister about the eating disorders program. We're looking at mental health, and can the minister give any indication what is being done to address the waiting list of 40 people for the Provincial Eating Disorder Prevention and Recovery Program? I understand that as of April 20th, 2012, the waiting list was 40. And I also understand that it's very difficult to get into the program.

Can the minister indicate what his department is doing to address this?

**Mr. Rondeau:** There's two parts of the program. There's the outpatient services, which are hospital-based, which is a program from—for ages 12 to 17, and basically that—and their families get to work with it. It's a six-bed unit, but that's within Health.

What we do, is we actually know that it—eating disorders can have a really tragic impact on person's health, their lives, their families. It's very tough. Prevention, early intervention's important. So we actually have been working with schools on the healthy living programs in schools that we do throughout the province, on appropriate eating and appropriate weights and exercise and all this. So we've been trying to push that.

We also work with other groups on eating—appropriate eating. So we don't say, obesity, we'll work with them on appropriate eating, appropriate eating habits. I can tell the member that the Provincial Eating Disorder Prevention and Recovery Program had a budget in 2010-11 of \$384,786, and '11-12 it was \$434,762, and the Canadian Mental Health Association Eating Disorders Self-Help Program for '11-12 was \$57,000, and that's out of this department.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate whether or not this eating disorder outreach worker component—or is there one? That could be a creation of a person that could go and visit northern and rural communities. Is there a eating disorder outreach worker, or are all of these—the programs he's talking about, is that just largely the in-house, in-hospital program?

**Mr. Rondeau:** There's a few parts of this whole strategy. There's the Canadian Mental Health Association Eating Disorders Self-Help Program—that's a community group organization. There's information and resources relating to eating disorders through the mental health education and resource centre of Manitoba and the Manitoba Health website.

There's the Teen Talk program, both Winnipeg and north, which is youth, health education program, including a workshop on body image, self-esteem and 'provective'-protective factors against developing eating disorders. So those are three organizations that we work with.

There's the provincial network on disordered eating and eating disorders. And then there's also a multi-disciplinary team consisting of mental health clinicians, a dietitian, and medical supports provides individual mental health and nutritional counselling, group interventions and medical services, and a community workshop and family support.

So there's that, and then there's the program at HSC. And so it's more than just one thing; it-it's broad, and we've tried to reach out to other areas of the province. Availability-although the one program that's in-patient is in Winnipeg, we've tried to reach out and a lot of that's been on the prevention side. So getting kids to talk about healthy weights and accepting themselves and self-esteem and proper food. And one of the things that I was really pleased with is we did a program called Healthy Buddies, which had some-correct-this is off memory-I think, grade 6, 7 and 8 kids working with some grade 1, 2 and 3 kids, and what they were doing is exercise and food and diets and all this.

And it was really neat, because what happened was what-the grade 7 and 8s, their families improved food and exercise, and it also improved the grade 1, 2 and 3 families, not just the kids, food and exercise. So what we thought was the kids would get improved, improved both sets of families as well as the kids.

So it's a lot of different, weird things that make a difference on food and self-image, and the Healthy Buddies program worked unbelievably successfully and we're hoping to expand it.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So the Provincial Eating Disorder Prevention and Recovery Program, which has a waiting list of 40, is that the-in Health-and that's the clinical program, okay, thanks.

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Rondeau:** It's-that program is in Health, because it's an in-patient program. All the outpatient programs and prevention programs we own; Health owns that one.

**Mrs. Driedger:** With Canada's first mental health strategy that just came out, can the minister tell us

where he thinks that is going to end up, whether there's going to be buy in from the provinces? Is there money on the table to move that forward? What is going to happen with it?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I'll start with the fact that we held the summit, and I had invited other Health ministers and other practitioners, other areas here, and there was hundreds of people here and it was hugely successful.

Number 2, I met with the people and the proponents and the writers of the federal national mental health strategy. We encouraged them to borrow liberally from our-not to use the term, figurative-we encouraged them to borrow liberally from our strategy, which they did. So I know that we have talked about prevention and non-stigma and moving the whole thing forward and actually engaging other groups and organizations and all that. So, we've been doing that. I believe it was something started under the previous government, but we won't get into that one.

But I think it's something that we need to move. We need to actually collectively not label people. We need to work with them.

So, we're going to continue to move it forward. I think what we want to do is make sure that the-our plan is consistent with the Mental Health Commission of Canada. I think we want to work together with them, and I read their study and actually I wasn't paying much attention to it-read their strategies and I thought I had read it before, and it was very similar to what our strategy is. And-so I like it and I think it's really good, and I would hope that it continues for the next number of years, because I think it's something that we can work together and move forward on.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So what is actually happening, now that it's out there. You know, it's a-I've looked at it-it's a lengthy document. Where is it at now?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I understand that there's a federal-provincial rollout of the strategy and what we're going to work on. I believe that we're in discussions, they say but, basically, what we got is we got the strategy about two months ago.

We had-I had met with the national commission on the-at the Mental Health Summit, which was a couple of months ago or three months ago, and I think what we're now doing is talking about collective action and seeing where we're going.

I think this is really tough because it's not something that the federal government can do. It's not something the provincial government can do. It's not—it's something that everyone has to do, and if you look at it, it's got very big blue sky that we need to move towards. And I think it would be better if we did that.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Is there any federal money on the table?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Not that we found. But, if there is, and you find it, let us know.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Are most of the ideas that come out of that something that requires money?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I don't think that a lot of—not all of it requires money. The antistigmatization, that's not requiring a lot of money. The open discussion doesn't require money. Information, like we talked about bedbug information and all this and talked about—that doesn't require tons of money.

So a lot of it when you start pushing it into prevention, you can really save a ton of money in the system but, more importantly, you can take proactive action.

So, if someone's suffering from depression or schizophrenia or whatever, if it's early diagnosis, arrange the supports, lots of information out there, people know where to go and get the help, then it saves a lot of frustration and stress on the treatment side, but, more importantly, it saves frustration and stress on the family and individual side.

So let's get it treated early. So this is no different than the bedbug strategy. We want to get it done, done early, done well and early diagnosis and then you won't have as big a problem, and so no difference than that—early intervention, prevention.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister give an indication as they're looking at a—the possible rollout of all of that, whether or not community mental health groups will be involved in some of that, or are they already quite actively involved in moving forward the mental health agenda in Manitoba?

**Mr. Rondeau:** They've been involved in moving forward our agenda. I don't know what the whole role of the feds and us become very—this is new. There was an initiative. We just got the report, so we're looking at it. I think what we have to do is look at where we can move forward in the future.

Now with things like the mental health court—fabulous, absolutely fabulous. I can't talk to you about it because it's not here. But it's fabulous, because if it does the same thing as the other specialty court, that would be good. I think what we want to do is look at the crisis centre, where you have the HSC or—sorry, WRHA crisis centre. That becomes important. You have the two—I don't know what the term is—the mobile response team. Those are fabulous.

But it's not a question of whether you engage some; you've got to engage everyone. So it's businesses, and I've actually been very pleasantly surprised at how receptive businesses have been to the mental health discussion and mental wellness. I actually talked to the chamber—Manitoba Chamber of Commerce on mental health—[interjection] Oh yes, you were there.

I've actually talked to other groups about this. And so it's not an engagement of one group or just the community groups; it's an engagement of everyone. And so I think then we'll win. I still think that the stigmatization has to go away and hopefully we can agree on that one and just deal with it—early.

**Mrs. Driedger:** The minister made reference to the crisis centre. Does he have any sense of when it will open?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I don't actually know when it's going to open because it's Health that's responsible for, again, treatment. So Health has got that. I know it's been a commitment that we're going to do it. I look forward to having it there.

I do know that we've been moving forward on mental health, and we'll continue doing that. You can see that the prevention initiatives have moved drastically, and we hope to continue to do that.

**Mrs. Driedger:** In the last few years, I do feel a sense of difference out there, in terms of—and maybe it's because some of the organizations are also coming forward, and they're having fundraisers, and they're bringing people together to work towards this. And they're uniting more people in a common cause, I think.

So, whether it's mood disorders or schizophrenia or the chamber of commerce as they were doing and looking at mental health in the workplace, I think there are good things happening. And I think that with all of that continuing to increase and more people getting involved in this, I think we are—it feels different, like it feels different out there.

And I sense that we can move the issue of mental health forward in a more positive way. But it will take a lot of continued effort. And I—a lot of, I think there's a lot of really good work going on by the groups that are out there, the not-for-profits that are really just doing exceptional things right now and in helping to move that agenda forward.

One of the discussions that does come up from time to time is whether or not there is going to be any funding for psychological support. Can the minister give any indication whether or not that is anything that is being discussed?

**Mr. Rondeau:** That would probably be more in the treatment realm, where we haven't gone on to it. That would be more a question, respectfully, to a different minister.

As far as the community stuff though, I'm pleased I agree with you. I think that there's actually a different feeling out there—like, and I go to—well, we, I see you more than my spouse, I think sometimes, when we're out in the community. We do a lot of those and there is a different feeling.

There's a feeling that people have a little momentum to push their issues forward and get support and actually are receptive—people are receptive to the different mental health issues, which was not there 10 or 15 years ago. And so I was the first MLA who walked into Friends Housing, which is a home for schizophrenia. It's—it was neat, but, now, it's very, very pleasant. And I think that it's—we need to continue to move that forward, regardless of government, regardless of anything. That's an area that we need to address.

\* (16:20)

**Mrs. Driedger:** I notice in the Estimates book on page 28, it talks about finalize, distribute, and begin implementing the provincial mental health strategic plan. Was that not already implemented, or has it been implemented? Where is it at?

**Mr. Rondeau:** The plan was introduced in June and there's been committee work, et cetera, but one of the things we're trying to do, we were actually trying to figure out when the feds would get their strategy in, because—in case there was issues with it. So what we were trying to do is not finalize our implementation, because we didn't want to have our strategy over here and the feds' strategy over here and not be linked. So now that the federal Mental Health Commission's report—and it's virtually linked directly to us, and there's lots of correlation, then we'll move forward.

We have a number of groups that are working now on the implementation. We're going full steam ahead, and we look forward to moving it forward. It's got a five-year work plan, so it will take a while and it'll—it's got lots of sectors all converging, but I have good feeling about this moving it forward.

**Mrs. Driedger:** When does the minister think it will be at the point of implementing it? That the workgroups will all be done, and?

**Mr. Rondeau:** What it is is a multi-year strategy for implementation. Now, there's some workgroups that are going on—work going on now, but we're also implementing things right now too. So pieces of it are coming through and getting done.

So while we're conducting work with the working groups in certain areas, we're also, at the same time, implementing things that are done. So it's not like we're going to wait till the end to implement new initiatives and programs. So we're trying to do it as we move forward, and now that the federal group is done we can move it forward very, very quickly.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Has the spiritual health-care strategic plan been completed, and is that available?

**Mr. Rondeau:** It's not available, and I haven't been briefed on it, so I don't know on that yet. *[interjection]* Almost apparently.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I know now that mental health is in with Healthy Living, back with addictions, where it probably should have stayed in the first place, as they are co-occurring. Is the minister happy to see that these two are back together, and is it going to be easier to move forward more successfully and more in-depth with this strategy?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I think I'm pleased to have mental health and addictions together, because there are a lot of co-occurring. We worked well with it in either way, but, again, what's happening is—the honourable member knows—if you have addiction issues, often there's mental health issues, often there's other issues. And so, we're just seeing it into one umbrella, and under the one umbrella it makes it simpler on a policy level.

However, I think we still had good programs regardless, and I had faith in the Health Minister. And, one of the things we do do well is co-operating, work together. And the staff are smooth; I've known the director very well since—Fran's been there since 2003-04, that—when I was first appointed minister,

and I had the pleasure of working with her there and I still work with her and she's very good.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us a little bit about this Farm to School Healthy Choice school fundraiser in 66 schools across the province, and this 120,000 pounds of Manitoba vegetables being sold? Can he provide some information on what that is?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I'm going to start this by memory and have the staff catch up on it, okay. What it is is it's a program where we're working with Peak of the Market and nutritionists in Manitoba. We started it a couple of years ago, and we tried to keep it to about 20 schools, and 35 schools participated. This year, we wanted about 50 schools, and about well over double that participated. What they are is two sets of bundles, a \$10 bundle, and a \$20 bundle. The \$10 bundle has five pounds of potatoes, three of carrots, three of onions in a reusable bag. The \$20 bundle has 10 pounds of carrots, five of carrots, five of onions, some parsnips, two pounds of parsnips and a cabbage and a reusable bag. The schools get half the money, so they keep 50 per cent of the money.

We provided support insofar as providing some money for the nutritionist to co-ordinate it and organize the activity, and the other thing we did was we made sure that there was appropriate—there was the same price of stuff throughout the entire province. So whether in Norway House or Lac Brochet, it was the same price. And finally, I think it was neat because we sold about, if memory serves me correctly, about 673,000 pounds of veggies, and they made about \$273,000. Those are numbers off the top of my head. I might be out a couple of thousand.

**Mrs. Driedger:** When the minister indicates that the schools get half of it, does the other half go to pay for the produce through Peak of the Market?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Yes, Peak of the Market actually provides the produce under the cost that they'd normally sell it to wholesale. So the interesting part is is they don't make money on the program. They put money into it, but I have to tell you, it had to be one of the best announcements I ever had. What it was was when we initially announced it, we had all these kids carrying these huge carrots and screaming, yay, selling veggies.

And then I went and I followed up on it and I talked to some buddies of mine in Frontier School Division. They were ordering bundles and teaching

people healthier stews, and then that followed up with a gardening program. So therefore they had those parsnips; they had the carrots, the onions, potatoes, and then, guess what? The next year they started doing garden projects in Wabowden and Norway House, et cetera. And the nutritionists were there to show them how to deal with parsnips and all this.

So this is a fabulous, fabulous example of the corporate branch working with nutritionists, working with schools, working with us to move it forward. And I'll tell you, part of the reason why we're doing this is that Larry came up with an idea on not selling those chocolate covered almonds where the kids made 50 cents on a \$4 sale and it wasn't healthy. Well, now the kids are selling healthy produce and they're making real money. And so I have to compliment Peak of the Market and the nutritionists. They've done a fabulous job, and by the way, I've never before or since seen 300 kids in a gym holding great big carrots over their heads and cheering for selling vegetables. It was very, very good.

**Mrs. Driedger:** There's something ironic about this, if that's the correct word, because when the NDP were in opposition, they lambasted the Tories for allowing fundraising by schools, saying that the Tories should properly fund education, and it was a pretty vicious attack. And it was a very, you know, like, concerted effort over many, many years. So basically, fundamentally, the NDP were opposed to any fundraising in schools, saying, you know, it's up to the government to fund schools.

Now the minister is telling me that he's out there promoting this project and a big fan. It sounds like hypocrisy to me, but I'll give the minister a chance to comment on it.

\*(16:30)

**Mr. Rondeau:** As a former coach in schools, I know that many times school sports teams, activity teams need resources. I don't know the year that schools weren't required to have extra funds to make sure that kids could afford that. I think, if memory serves me correctly, it had more to do with TV commercials and commercials in schools, actually putting TV and having kids required to watch the TV commercials and the TVs. But that's just memory serving me.

I think, in this case, what we're trying to do, is we're trying to promote healthy living. If—again, one of the interesting parts that I like about the project is that in Brochet, they actually used it as part of their

school lunch program and it was cheaper than The North West Company. I also think that it was interesting, because it sort of linked into the whole healthy food and growing the healthy food.

So, I think that there has been fundraising in it. I'd like to let the member know we've also expanded it to other areas and we continue to look forward to how other groups can make use of the healthy food fundraiser. Again, I think there's a difference between watching TV and commercials in a history class versus selling healthy vegetables as a fundraiser for sports or activities, as schools are doing. I believe that schools need appropriate funding, and so I'm pleased that we continue to move funding towards schools. And I think that's appropriate.

But, I do know that some schools do fundraising and this is a—one where they can make decent money selling a healthy product from a Manitoba product.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us who runs the Senior Abuse Support Line? I think he, in his opening comments, indicated that it was 24 hours a day. I would note that it was an initiative between Klinik and Age & Opportunity, and I think I heard Age & Opportunity was shutting down its services or something to that effect. So, I wonder if the minister could just clarify what happens to the Senior Abuse Support Line?

**Mr. Rondeau:** There's two things to it. The phone line is running by Klinik, hasn't changed; it's been run that way for a few years now and it's 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's staffed by professionals. Age & Opportunity still continues to deliver services and some of the services that they do, is they do the elder abuse consulting and support, and they'll continue to do that. And—so that's moved forward. And so both those contracts are in, and there's deliverables that are happening.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So Age & Opportunity is still an entity. It hasn't closed down, or what was in the news recently about what was happening with Age & Opportunity?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I understand Age & Opportunity had a space at 1058 Main Street, and they decided that they would close that area—their location. But, no, they're still an entity. They still run programs, they still have deliverables and they still have contracts with us. And part of the contracts that we have with them is the whole area do—area of elder abuse and the support for that in holding clinics and

consultations in helping us support seniors with elder abuse.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I'd like to ask the minister a couple of questions about this Health e-Plan that his department put forward and people logged on. And I did submit a FIPPA, and I would note that there were a significant number of people that actually did engage in this—4,200 of them. And the one thing that jumps out at me, though, however—and also it was an article in the paper at the time, up for grabs, because what was happening is people would come onto this site, prize ballots were given out, people won prizes and there were a number of prizes, I understand, that I guess the department must have gone out and requested.

Now, one of the things that the department somehow got, were two tickets for each NHL home game that was given out through this Health e-Plan. Can the minister tell us how he got those Jets tickets? Like, that's two home game—two tickets for each NHL home game, which seems pretty significant to me. How did the minister get those tickets?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I understand that in motion had a contract with the Moose for many years to promote activity—motion activity, all that sort of stuff. They were a sponsor so they were doing all sorts of interesting commercials. There was activities, there was all sorts of things going on, and that was to promote in motion. The opportunity existed to get two season tickets for prizes. It was interesting to note that from what the discussion was, was they thought it would be very motivational for people to acquire these tickets as a—if they signed on, developed their plan, returned to the site and so they thought they were very motivational, and apparently they were.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So can the minister indicate how people—you know, they came on to the site obviously and they registered their names on site. Was there any breach of privacy in any of this or because they willingly put their name forward?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I understand that it was two separate parts of it. There was the healthy plan part, which had the demographic and name and the questions, and then totally separate was the prize part of it, and so one didn't link to the other and you had to sign up for the prize thing, and so I didn't. And I think the key was is that it was very motivational to get people in there. The prizes went to people who signed up to the healthy plan but there was no linking of the

health and question information and the other, and it was all done separately.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So how many people won Jets tickets?

**Mr. Rondeau:** There was a total of 90 tickets, so 45 people won and there was two tickets on—as a prize.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Did the Jets just give the tickets to in motion?

**Mr. Rondeau:** No. As in previous years we had bought tickets to the Moose, we had bought tickets to Goldeyes and the Bombers previously, and so we had also continued our sponsors. The cost was \$5,545.80, and, as I referred to it, one-twentieth of a heart attack.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister just clarify what is the \$5,000 for, that he just mentioned?

**Mr. Rondeau:** That was the cost of the tickets.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Which tickets? Because the—pairs of Jets tickets, 90 tickets, costs more than five grand.

**Mr. Rondeau:** It was part of the sponsorship package we had, to promote in motion and then the price of the tickets. So the tickets cost \$5,545.80.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So can he explain what this sponsorship package is all about? What's in it?

**Mr. Rondeau:** It was part of a package that promoted in motion activity at the games, and as part of the entire package they gave us this price for the tickets. The 90 tickets for the \$5,000.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So that's all in motion had to pay? And by saying in motion, are we talking Healthy Living?

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Rondeau:** The in motion brand, it talked about being active, getting the active message out there. Part of the problem was is, if the member can remember ParticipACTION, a very, very positive, very effective, et cetera—it was cancelled.

And so what happened was, back in 2003-2004 when I was first minister, we decided to bring back the activity process, and we had worked with Saskatchewan to bring back activity, physical activity, getting more active, et cetera.

We've promoted that in schools; there's a whole pile of schools that are now in motion; a bunch of—

about 150 workplaces, a whole bunch of other communities, organizations.

And so what we're trying to do is get people active and physically active. In seniors, it might be something like elder aerobics and tai chi classes. In kids, it's just fitness and activity. And in a general sense, we're just trying to promote movement, exercise, and getting that message across, and we've done it quite effectively.

The—it was interesting because what we have done is we've successfully done that in a number of sports venues. It's the demographic we want to have more active, and we're trying to find a way of getting—there's some part of the population is already active but we're trying to focus is on the other demographics that aren't active enough.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So am I to understand that 45 people won pairs of tickets to Jets games? Can the minister explain how they won these tickets? Is—was it a draw?

**Mr. Rondeau:** It was a random draw from those people who signed up from the website and gave their names and wanted the tickets. So, there was the information, the healthy plan, and on the other side of the website was the—you could sign up at the end of it, if I can remember correctly, you can sign up, I want to win.

You could win everything from a T-shirt to pedometer to Jets tickets to et cetera, and what we were trying to reach was the demographic of, if I may, young, male, inactive, and so we found that these things were very motivational for that demographic.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister provide a list of the names of the people that won those tickets?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I don't think I can provide a list of the names because of privacy. I can tell—I don't know if—I'll check with the people who do that. I don't want to break the privacy law. I can tell you that no MLAs won. No, I didn't go, thank you, and I can tell you that there was no political staff whatsoever that went. And I can commit to you that.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us how he got those four Jets tickets himself?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I can tell you how I went to two games and basically I had a friend of mine who gave me his season tickets, which I attended a game and for that game, I donated to my Camino walk where I'm walking to raise money for diabetes, food for

diabetics. So I got one set of tickets from a friend, and I made a donation to Harvest right after that.

And then I also got—I went to a game for Labatt's. We talked about FASD and prevention initiatives, actually what they were doing in Ontario which was talked about, lack of binge drinking, and really getting something out, and making sure there was no drunk driving.

I actually googled Labatt's and found out what they were doing around the world for best practice so I met with the executives. Tried to put the arm on them to make sure that they were bringing those programs here to Manitoba as far as prevention, and I have that on my declaration. And I actually made a donation to MADD Canada for that ticket and I did that two days after the event.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So is the minister saying he only got two tickets? There was—certainly in the media it was covered that the minister got four tickets and some from a seniors group, and there was also mention of Manitoba lotteries commission or liquor commission.

**Mr. Rondeau:** If you look at the media, there was—MLC provided my office with some tickets. I did not use those tickets. What I used is, I used the tickets for the—from my friend who owns a number of seniors organizations, which we do not fund, nor do we get money to. These are very nice seniors organizations.

The other one was from Labatt's which I did declare and made a donation right then, and those are the two that I've done. I have not taken tickets from a Crown.

**Mrs. Driedger:** From the liquor commission, then, the four tickets that appeared at your office—did you ask for them? Or did the liquor commission just provide them, and then where did they end up?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I did not ask for them. I can find out exactly where they—I did not ask for them. I believe the former minister asked for them, and—just before he had left—and he was provided them, and he's paid for those.

**Mrs. Driedger:** And out of the tickets that you were given by a friend and by Labatt's, were those only one ticket from each or two from each?

**Mr. Rondeau:** There were two, one for me and my spouse.

**Mrs. Driedger:** So, in total, two from the friend related to the seniors groups, and two from Labatt's, and then the Liquor Control Commission dropped off four tickets to the office because the previous minister in charge of the Liquor Control Commission asked for the tickets.

Am I—did I understand correctly?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I will clarify one more time. The person who gave me tickets has season tickets. He owns a number of seniors homes, and he's just a friend of mine. And he gave me the tickets to go to the game because he wasn't going to go to the game. So I got those tickets which I've paid a donation for.

I can say for Labatt's, I was invited there. We talked about the FASD and prevention and non-drunk driving message, which is on the declaration, and I've made a donation to MADD Canada for those.

The other tickets, I didn't request. Apparently, it was in transition that we—that the tickets came to the office and were distributed to the person who requested them. I don't know the details of that personally.

**Mrs. Driedger:** That was going to be my question, but I think the minister's indicating he doesn't know the details, but I'm—my question would have been, you know, once they came to the office, who actually, then, accepted the tickets and then handled them and gave them to the previous minister?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I don't know. The interesting part is is that this is one of those discussions that happened in transition.

I can tell you that I've never taken a ticket from a Crown or a taxpayer-funded ticket, and basically, I've made the donations prior to this on the two occasions.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, thank you very much. I'm—I appreciate the time with the minister and the staff, and I'm just going to turn it now over to—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Member for River Heights.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** A question to the minister, just in terms of the changeover in the department: Is your Department of Healthy Living, which the minister is responsible for, still very much involved in activities to help keep people healthy and prevent diabetes?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Yes, we are.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Can the minister tell me what the latest accurate numbers are, in terms of the number of people with diabetes in Manitoba?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Health would have that. I do know that we are focusing on trying to change activity and diet, and, actually, one of the things I didn't realize how important it is is that, if—with a small change in the diet, the prognosis, the actual obtaining of diabetes can change drastically. I didn't realize how drastically. So as a population level, what we're focusing on is on food, and heavily on food. And on my communal walk, what we're trying to do is get healthier food into the—to poorer people who—it doesn't help with a prediabetic or a diabetic to get a whole bunch of pasta or Kraft dinner or potatoes or other carbohydrates. So what we're trying to focus is on healthier food.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Gerrard:** Now, does the minister have the, again, the responsibility for keeping people healthy and preventing FASD?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I'm pleased to say that that's a multipronged strategy led by the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet. I know that under my role as Minister of Liquor we've been focusing on what we can do as a royal we, where we are working with the MLC advertising, promotion, and we'll look at that. Is far as the other things, we're working through all ministries on the prevention of FASD, that's Healthy Child, Education, Health, us, everyone, because this is something that we want to continue to push.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I wonder if the minister can tell me what the most recent—for the most recent year the number of children born with FASD or the number of children identified with FASD is.

**Mr. Rondeau:** We actually don't look at that part of it. We fund the diagnosis clinic now and services and treatment services through Health and Children and Youth Secretariat. We do more of the—and the Children and Youth Secretariat and the minister actually co-ordinates Healthy Child which actually deals with the FASD strategy.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Now, in the area of preventing addictions, the minister has a responsibility for the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. Does the minister also have the responsibility for supporting or funding organizations like the St. Norbert behavioural centre?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Yes.

**Mr. Gerrard:** And where in the appropriations is that?

**Mr. Rondeau:** It's under subappropriation, 34-2D under subappropriations, and it's \$8,540,000 for all of the organizations that get funding. That's not just for behavioural found. AFM is broken down separately under a separate category. So \$8,500,000 is for a number of organizations that we give grants to.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Can the minister provide a breakdown and the amounts to each of those organizations?

**Mr. Rondeau:** We'll provide you a list of what the budget is for those grant organizations.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Now, I see that the minister's also responsible for The Residential Tenancies Act.

**Mr. Rondeau:** Oh, yes.

**Mr. Gerrard:** One of the areas that I had raised several years ago, now, was the change in legislation to make it easier for people to have pets in apartments, in part because this would allow people to be healthier. And so I would imagine it would be an area that the minister would be very interested in. And it's my understanding that in the previous minister responsible for The Residential Tenancies Act, that there was some initiative under way to try and look at what changes could be made in that direction, that is, to make it easier for people to have pets in apartments.

Can the minister provide me an update on what's happened and what is happening now?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Although I don't have that part of my staff here, I will tell you some of the things we're doing. One of the things we did was we did pet deposits, where we allowed people to—landlords to collect an additional amount of money as a pet deposit. Number 2, what we—we've just changed the legislation to ensure that that money can be collected, et cetera. Number 2, what we've been doing is having discussions with the professional land—I don't know—there's an organization of landlords. We talked to them about issues and making sure that we move forward their issues and people's issues, and we've had discussions about that.

And we also—looking at what's gone on in Ontario and seeing the issues and concerns on both the parties to see how we can implement what they've done. In some cases it's worked well, other cases it's more difficult. We will continue with this because it is—pets do make you healthy. I have a Jack

Russell; I know that. If I don't keep her busy—a busy Jack Russell is a good Jack Russell. But you want to—we want to work with all parties. I think we can create a win-win, and I will be following up on the previous minister's work.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Okay. One of the areas of FASD activity or FASD prevention was in keeping track of to what extent there were mothers who were using alcohol during pregnancy. Is that under the minister's mandate or not?

**Mr. Rondeau:** No. A lot of the programs went to Children and Youth Opportunities and Healthy Child. Some are also with Health. We didn't assume that responsibility.

**Mr. Gerrard:** How much is the department funding, if at all, or only through the Liquor Control Commission, the preventive effects on—for FASD? Or advertising or communications, or?

**Mr. Rondeau:** MLC has a budget and money that they spend on information, on bags, on advertising, et cetera. This department doesn't have it. It actually all got transferred to the new minister, Minister Chief, at Children and Youth Opportunities.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Okay. Is the—now, is the minister looking at issues related to obesity?

**Mr. Rondeau:** We're looking at healthy eating and weights; we're also looking at activity. I was mentioning one of the programs I'm really pleased with. It's called Healthy Buddies, which is some older kids, grades 6, 7, 8, if memory can serve me correctly, works with grade 1, 2, and 3s to—on food and activity. And it's had unbelievable results for very little cost, and it's been very good. And I will try to get an update for both of you to show you this, because it's amazing. It's an amazing program.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Can the minister—he says unbelievable results. Can the minister give us some quantification of what the results were?

**Mr. Rondeau:** What we found out was the young child would work with an older child. Both the older child and their family improved nutrition. The younger child and their family improved nutrition. And activity went up in all cases; virtually all cases, it was amazing. And what it was was I think they tried to show how active they could be. So physical activity improved; the diet improved. And we thought the kids' diet would improve, and it actually became the kids' diet and the families' diet for both

the buddy and—the mentor and the mentee, I don't know.

**Mr. Gerrard:** How many people were involved or how many families or how many buddies or—  
*[interjection]*

**Mr. Rondeau:** It was 20 schools. I don't have the exact numbers here, but it was 20 schools so it was a good sample, and it was amazing—the response. What we found—what I was surprised at is the increase in physical activity. But, basically, the older kids work with the younger kids to get them active. And it worked.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Was there a comparison school looked at, or schools which—without the intervention?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Yes.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Right, and what happened in the comparison schools?

**Mr. Rondeau:** We're finding that screen time is taking over, and it's really scary the amount—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order. The time being 5 p.m., committee rise.

#### ADVANCED EDUCATION AND LITERACY

\* (14:40)

**Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy.

As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner, and the floor is now wide open for questions.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** I'd just like to start off to thank the Advanced Education and Literacy's staff for emailing me a copy of the MOU for my enjoyable reading over the weekend.

And I'm just wondering, since we're on topics of questions or things that carried over from last week, I'm wondering if the honourable minister possibly had an answer to my question on the—whether the thousand-plus students who are affected by Equifax have been contacted yet.

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy):** As we were speaking about last week, yes, it was an unfortunate error that did impact students in means of—in terms of some erroneous

information was sent forward. We are very thankful that one student did come forward and let us know about the situation, and I'm also very happy to know that Student Aid immediately acted upon that information, keeping contact, of course, with that student, also contacting the third-party institutions such as the banks.

During the short time that the error had occurred, as soon as Student Aid found out, of course, they went into it—into action, stayed in contact with the students who had originally brought the error forward, but, Mr. Chair, the students, the individuals who were affected were not each individually contacted. Student Aid did stay in contact with those who brought the issue forward.

Definitely, a most unfortunate event. Certainly, something we don't want to see happen. During the 14-day period that the error was understand—was on the record, the impact would have been for those who may have been applying for a loan during that 14 days, but with quite a fast reaction upon hearing about it, Student Aid was able to work with Equifax and make sure that the error was not only corrected but that there is no file, that the error has been, of course, completely erased from the files of those individuals who were affected.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Madam Minister, for that answer.

Back to a question in regards to transfer of credits: Are—is—does the minister plan to legislate the credit transfer plan?

**Ms. Selby:** As we've been talking about, as we began our conversation when we last met, this government, of course, supports a more transparent and easily accessible process for students to transfer credits between institutions and programs.

June 24th of last year, we did sign that MOU that the member is referring to. It was signed by the presidents of all the seven publicly funded institutions. Part of that signing involved putting a task group together. The task group has met several times since that MOU was signed and did present a final report this past winter, outlining the opportunities and the key elements for student mobility, along with recommendations of what needs to be done next to keep moving forward.

At this time, I have to say that I am very optimistic about the commitment seen by the institutions, the presidents, the various people on the task force. I think that the institutions have continued

to move forward, both in recognizing and formalizing I believe it's 30- or 40-odd agreements that were in place, but are now more formalized. So I feel quite confident that the memorandum of understanding is actually quite robust, quite strong, has the commitment of everyone on board. I've met with all the institutions. I've met with the presidents. Am feeling quite excited by the information that we've discussed in those meetings. As I said, they've been formalizing the agreements and they do continue to work on agreements in additional areas, as well as those ones addressed specifically in the MOU, and we know that this will benefit students.

So I have to say at this time, they introduced—we introduced legislation, this session, to freeze tuition to the rate of inflation, to make sure that universities continue to get their block funding, to be able to track better ancillary or other fees for students, and to make sure that there's strong criteria in place before professional fees—professional program fees could be looked at being raised. But the MOU has certainly been met with the kind of enthusiasm and support that, I think, we see a strong enough support for it, that I'm confident that the MOU is sufficient right now to keep our articulation credit transfer system moving forward.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Just taking a look at the University of Manitoba, their faculty amalgamation, and just wondering if the minister is in full support to reduce the faculties at the U of M by seven.

**Ms. Selby:** The organization of universities, and such matters as the member has raised, is entirely out of the jurisdiction of the minister and the department, due to legislation. It is within the university's authority to make these decisions. But, having said that, I will say that we're always supportive of any move that the universities have to modernize their facilities and to streamline the facilities, and to make sure that the entire learning process is not only a smoother and easier system for students to access but, of course, is responsive to today's needs. And, so, that being said, although it is entirely in their jurisdiction, from a legal standpoint we are supporting the modernization and moving forward of our universities.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Madam Minister.

Now, just going on the fact that quite a few of the minister's staff is—quite the background in post-secondary education and advanced education, some of the support or some of the questions that might have come on from the University of Manitoba, have

you been asked for any particular support or any advice? And what has that been?

**Ms. Selby:** As I mentioned earlier, this is with-entirely within the mandate of the university and not something that the department or the minister has a legal authority over. That being said, I should clarify that these changes haven't been implemented yet. The-is, right now, just in an internal consulting process and it expected to have a proposal brought forward within the university by 2012. Of course, because I meet regularly with the presidents of our universities and colleges as well as our student unions, Dr. Barnard did give me a courtesy call to let me know that this is something that they were looking at, that they thought that they could find efficiencies and better serve their student clientele, and I am supportive of them modernizing the university but my understanding is that it is still in the internal consultation process right now.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Madam Minister, for that answer.

Talking about Brandon University, 147 students dropped out as a result of the strike, approximately 5 per cent of the population; 28 students had their nonrepayable assistance reduced due to course load changes. Can the minister please comment on the fact that a lot of these nonrepayable assistance funds to these students have been compromised.

**Ms. Selby:** Certainly, there's no question that the strike was a difficult time for students. It was a difficult time for their families, for the community. I know that the community of Brandon, of course, is quite focused on the fact that they are an education town and rely on the presence of students as well, so a difficult time for faculty, for administration and especially for the students; always hard particularly those who are away for the first time, already a little bit nervous about it, but then to have to deal with the added stress and not knowing whether those sacrifices that they're making are going to work out for them. It was definitely a difficult time.

I am pleased, though, that-first of all, that-of course, that students were able to get back into class and to finish the semester on time. I know that the university worked with the faculty and the students to make sure that students would wrap up that final semester as planned, because, of course, students have plans in the summer, whether that be internships or jobs.

Also pleased that both Manitoba Student Aid and the university of Brandon did make allowances to accommodate the students who were affected by the strike. No students receiving student aid should have been impacted by the strike. In instances where the students reduced their course load or withdrew from classes because of the strike, Manitoba Student Aid took measure to make sure that penalties were not imposed, but, of course, when a student withdraws from university or college, they are no longer eligible for student aid funding if they're not going to school any longer.

I know that the voluntary withdrawal date for the first term was extended into January-January 6th, to be precise, to allow students a full refund knowing that some of them may have decided that that was their best option. If they decided they wanted to discontinue their studies, the university did ensure at that time that they got a full refund. But, of course, if there are students who feel that maybe they've fallen through the cracks or that they don't feel that they were treated fairly, I would always urge them to contact either my office or student aid. I know student aid has worked really hard to make sure that students didn't fall through the crack and that they were able to support them where possible and as necessary to continue their studies. But, as I said, when a student does withdraw from school entirely, then they're no longer eligible for student aid funding, but we did see that Brandon University extended that voluntary withdrawal date so that more students could take the time they needed to decide if this was going to be the ongoing, right choice for them.

\* (14:50)

What I am happy to see that although, unfortunately, some students did feel that this wasn't where they were going to continue their studies, most of the students did return to Brandon University, and I'm confident that from what I hear in speaking with both the student union and with the president of Brandon University, that people are healing the relationships and working right now to find a better work-life atmosphere so that we don't have to face this sort of situation again in the future.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Since you have been in contact with the president of the university, and in the light of 147 students dropping out last year, enrolment for future years to come, I'm thinking, are-is going to be affected, but I know that you don't have a crystal ball, but it is this time of year when we can start

gauging on how enrolment or applications are going for Brandon University. So if the minister could just let us know how that's going.

**Ms. Selby:** Well, I don't have a crystal ball, but I think that perhaps the member may because I just had this conversation, actually, just this past week with the president of Brandon University, because I'm curious as well what this will mean to their enrolment and how we can support the university in that process.

Dr. Poff told me that it's a bit too soon to speculate right now, that it's—it—although students are starting to make some plans, that it's not at a time right now that the university can make that decision of where they're at and—but I've of course asked her to remain in close contact and make sure she lets us know where it's at.

One thing they're doing, though, is really working to make sure that the atmosphere and the working conditions and the relationships between administration and faculty are definitely working on making sure that that is healed. I know Brandon U has put together a group of both faculty and administration working on having a more open terms of communication and making sure that they have a better working situation so that we don't face this. I know that they've also been reaching out to the community to remind people of the great work that folks do at Brandon University. They've had some wonderful opportunities for people to come on campus and just sort of look around and get to see what it's like to be at a university.

So I certainly will be following quite closely what enrolment is. Most of the students did decide to return to Brandon University, and I hope that we see that continue, but Dr. Poff did just tell me, as of last week, that it's a bit too soon to speculate on what enrolment will look like this fall.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Today is May 22nd. Generally, there are quite a few applications that have been put in because there is a significant amount of entry-level interviews and those type of processes that need to be done. I just wanted to know how that has compared this year to years in the past.

**Ms. Selby:** Of course, and we eagerly await those numbers as much as the member does. We're all hoping to see that Brandon University, from what I can see, is working hard to get back on their feet and heal some of those relationships, and we hope that

that moves forward in a positive manner and is reflected in their enrolment this year.

The early application process would have just closed at the end of April, and so we wouldn't expect to see the—even the early application information until probably July or August. It's not something that we have this early in the game. At this point, our understanding is that Brandon University hasn't even yet published the calendar or the fee schedule.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So, generally, early application deadlines are a bit earlier than the end of April. So the late printing of the calendars and the fee schedules, is that due to the major effect of the strike?

**Ms. Selby:** As I said earlier, the university worked hard to ensure that their academic year would end on time, as it did, knowing that students had other commitments. We're actually on schedule for everything else in place at Brandon University. The end of the 'academic' year happens at the end of April. We see that at the end of May is when the board usually meets in order to discuss things such as a fee schedule and the calendar. So they're scheduled to do that end of this week, and at that point all those other processes will start to move into place.

But we're actually completely on schedule for Brandon University; everything happening at the same time as it always would at this time of year. And that's because—thanks to the flexibility of administration, faculty, and, of course, more than anyone the students, who did have to have a slight compression to this semester, who did miss out on their reading week, which, although, you know, sounds a bit like luxury, it also is a time for students to normally, actually, get some studying done and to regain their energy and get ready for that second semester, so they had—they didn't have that this spring so that they would end on time. But everything else is moving according to the normal schedules at Brandon University.

**Mr. Ewasko:** It's nice to hear that Brandon University is progressing along the same timelines as they usually would. So my question then is: What steps is the minister taking to assure the students that they're not going to be suffering these effects of a strike again?

**Ms. Selby:** As I spoke of a little earlier, there is a working group that's been put together with faculty, administration working to look at—and, I guess, the most important thing is acknowledging that there

have been—there has been a difficult relationship between the two. The president informed me last week that she is meeting quite regularly with the new president of the faculty union, and is feeling confident that they are working to have a better relationship, and to work proactively, you know, years in advance of the next contract, so that we won't see the same situation.

Of course, Advanced Education and Literacy's role is to support students in making sure that the university has the support it needs in order to provide the education that students deserve. Minister of Labour (Ms. Howard) would probably be someone that the member could speak to more about the labour situation. Advanced Education's role is to—of course, during the strike to make sure that students were not adversely affected in terms of their student loans and bursaries, and also to work with the university afterwards to ensure that—as the university was able to do, make sure that the students got back on track. And then, again, to stay in constant communication to make sure that they are working towards a healthier relationship. And, from all senses that I get, in speaking with the president it seems that they're on track for that. But as much as we monitor the situation, the Minister of Labour is the one that is responsible for labour relationships. We here at Advanced Education are responsible to make sure that our universities are affordable, accessible and of high quality.

\* (15:00)

**Mr. Ewasko:** So that being said, Brandon University has not asked you, the minister, for any type of assistance in regards to the whole strike process within the last few months?

**Ms. Selby:** Well, the member's question's a little vague, but certainly we were there to support, particularly through Manitoba Student Aid was certainly one of the key roles where Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy—department came into play, making sure that students were not unduly affected by it and certainly encouraging and supporting the university to find a way to get students back on track and able to finish their year on time. But we're not directly involved in labour relations, no.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So I'm sure the minister can appreciate the fact that definitely there were the student—that the students were unduly affected by this strike, and—but I guess I will be taking up some questions in regards to some of the bargaining process and that with the

Minister of Labour. But, even that being said, does the minister know of any conversations that has happened in regards to the timelines of that bargaining process? Or is that strictly just totally on the Minister of Labour's portfolio considering, you know, you're the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Just before acknowledging the minister I want to point out that the line of questioning, I mean, it's a little bit of a grey area in terms of global discussion. There's a lot of latitude given so that a critic can ask questions of the department and that's totally fair game. I would, I guess, perhaps, encourage the critic to try, and when you're asking your questions relate them to the Estimates of this year. I mean, what we're talking about is something that happened in the previous fiscal year. If you can, you know, link that event in terms of, you know, that type of event or a impact on the Estimates, that will help conform more with the standard practices of how we run Estimates. But I'll acknowledge the minister and she can deal with the question as she sees fit.

**Ms. Selby:** Well, of course, we certainly stay in, as I said, constant contact with both the administration and with students at the university and, of course, we are going to be tracking enrolment and offering support in that where we can, and through the strike I appreciate the work that Student Aid did to help students through that very difficult time and not penalize them for being out of school or those who decided that they didn't want to maintain that course load for personal reasons. But it would be impossible for me to comment on conversations the Minister of Labour may or may not be having with a third party.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Minister, for that answer.

That being said, ACC and Red River community College generally have wait-lists for entry into nursing and probably the majority of the trade courses. Can the minister provide details about the waiting list for each entry into each college department please and how long the wait-list is?

**Ms. Selby:** We can get back to the member with those specifics. As you can imagine, he's asking for some details.

But I do want to explain that what is one of the benefits of our colleges is that they're responsive to the labour market, both responsive in terms of new demands that come up, but also making sure that we're training those who will find jobs.

We definitely don't want to be in a situation where you're training too many people than the job market is demanding.

That being said, we have been expanding capacity at both Assiniboine College and at Red River College, as well. We've seen records numbers of nurses being trained and, of course, we know that more and more nurses are working in this province, as well.

We know that we have also been committing to more and more trades labour, and although it doesn't fall under this portfolio, apprenticeships, as well.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Okay. I appreciate—thank you, Mr. Chair—I appreciate the minister getting back to me with those figures. So what I'd like to do is focus on a couple, maybe, easier ones for her and how about we tackle just nursing. How is the wait-list for nursing? Timelines? How many students are applying? How many are sitting on the fence waiting to find out?

**Ms. Selby:** I will get back to the member with the specific numbers that he's looking for. But I do want to say that this government has worked hard to increase the number of nurses working and training in Brandon, in Winnipeg, in the North, right across Manitoba, and we'll continue to make this a top priority.

We have more than doubled the number of nursing training seats across Manitoba since 1999, exceeding earlier commitments by more than a hundred more seats. We know that we continue to show commitment to training nurses and doing it through predictable funding, which is a big help, certainly.

We've also responded very quickly to those training needs. It's really important that the colleges manage their enrolment programs to ensure that there's appropriate ratio of supply and demand for careers, all careers, including nursing. You don't want to be training more nurses than demand is looking for.

We know that in 2009, there were 16,624 active, practising nurses, according to registration data that is collected from the college of registered nurses in Manitoba. We know that those numbers represented a net gain of more than 498 more nurses from the year before, and we certainly know that in the time we've come into office, we've trained, I believe, it's two nurses for every nurse that was fired under the Filmon government.

As I said, our colleges are very responsive, and responsive to the labour market in terms of making sure they're training the accurate amount so that people, upon graduation, find work. Nothing more disappointing than going to school, working hard, and finding out there's isn't a job available for you. And the nursing program is managed in such a way that that's not an issue.

\* (15:10)

But, also, as I said, they're responsive in terms of addressing the new market, and we know that it is continually changing. We, certainly, as I said, continue to respond rapidly to nursing, nursing training needs, including making sure that we've got nurses trained with rural background, who may then more likely to stay and work within the rural community of where they live or were trained, and that, of course, as I said, we can bring those specific numbers to the member.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Madam Minister, for part of the answer.

I guess when we get—when you're talking about increasing seats, increasing facilities, it sort of astounds me that we don't know in regards to the number of nurses who have applied and how big the waiting lists are, if we're increasing facility size and seats when we don't really know how many have to go in there and how long the waiting list is, how many years, and all of that—those numbers. So could you explain that, please?

**Ms. Selby:** Let me just correct the record. I did not say that we didn't know those numbers. I said to the member that I didn't have those numbers on me, but, as we've been true to our word for other questions that we didn't have the information right in front, we've responded by bringing it to the member and we'll do exactly that in this case as well.

**Mr. Ewasko:** And so—just so that I'm referencing the Estimates booklet, page 9, No. 2, support for universities and colleges, it just is a little odd that when the minister is correcting the record on the numbers and yet is stating the fact that they are training now two nurses for every one that was supposedly fired by the Filmon government, that for something along this lines as far as health care, that she doesn't have those numbers at her fingertips, and with that being said—yes, you know what? I'd still like an explanation for that.

**Ms. Selby:** Of course, I didn't say we were training two nurses to one. I said that we had hired two

nurses for every nurse that the Filmon government fired. We rely, of course, on Health to give us the numbers of where they see the projection of nurses needed. We know that we expanded—we committed in this last election to expanding the medical workforce by hiring two thousand more nurses, including a thousand to replace the nurses expected to retire and a thousand to grow the workforce. Those are numbers that Manitoba Health works with our colleges and universities to look at to see where we will be needing that expansion.

We know that there were, in 2010, 17,034 active practising nurses according to the College of Registered Nurses in Manitoba and we've committed to expanding training, including a hundred more nursing training seats with a focus on rural training. We're looking at 22 more medical residencies, doubling the nurse practitioner training seats to 18, developing a nursing Ph.D. program to build the faculty who train nurses, and also committed to offering free tuition to nurse practitioners who will work in a rural community. These are just a number of the things that we're doing.

Certainly, since we've been in government, we have seen, since 1999, a net gain of nearly three thousand nurses practising in Manitoba, according to statistics from Manitoba's independent nursing colleges, which is in stark contrast to the 1990s when Manitoba saw a net loss of almost 1,600 nurses. We've worked hard to reverse the trend in the 1990s by investing nursing—expanding nurse training, retaining more nurse graduates and recruiting nurses, also, from out of province.

And I must correct the record, Mr. Chair, I spoke incorrectly earlier: For every nurse that the Conservatives fired in the '90s, we've actually hired three back. I misspoke; I thought it was only two, but it's actually three.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Referencing support for universities and colleges, I would, as well, like to set the record straight in the fact that the nurses that the minister comments on, in regards to the firing from the Filmon government: In fact, those nurses were in—under contracts under hospitals, and that's when the hospitals were switching over into RHAs. It's unfortunate that, myself, as a newly elected MLA, has to bring this up and correct the minister, but that being said, we'll continue. Nine hundred and approximately twenty of them then were rehired under the RHAs, and the other 80 or so had either retired or—retired—yes, retired or gone on to another

profession. And within two weeks after that, there were another 200 that were hired under RHAs, so I thank the minister for giving me the opportunity to correct the record.

And, as she was stating a whole pile of numbers there in regards to seats and that, it still baffles me that she doesn't have the numbers of people who've applied into nursing and who are on waiting lists and how long those waiting lists are going to be.

**Ms. Selby:** And I'm not surprised that the member would like Manitobans to forget that a thousand nurses were fired last time they were in power. I know they've gone so far as to say that no nurses were fired, but in 1999, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that the Conservative government had eliminated 1,100 nursing jobs over the past six years.

In 1998, the Manitoba Nurses' Union reported that already a thousand nurses have been laid off by government. And in 1999, there were 14,092 nurses practising in Manitoba, which is a steep drop from 1992 where they had been 15,665 nurses practising.

As I said, I will bring the numbers of the wait-list to the member, but I would like to give him some other specific numbers that I'm sure he'll be excited to hear, and that is the total nursing enrollment. We see that the total people studying to be nurses right now is 3,149, and I would be happy to break that down into the U of M pre-nursing, the U of M's bachelor of nursing, Brandon University, Red River College, UCN, Brandon University's pre-nursing and psychiatric nursing. Of course, we've also got the université's nursing program serving the francophone community. Red River College, Assiniboine college—Assiniboine college having programs, both the diploma nursing program but also LPN programs in Brandon, Winnipeg and other rotating rural sites. They've also, of course, got the diploma of practical nursing at UCN, post-basic nursing programs at the graduate and masters level and—at the University of Manitoba and Brandon University, as well as LPN and other various nursing programs at Red River College.

Now, if the member would like those specific numbers of how many nurses that were training, I can certainly share that with him, but just to let him know and to reassure him that, thanks to the support we see in Health in giving us an indication of where we'll need nurses and thinking proactively and working together, departments know that, at this point, training 1,149 nurses in the province of Manitoba.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Ewasko:** And I thank the minister for her extensive list of programs that are throughout the province, which we could all pretty much Google on the computer. But that being said, yes, I would love those numbers to be given to me, including wait-lists and not only nurses, then, since we're going with that. I'd like to get into the trades courses, the welding, electrical and the plumbing, as well, at Red River College and Assiniboine Community College. And I'd like to know how those compare to those wait-lists between those institutions as well.

Going back to a press release, *Free Press*, April 10th, 2012, Assiniboine Community College had hoped for 5 per cent in the budget just like the universities receive, but they didn't get this. Does the minister know if this means there will be restricted course offerings at Assiniboine Community College because of this?

**Ms. Selby:** On the day of budget, Mark Frison, who is the president of Assiniboine college, had a ticket to be in the gallery, but kindly decided to give his ticket up to a student who had showed up unexpectedly. And I made the offer for the president to watch the budget in my office, which could have been considered a risky thing for a minister to do, but I was happy that when I joined Mr. Frison after the budget he was smiling. He had with him a chief financial officer, or member of his board was with him, and I'm—forgive me for forgetting the gentleman that was accompanying him. Both were happy with it; both told me that they were pleased with the 4 per cent that they were seeing.

Of course, we have seen funding to Assiniboine college increase by about almost 60 per cent since we came into office. So, certainly, we've seen that folks are pretty happy overall with that. They also have shared that all full-time programs will continue, but, like all of us in uncertain economic times, are looking at if there are more efficient ways for them to operate, and I would encourage them to do so.

There is some 'adjustment' being made to some programming. They are looking at coming into line with other programs across the province and looking at a full recovery cost for distant education.

And, I apologize, it was the chair, Harvey Armstrong, who was in my office during budget day.

But right now, certainly, ACC is looking at enhancing their on-site programming. I was out there not long ago for the shovel ceremony of the new

greenhouse, which we know is just going to further supplement the students who are there for culinary studies as well as, I would suspect, those who are looking at agricultural, sort of, studies, as well.

So, like all of us, universities, colleges and government are looking at ways to be more efficient in the way that we operate, but all full-time program studies will continue as usual. And just from what I gathered in our talks on budget day, certainly, the president and the chair were very positive in reflecting on the 4 per cent in the budget. And I think that it showed that we are continuing to find that our—we have an approach that is balanced and sustainable in making sure that our universities have the funds in place in order to excel and offer the quality education that we expect.

Like I said, almost 60 per cent increase in their budget, which is a big difference from in the '90s when we saw that university budgets were cut, or frozen for five years straight at the same time as tuitions were going up by about 132 per cent.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Madam Minister, for that—for your answer.

It is very interesting, if we actually really did get into the amount of transfer payments that are coming from the federal government, back in the '90s and now present day.

But we'll move away from that and we'll get to funding from COPSE in regards to the three private institutions that receive grants through COPSE: Canadian Mennonite University, and Providence College and 'seminary', and CMU and, also, Steinbach Bible College. If she could comment on the grants from—for those institutions please.

Just to clarify that's—I mentioned four, I think I said three—so four of them.

**Ms. Selby:** I can give the member the numbers of the operating grants for this year for each of the private university colleges: CMU was \$3.993 million; Providence was \$1.242 million; William and Catherine Booth was \$369,000; Steinbach was \$230,000; for a total of \$5.834 million to the private religious colleges.

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Ewasko:** I see that CMU received an increase in funding, same with Booth University College, but Providence and Steinbach did not. Can the minister comment as to why?

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Chair, I just—I wanted to correct the member that Providence, William Catherine Booth and Steinbach have a fixed grant that was fixed in 1998. CMU has a separate agreement that was brought in by former Premier Filmon, that sees that it has the same increase as the public universities and colleges—or sorry, universities—correct myself there.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So, then, since we're bringing up Premier Filmon, then does the minister not possibly think that she should take it upon herself to make some sort of changes in regards to the private institutions as far as funding increases?

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Chair, the member may not be aware that we don't dictate the tuition for private religious colleges. They can set tuition as they want, whereas, of course, our tuition legislation that we have just introduced into the House brings our policy into legislation.

We are freezing tuition to the rate of inflation, at about 2.8 this year. That way we know that our university remains the third most affordable in the country. But that tuition policy does not apply to the private religious colleges.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Mr. Chair, then honourable Minister, if you could comment on the grad rates of those four private institutions.

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Chair, I don't have those specific numbers on me right now for the member. But I can tell him that graduation rates at the private religious universities is comparable to our publicly funded universities.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Minister.

We see support programs are funded at a rate of \$1.765 billion. Can you elaborate a little bit? What are we talking about when we're talking support programs?

**Ms. Selby:** We were hoping that the member could elaborate a little bit more of which page he's on. We're not sure which program he's referring to.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So when we're talking total operating grants for universities, 2012, we have a total of approximately \$408 million, and out of that we have 1.7 that is sort of on a separate line for support programs. And I'll look for the page but—Mr. Chair, we're still live. Okay, I'm going to move on to another question whilst I look up that page.

Assiniboine Community College, does your department support for phase 3 of ACC's redevelopment and will you be committing any financial support to that?

**Ms. Selby:** Of course, I will point out to the member that phase 1 and phase 2 of the project are complete. Phase 3 has not yet been approved, but Budget 2011 announced that funding would be provided to develop the plan for third phase of the construction of ACC's new campus, and that is moving forward.

We, of course, announced that we are looking at planning that plan, but that's the stage that we're at right now.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** The question I have for the minister: What are the projected tuition hikes over the next five years?

**Ms. Selby:** The member is expecting me to have a crystal ball to know what the inflation rate will be over the next five years. As the member knows, we just brought in tuition legislation that will freeze tuition to the rate of inflation. This year that's 2.8. It does provide some predictability for students moving forward, and we know that we won't see those horrible tuition hikes that we saw in the '90s under the previous government where tuition went up 132 per cent.

I can commit that that won't happen under this government, and our legislation freeze in tuition to the rate of inflation will make sure that tuition goes up in a reasonable and somewhat predictable manner.

But right now we certainly know that that rate of inflation is going to be meaning that our tuition will go 2.8 this year.

**Mr. Graydon:** And will the—since the member has—or the minister has indicated that this is going to be tied to the rate of inflation, does she believe that that's going to provide an adequate level of support for the education that Manitobans expect and require?

**Ms. Selby:** I think it's really important that we balance the needs of the students, the needs of the university. Some of those needs are the same. Both want excellence in our universities, and I am proud of the education at our universities and in colleges. Certainly, it's important that we make university affordable and accessible. We want students to obtain post-secondary education because they have

the passion to learn and not to discourage them at the door because of 'exorbitant' tuition fees.

We think that freezing tuition to the rate of inflation will make those tuition increases reasonable. But, at the same time, of course, we've been increasing funding to the universities. Funding has increased by over 90 per cent since 1999. We certainly have seen that college operating grants have increased by almost 143 per cent with the college expansion initiative.

But another thing that we are doing to support our universities is block funding. That was also part of the legislation. It was recently brought in so that universities also have some predictability. Last year we gave them a 5 per cent increase, this year 5 per cent in their operating, and next year 5 per cent as well.

\*(15:40)

Now, this is at a time when governments make choices. The member for Lac du Bonnet talked about choices that his government made when they were in power. Ours is to make sure that to-policies around education are of utmost importance, and, at times of uncertainties, governments decide what matters to them. In our case, education and making sure that we keep it affordable, accessible, but high quality is very important, and we see differences, certainly, across the country. While we're giving a 5 per cent increase to our universities, Alberta and Saskatchewan only gave a 2 per cent increase. Prince Edward Island is actually cutting their funding by 3 per cent. Nova Scotia is expected to cut 10 per cent from their operating budgets to universities over the next three years, as BC is also looking at cutting 2.2 per cent over the next three years.

So I think that it's easy to see that in difficult and 'uncertained' economic times, governments set priorities and make choices, ours being education, and that's why you see our government in stark contrast to what other folks are doing. And as I said, it's certainly important to balance an affordable university with excellence, and I think we've done well by legislating block funding to universities but also keeping tuition fees at reasonable and somewhat predictable for students.

**Mr. Ewasko:** I found the page that I was referring to earlier, and it's more so from the report—from the COPSE report, and basically it's more so asking you for some clarification on what some of these programs are.

On page 41 of the report, it does break it down to support programs, and I'm just wondering—Campus Manitoba has a 1.258–\$1.2 million, and I just want to know sort of what you're talking about when we talk about Campus Manitoba as far as support programs.

**Ms. Selby:** Just to be clear, is the member asking me what Campus Manitoba is?

**Mr. Ewasko:** Yes, and also have we seen that number jump up for this coming year?

**Ms. Selby:** So Campus Manitoba is approximately 10 years old. It's a model that was established to bring post-secondary education to where people live, to rural communities in particular. It was a program that at its—in its launch was very innovative. It allowed students to meet in a classroom in a community centre or a school or available space in a particular community and receive an education from one of our post-secondary institutions.

It definitely worked well. We've had a number of people successfully move through Campus Manitoba, whether to take more than one course or just to upgrade some particular skills. I'm quite proud of the work that has been done at Campus Manitoba, but we are currently reviewing the program. As the member can imagine, in 10 years—is a lifetime for technology. Things have changed. We know that more and more students are studying online either at home or at a library and don't always see the need to have a classroom setting in order to learn, as we become more and more comfortable working with our computers. So we are currently looking at whether Campus Manitoba is the best way to serve rural Manitoba, and if perhaps there's a way that we can look at updating and moving forward with available technology now.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So we saw in 2010 to 2011 a \$25,000 increase. Can the minister mention, what is that budget for this year?

**Ms. Selby:** The 2012-2013 grant for Campus Manitoba is \$1,087,000.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you. So that number, then, had gone down.

Visually impaired, in 2010, we were at \$203,000. We went up to \$387,000; 2012, what are we looking at?

**Ms. Selby:** This number represents the money that is used to translate resource material, textbooks, that sort of thing, into Braille.

We currently have two visually impaired students who are going through a master's program and this money reflects the resources being translated to support these particular students in their studies.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So, in 2012, what is that figure?

**Ms. Selby:** You'll note that there are changes in this particular fund because it's responsive to the students' needs at the time. Depending on the number of visually impaired students who are studying; depending on what they're studying; depending on what level they're studying, is going to reflect how much translation into Braille needs to be done. So, in '11-12 the number was higher because there were two master's students who, I guess, had a particular needs for their translation.

The 2012-2013 budget has been reduced because those two master's students have completed their studies and this is the amount that's needed to support the other visually impaired students currently enrolled in our institutions.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So, just to repeat the question, what's the budget for 2012?

**Ms. Selby:** The budget for supporting visually impaired students in 2012-2013 is \$250,000.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So, from 2010 to 2011, we saw \$184,000 and now we've dropped it by \$137,000 for two students attending their master's program. Is that correct, Minister?

**Ms. Selby:** That is correct. The money is responsive to the students' needs, which would vary from which program they're studying, which would vary from what level they're studying. Some courses require more translation of resource documents and textbooks than others and certainly, students at the master's level would understandably need more support than students at a lower level of learning.

\* (15:50)

**Mr. Ewasko:** I'd just like to say that I think that's fantastic that these students are getting those supports.

I'm just wondering, is there any other impairments that are being covered or students are being helped out with, that are not covered, and why is visually impaired separate from any other impairment, that is, that the students occur throughout their post-secondary studies?

**Ms. Selby:** The member's right; it is fantastic to see students of all abilities being supported and

encouraged to learn. It's certainly something that we're happy to see. I would like to point out that we do supply \$85,000 per institution in a grant to specifically address student need. It's really best for them, of course, to work with that student and their disabilities support system to see what they need. And it would be an ongoing, changing need reflective of the student population.

Certainly, for the visually impaired students, it is an expensive support system, because unlike, perhaps, somebody with a hearing loss, who can be accommodated with a hearing aid, or other disabilities, the need for the translation to Braille is an expensive process, which is why you see that additionally marked out.

There's also support through Student Aid. There is a federal program, a bursary that's—that we administer through Student Aid, for students who have a disability to see extra support as well. But as I said, each institution does receive \$85,000 a year to address their needs in that ongoing year of their particular student population.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, in, I think it was Public Accounts Committee, I had asked some questions of the minister about funding of post-secondary education, in particular, related to—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Excuse me, sorry. If the honourable member could speak a little bit louder and into the mike, there are some of us at this end of the table who would take advantage of hearing aids—me among them.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Sorry, no problem. The University of Winnipeg, as I understand it, there were a number of people in sociology, for example, which—where there were funding cuts as a result of the level of funding. And the minister had dodged the question and said, you should ask it in Estimates. So I'm going to ask it in Estimates. Can the minister provide greater clarity on the situation at the University of Winnipeg and what is happening and why they are short of funds?

**Ms. Selby:** I would like to point out that the member had a misunderstanding when we last discussed this case, this situation. I wanted to just clear up the way that funding works to our institutions. Of course, we are supported—we are committed to supporting those institutions, but it's important for the member to recognize that funding grants to 'institutions' are provided on a per program base. They're not provided per student and there are very significant differences of cost associated with those different

programs, such as, you know, medical, dentistry; nursing versus the arts, of course, can be more expensive to offer.

The University of Winnipeg, since 1999, has seen an increase of their operating grants by 110.5 per cent and \$120 million in capital supports. I think that that's an important thing to point out, and also to point out to the member that institutions make the decisions on how they will spend the money and how they will not spend it.

Universities do come to COPSE with programs that they're looking to be funded. COPSE evaluates whether the program is one that they feel is strong enough and necessary in the province to fund, and should they decide to not go forward with funding the program, the university, having their autonomy, are allowed to offer that program with or without funding.

But, of course, if they go forward with programs that are not been approved for funding, then they need to find ways to live within their means. They make the decisions on how they will spend their money and how they will not spend it, and we know that they're very dedicated to their students. We know that they want to see high-quality programming, as do we, and we know that that will continue as well.

And I understand that the president has made it clear that the university will support existing students to complete their programs and their requirements.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes. The minister's not correct that I wasn't—I was—it was not my misunderstanding, it was the minister's misunderstanding of the question at the time. And the concern was that when you fund on a per program basis, if programs that are existing have a very large increase in the number of students going, I think the University of Winnipeg has had a significant increase in the number of students attending in the last several years, that the way that things are funded at the moment, because it is in terms of programs that you don't necessarily recognize the fact that there may have been a substantial increase in the number of students within a given program.

And so this can put a university in a more difficult position just because it's successful in attracting lots and lots of students.

When the minister looks at the allocation of funding, one of the problems, sometimes, is that the—doesn't take adequately into account a change in the

number of students within a program, and is the minister going to, in moving forward, take into account any, you know, changes in or dramatic changes in the number of students within a program?

**Ms. Selby:** I think that the member is forgetting the numbers that I just put on as well, and that is the fact that we've seen an increased support of the operating grants of the university since we've come into office. We certainly know that that was not the trend in the '90s, but since 1999, we've seen an increase of operating grants to the University of Winnipeg by 110.5 per cent.

We've just introduced legislation that I'm sure the member will be keen to support that will see block funding to universities to allow them to have predictability and to be planning on their futures and where they see a growth in their universities.

We brought in 5 per cent last year, we brought in a 5 per cent increase this year and are on track to bring in a 5 per cent increase next year as well. The member may have missed it when I was comparing that to some of the other provinces that are seeing massive cuts at this time of economic uncertainty where some provinces, many of them—Alberta, Saskatchewan, BC, Prince Edward Island—cutting their funding to universities.

This government sees education as a priority and that is why we have seen those operating grants to the University of Winnipeg go up by over 110 per cent since we came into office.

\*(16:00)

And the member also must remember that as more students attend the university, of course, those students, although, have a very affordable—third-most affordable—tuition in the country, do also pay to be at university. And, as I explained, we don't fund per student because the programs are a very different cost to administrate. There is a big difference in the cost of running a medical or a dental or a nursing program versus running an arts program.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Will the minister consider within programs which are similar, like arts programs, to have any adjustments based on if there are dramatic changes in the number of students enrolled in those programs, or will the funding for programs be completely independent of the number of students in them?

**Ms. Selby:** I would like to assure the member that when COPSE looks at programming and when it

looks at funding to universities and colleges it takes a number of factors into play.

But I should also point out again to the member that, yes, we are very excited that the University of Winnipeg—in fact, all of our post-secondary institutions have seen increasing enrollment. I think that's probably due in part to the fact that we have a strong bursary program in place, that we have affordable, accessible tuition and quality excellence at teaching at our post-secondary institutions. But, while enrollment has gone up about 52 per cent at the University of Winnipeg, the operating grants in that same time have gone up 110 per cent.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I note the minister talks about the increase in funding for bursaries and student aid, but in point of fact, on page 9, it shows that the estimated expenditure this year will go from \$35.5 million down to \$33.5 million, which is a loss of about \$2 million. Will the minister address that loss?

**Ms. Selby:** The number that the member is referring to reflects in the fact the millennium scholarship-bursary fund ended that was a federal bursary and the current—the federal government ended that program and that is reflected in those numbers. The transition fund that supported that millennium fund was no longer needed.

But I do find it interesting that the member would have the gall to talk about funding to universities or funding to bursaries when he sat at the federal Cabinet table when those massive cuts happened at the federal level in terms of funding our universities and colleges across the country.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I think that the minister's comments are rather gratuitous, given the fact that—if you start in the '93 period and go through when there was a Liberal government, there were overall very, very huge increases in the overall transfers to the government of Manitoba, and that many of those were in equalization payments.

So—that—the government of Manitoba had a lot of discretion about how to use those, and if the government didn't always use them wisely, well, then, that's a problem. But, certainly, there was—the minister should not go after a decrease when, in fact, the overall funding during that period was a very substantial increase.

The—on page 47 there is decreases only of about 30,000 in the Canada Millennium Scholarship Fund, but the biggest decrease is in the Transition Bursary from 2.3 million to 700,000, and is that 700,000

going to continue to decrease so that in another year or so it will be completely gone?

**Ms. Selby:** I agree with the member. It's certainly true that governments make choices of where they want to spend their money. Certainly, this government makes a choice of supporting education and making sure that we have an affordable, accessible and high-quality education for everyone in Manitoba. We've done that by increasing post-secondary education by nearly 90 per cent. We're freezing tuition to the rate of inflation. We're committing block funding to students. We have a 60 per cent tuition rebate for students that has put about \$40 million back into the pockets of about 43,000 students—graduates rather, and certainly that is in stark contrast to the choices that were made in the '90s under the previous government.

I agree with the member. Where we are giving block funding of 5 per cent last year, 5 per cent this year, 5 per cent next year, the previous government cut or froze funding for 5 per cent during the '90s to universities. Where we're freezing tuition to the rate of inflation, they increased tuition by—it's incredible—a whopping 132 per cent. So the member's right. I agree with him. Governments make choices and this government made the choice of supporting education, and I also want to point out that the federal government made a choice. When the current federal government came into office, they ended the Millennium program in OTHA in 2008-2009. We did agree to support some of those students in that program, students who were expecting that program to be there throughout the duration of their studies. It will end this year as the students who were involved and enrolled in that particular support program are expected to finish and graduate at the end of this year.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I thank the minister, and I'm going to turn it back to the member for Lac du Bonnet.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Just a quick question and a note, and just ask the minister for clarification. Back on Friday we were talking about the associate deputy minister, Dr. Henry, and his appointment. Can the minister talk again or just reiterate the fact of when Dr. Henry was appointed, because I believe she stated he was appointed in January of 2012?

**Ms. Selby:** I apologize for the delay to the member. We're going to get the exact date that the order-in-council went through. I remember Dr. Henry working along with us in January, but we want to confirm the exact date of when that order of council

went through, and that exact date was December 14th, 2011.

\*(16:10)

**Mr. Ewasko:** Now, just a clarification on that. I believe the deputy at that time was getting ready to leave or making an announcement.

**Ms. Selby:** Yes, that's correct. The deputy minister at the time was moving on, so no new positions were created in this process.

There's one deputy minister serving both Education and Advanced Education and Literacy as well as the associate deputy who serves both departments, as well, and as we discussed on Friday that it's a—it really makes for a lot of synergy between the departments. It only makes sense that the transition for Education be smooth throughout the lifetime of one individual and their learning. So we have found it to be very beneficial to both departments to have such close ties and to the fact that so many of the issues that we look at either relate directly to each other or sometimes have some crossover.

**Mr. Ewasko:** And I know that on Friday we did mention about job descriptions of the associate deputy minister and the minister's SA. And I did make comment on how it is amazing that the two job descriptions seem quite comparable, and we're talking about a \$50,000 difference. So, for that being said, since I don't want to come across as if I was picking on Dr. Henry, I'd like to now ask the minister for the acting deputy minister's qualifications and the things he brings to the position as well.

**Ms. Selby:** Of course, I believe we did discuss this, as well, on Friday. Dr. Henry holds a Ph.D. in the history of higher education from the Australian National University, has been with this government for 12 years. He has held several senior positions, including working directly with Cabinet ministers and with the civil service. As with all our deputy ministers, and associate deputy minister, Dr. Henry was appointed by Cabinet to serve as associate deputy minister with responsibilities to both Advanced Education and Literacy.

Forgive me. I'm repeating information that the member, of course, already got on the associate deputy. I will give him the qualification of our deputy minister now.

Our deputy minister has a remarkable background. He tells me—has shared with me that he

holds four degrees, none of which are in penmanship from what I can read in here. He has a bachelor's of education from—in history at the University of Manitoba; a B.A. honours in economics at the University of Winnipeg; a masters in natural resource management from the University of Manitoba; and a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics. He also has had 10 years of teaching experience at the university, fourth-year level, and has worked in the department for over 25 years. But, we're not sure if we're getting ready to give him a 30-year celebration or not, because he's not sure if it's 28 years exactly or what.

**Mr. Ewasko:** And thank you, Minister, for that answer and—gives a chance to toot the horn of the acting deputy minister.

Now, that being said, our quarter—our fourth quarter expenditures have not been posted quite yet, and I'm just wondering if the minister can chat about any of her outside-of-province trips or functions or events that she has attended.

**Ms. Selby:** Yes, I was asked by CMEC to represent Canada in Suriname at the end of February, and CMEC being, of course, the Council of Ministers of—Canadian Ministers on Education. Was very pleased to be able to represent Canada at that, and finding ways—we were looking at finding ways to improve education and teacher training throughout the Americas. As you can imagine, Canada is looked upon as a leader for that. Because CMEC was paying for the Conference of the Organization of American States, and it just north of Brazil, I decided it would probably be prudent to visit Brasilia and São Paulo, which are the two centres of international student activity in Brazil as established by our federal government.

I'm not sure if the member is aware, but Brazil has just put together—well, they have always had quite a number of their students leaving Brazil in order for international education. They have just announced a new initiative to ship a hundred thousand young people to other countries over the next five years. We certainly know that Brazilian students often choose Canada as one of their destinations to study and we do see some of those students choosing Manitoba. But, unfortunately, their focus has more been on Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver, and I wanted to make sure that with this hundred thousand students set to leave, with many of them looking at Manitoba as being a—where they—or Canada's being where they wanted to study, I wanted

to make sure that Manitoba's interest and opportunities were put squarely on table for consideration.

I had the opportunity to work with the embassy in Brasilia, the consulate in São Paulo. I met with various key stakeholders in departments and was happy to see that the immediate impact was that the draft MOU that the University of Manitoba had with one of the main government agencies, unfortunately, had been neglected and was not being followed up, but, as a result of the visit, we were able to fast track that and get it completed, and we now see that the University of Manitoba has put in a really substantial bid to the government of Brazil to see that the University of Manitoba will be seen as a key place for those students to be coming to Canada.

We know that this is important, not just to the—enrich our universities and our students' exposure to having international students there, but we also know that beyond the financial benefits of international students from Brazil coming into our institutions and helping our economy, we know that this also further develops connections that we have with Brazil in a growing economy, and we'll see dividends paid in future years as a result of these sort of relationships that we build now.

**Mr. Ewasko:** And thank you, Madam Minister, for the answer.

CMEC picked up the entire tab and who—and if they did or didn't, if you could clarify that and also who attended that with you.

**Ms. Selby:** And I am really pleased to speak about some of the important work that I was able to take on on behalf of Canada, which is such an honour, and as well as the province.

CMEC paid for the portions related to Suriname, and the department was responsible for those portions outside that were related to Brazil. I was staffed by Dr. Rory Henry, the associate deputy for the department. The decision was made that we wanted to send a clear signal to Brazilian authorities that this is an important file to both this department and to government.

Also, when I was not in the chair, the official Canada chair in Suriname, my staff did have to assume the delegation leave for the country, and I wanted to make sure that that was a senior departmental official.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Ewasko:** So that's fairly interesting and, you know, the minister made comment about the accolades that our leader made on—in *Hansard* in regards to Dr. Rory Henry, and I'm a little puzzled, again, from the fact that from the job descriptions that the minister stated on Friday and me taking a, you know, sort of a thought into the difference between an associate deputy minister and a—and the minister's special assistant and of—and a price tag of about \$50,000—the associate deputy minister was appointed December 14th, 2011, I believe that's what the minister had said, and to then, for this trip, which was representing Canada, to then take a newly appointed associate deputy minister, who spent many, many years as a staffer for her government, can she explain on the decision-making process for that?

**Ms. Selby:** Certainly. We definitely wanted to send a clear signal to Brazilian authorities that this is an important file to the department and to the government. It's certainly a trip where staff would have to assume the delegation lead on behalf of Canada when I was not able to be in the chair in Suriname. It's certainly the type of trip that it would have been appropriate to bring the deputy minister to, but, unfortunately, he was already committed to chairing a committee in Geneva at the time, and we certainly wanted to make sure that it—there was a senior departmental official in the role.

We know that Dr. Henry has experience in—both in government and a background in higher education, that we felt confident that bringing the associate deputy minister was a clear signal that this government was taking the Brazilian opportunity very seriously, but also to feel confident that should staff have to take over the delegation lead and represent Canada, that we felt that Dr. Henry has the experience and background in order to do that job.

**Mr. Ewasko:** It just—just a quick comment, and, thank you, Minister, for that answer. Just on the possible wage increase and the opportunity to go with you to Brazil seems like quite the opportunity. Was there anybody else besides Dr. Henry that accompanied to 'surin' and Brazil?

**Ms. Selby:** The conference in Suriname was also staffed by some federal representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs. As I was saying, there were three federal people there, as well, to support. There was a person from CMAC and two people from Foreign Affairs in the Suriname. In Brazil, I was staffed just by Dr. Henry because, of

course, we had the opportunity to work with the embassy in Brasilia and the consulate in São Paulo who were able to make sure that we met with the key stakeholders in departments and also had a chance to visit with university and government officials in Brazil.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Because the minister had stated that it was fairly important to have a senior official with her on this trip just in case she needed to leave the chair and have Dr. Henry occupy the chair, what do you mean by that, and how many times did this have to happen?

**Ms. Selby:** I—perhaps the member's not familiar with how this sort of international 'conferench' is set up, but each country is represented at a large table. The country is sitted—seated behind a plaque with their name and a flag representing the country. It's very important to show respect to the process by making sure that someone is always in the chair. So I, for instance, the delegation lead, as I was, being minister, had to step out for personal reasons of any kind, someone does have to fill that chair.

But it is important that the person has the capacity and the experience to add to the conversation, to monitor the conversation, to contribute to the conversation and, given that Dr. Henry has 12 years' experience with this government, has staffed a number of ministers and worked with a number of ministers, including the Premier, I felt quite confident that, should I have to leave the table, as I did on a couple of occasions, quite confident that Dr. Henry could easily represent the views of both the government of Manitoba—but, as a representative CMEC, of course, one is there to speak for all of Canada.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thanks, Madam Minister. The reason why I asked the question was because, no, I was unaware of exactly how that operated, and that's why I asked the question. So did—was family allowed to go on this trip as well, or—I'm just asking.

**Ms. Selby:** My department pays for the people necessary to go to the trip, which would be—the Suriname was paid for by CMEC, and CMEC paid for myself and my staff as well, Dr. Henry. Brazil was paid for by the department, but, of course, the only people that we felt necessary to be on that trip were myself and a senior departmental official.

You know, I should point out to the member, I talked a little bit about the fact that Brazil is shipping a hundred—shipping, it sounds so impersonal—is

sending 100,000 of their young people to other countries to further their education, that Manitoba has been very successful in—University of Manitoba in particular have been very successful in their bid to see more students coming here. And it's hard to estimate the long-term impact of how many other students will come because they know a cousin or a teacher, or one of their parents studied in Manitoba and they'll follow in them, how many business relationships we'll see develop because of somebody's fondness for their time they spent in Manitoba.

But we do know that, while the total cost of the trip was less than \$8,000 for the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy, we know that one Brazilian student brings about \$25,000 in one year to Manitoba. So we know that this has resulted—the fact that we were able to speed up the MOU, that unfortunately had been neglected until the time we got there, to say that we are probably going to see about 18 students in Manitoba heading to Brazil and also a number of Brazilian students coming here.

It's the kind of exchange that enriches both the culture of our university but also opportunities for our students in cultural exchanges and education exchanges. And Manitoba has done a good job of positioning itself to become one of the key areas of choice for Brazilian students when looking to study outside of their country.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Madam Minister. It is interesting that when we were talking about the strike of Brandon University earlier, you stated that in regards to general runnings of the post-secondary institution, you basically weren't involved, and that was more so Brandon University's department. And I know that a lot of the post-secondary institutions have international recruitment officers, so it's interesting that the Minister for Advanced Education and Literacy felt that it was necessary to help out with those recruiting procedures in Brazil. Can you comment?

**Ms. Selby:** And I must say that, whether it's at work or whether just in my personal life, I do as much as I can to promote the universities and colleges and post-secondary system in Manitoba wherever I am.

I thought that this was important since I had been asked to represent Canada at the Organization of American States conference in Suriname. I was quite proud to represent our country. The conference was established to improve the region and to find ways to improve education and teacher training,

helping our neighbours to the south of us, in particular, improve their education system, just as—seize the advantage of all of us.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable member for Morris, on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, on a point of order.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** The whole purpose of this Estimates is for the critic to pose questions and to have the minister answer, and it's quite clear that the minister does not comprehend the questions that are being put to her. We see in front of her a binder with a—clearly, a two-inch binder which she flips the pages and just reads a script over and over and over again. I've sat here for the last 20 minutes and heard the same answer several times. So she's clearly just going on a script and reading something prepared from a book.

\* (16:30)

So there's no clear acknowledgement of the question, no clear understanding or comprehension of the question being asked, and it just appears that the minister is just going by rote here.

I'd like to ask the minister a question, and that would be: Who prepared the speaking note? Which of the staff here prepared the speaking notes for her?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Anyone else on this same point of order? Seeing none, with all due respect, it's not a point of order. It's quite clearly a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Yes, Mr. Chair, I'd like to ask the minister, she has a binder about two inches thick in front of her that she flips through and finds the—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Just—order. Order. Order. Order. It was someone else speaking. Are you raising another point of order, because otherwise I'm going to revert back to the person who was speaking before the initial point of order. So are you raising another point of order?

**Mrs. Taillieu:** No, I was raising a question and you recognized me, I believe.

**Mr. Chairperson:** No, I—only on a point of order would I have to recognize you, in that case. If you

are asking a question, that's going to have to be deferred.

We go back to the minister to complete her answer, starting from the time when she left off. She has 10 minutes to respond to any question that's posed, and there are several minutes left, so.

**Ms. Selby:** I think it was important in that CMAC was paying for the trip to Suriname, Brazil, by coincidence, who's just south of Suriname. I decided to take that opportunity to visit Brazilian São Paulo. I think that any opportunity to promote post-secondary education in Manitoba is a welcome opportunity. We know that both those cities are two centres of international student activity in Brazil, as established by our federal government, and we have seen that it is resulted in that we will be seeing more of the students of Brazilian initiative coming to Manitoba.

And, as I said, international students result in millions of dollars, \$70 million to Manitoba's economy every year. We know that in 2008 Brazil spent about \$538 million to study in Canada. Unfortunately, not all of those students have been looking at Manitoba—have tended to focus on Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver. But we can see that the visit has ensured that more students will be considering Brazil for—rather, Brazilian students will be considering Manitoba for their place of study.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** I'm going to pose a question to the minister, and that is: I see that she has before her, a binder, a—clearly, about two inches thick, of prepared answers, that she repeatedly flips through and answers—reads from a prepared answer, regardless of the question asked. But I would like to ask her, who within her department, within her staff, prepared those notes for her?

**Mr. Chairperson:** I'll refer the question to the minister. She can do with it as she sees fit. But the questioner did not, I believe, as Chair, appropriately link the question to the subject matter at hand, which is the purple binder that all of us should have a copy of, namely, the Estimates for the Department of Advanced Education for 2012-2013.

Honourable Minister, as you see fit.

**Ms. Selby:** I will say to the member that I take my role as minister very seriously, that when a member is asking me a question I think it is impertinent that I give a full and detailed answer and give as much information as possible, and if that means I refer to a note, then, by all means, I will. I think it's important that the member receive the answers to the questions

that he's asked. When possible, I can refer to them and give him those numbers, those answers and, in some cases, as we have discussed, I've asked the member to give me some time to respond and get back some detailed information to him and he has been agreeable to that.

The member will probably note that occasionally I look at the glass in front of me, the handwritten notes in front of my page. I may look to my department to clarify a particular issue and I do refer to the notes because, as I said, I take this job seriously. And when the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) has a very specific question, if I have that number in front of me I want to provide it to him. I think he's had very well formed, very well thought out questions and deserves to hear the answers. If I can get them from the book in front of me, from the number of department staff who are here with me, or to refer that to him and bring it back on another day, I'm quite happy to do that.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** I mean, I can refer to any number of lines within the Estimates book, but just administration in general, because I'm asking the minister to tell us who prepared—which of her staff, in administration prepared the binder that's before her, which is clearly not handwritten. It's clearly typed and clearly is very extensive, and certainly we know that she's reading prepared answers, because they're the same answer over and over and over again.

So I'm just going to ask her again, who in her department prepared the notes for her?

**Mr. Chairperson:** I thank the honourable critic for linking the question to the budget process.

Honourable Minister.

**Ms. Selby:** Well, Mr. Chair, and as I said, and I will say again that I take this role seriously, and that is why I will always refer to notes and/or department staff to ensure that we give the most accurate answer to the member.

Of course, a number of people within the department support the minister and through the Estimates process. You see a number of them in the room right here who have prepared or assisted in preparing many of the briefing notes. One of the roles of a minister is to make sure they were briefed on their department, and that involves people from all the various areas to do that.

If the minister would like, I'm not sure who ordered the binder. I suspect it was probably one of my support staff, perhaps one of the assistant secretaries. It also may have been one of them that did the hole punching. But I would have to get back to the member on the details of who supplied the papers clips and who typed out the various tabs.

But, again, I will emphasize that I think that when the member for Lac du Bonnet takes the time, as I know he did this weekend, to look over some of the papers that we were able to supply to him to answer some of his questions, I know that he's done a detailed reading of the Estimate book. I can tell in the questions that he has brought forward, they have been well thought out and deserve the attention that I hope that he feels both myself and the department are putting into this Estimates program—process, rather.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Madam Minister. So back to my original question on that matter. And if we could do just—rather quickly, I know that there's international student recruitment officers, that they're paid to go throughout international countries and recruit students.

I do understand that you went down there. That's sort of basically my question—why did you feel that it was absolutely necessary for you to go down there? If you can just share that, just quickly.

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Chair, as I mentioned, the reason why I went to South America was because CMEC's request to go there, and while there thought it was a good opportunity to promote Manitoba as a destination, in light of the fact of the 100,000 students that will be leaving the borders of Brazil to find international study.

Manitoba doesn't have a representative in Brazil. I think that we've shown that by going myself and a senior department official, really sent a strong message to Brazil that we were serious, that Manitoba really does want to make sure and to work with Brazil and the Brazilian government and institutions in order to accommodate this number of students coming this way. And we've seen the results have paid off in that Manitoba was seen very favourably.

University of Manitoba was able to use this to attract a number of Brazilian doctoral and master students, beginning as early as this September, who, I'm sure, will be not only getting in a great education

at the University of Manitoba but quite a treat when they live through our first winter, I suspect.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Just to get off the Brazilian question, just for a little bit. The U of W Richardson centre, has the minister had the opportunity to go on a tour of the science centre?

\* (16:40)

**Ms. Selby:** Yes, I have had the pleasure of touring the new Richardson institute for environment. Of course, we know that the Province committed \$25 million in the first phase of the institute and, of course, we've seen that we got the wonderful chance to tour it just a few months ago. It's really—it's quite a beautiful building to tour, but also, of course, we know, an important building. And we'll see quite a few students coming out of that project—or out of that building.

It was one of the programs—one of the buildings that was funded under the KIP program, which is a program that is jointly funded with the province and the federal government, and we saw a number of buildings go up under that program.

In fact, you can't tour any post-secondary system—institute in Manitoba without seeing some kind of new building, most of them quite innovative and really have added to the quilt of our education system.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Has the biology department attracted any new students due to the fact that it's being advertised as the ability to specialize in animal sciences?

**Ms. Selby:** And, as I said, the member's always got detailed questions. We'll have to get back to him with some specifics on that.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Can the minister then comment on the vivarium at the Richardson centre? Do you want me to repeat it? Vivarium.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Honourable member for Lac du Bonnet, to continue.

**Mr. Ewasko:** And also if her department is—has allocated any funds towards it, as well.

**Ms. Selby:** The member, of course, is referring to the state-of-an-art—the state-of-the-arts lab at the Richardson's science building. The Province put \$6 million towards that. It is used to house animals that are used in the various biology classes.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So the minister went, a couple of months ago, on a tour of that facility. Were you pretty impressed?

**Ms. Selby:** I did not tour that particular lab at the time when I did; I still have to do that. But I did tour the rest of it, including some of the technology that they have.

The library is available to specifically for science students, and just in general, some of the classrooms, and it is a very beautiful building. It's got some incredible technology, including the Cisco lab which I was able to tour.

I was there just on a regular meeting. As I've said, I meet quite regularly with the institutions. It was a chance for the president and some of his administration to meet with myself and some of the department, just to discuss, as we do from time to time, things that are going on in the world of post-secondary education.

And at that time, Dr. Axworthy asked if I—I'd like to have a quick tour and, of course, I took him up on that opportunity. But I did not tour the area where the animals are housed for the biology classroom.

**Mr. Ewasko:** I had the pleasure of going on a tour of the centre a few weeks ago, actually on Manitoba Day. And have you heard or seen of any of the problems that they're having with the facility as of late?

**Ms. Selby:** At the time when I was last visiting with Dr. Axworthy at the Richardson science building, and, as I said, took a small tour of it, the animals had not yet been moved into the classroom. We know that the university had told us—and as we address ongoing needs at any of the institutions—that it was looking at a shortage in their operating to cover the Richardson science building. Last year, we added an additional \$1.2 million; we've now added that into their base operating grant ongoing.

But no formal concerns or complaints or issues have been raised with myself or with COPSE, which is normally the direction that universities take if they have a particular concern. Other than the previous, when they brought to our attention the operating concerns, and we addressed it last year as a one-time grant, but have now added that to the base operating funds of the University of Winnipeg, we haven't heard any concerns or issues brought forward.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Okay. That being said, Minister, can you just state on the record how much that building is—or that centre is costing in total?

**Ms. Selby:** The number that I have from my staff at COPSE is the total cost of the building was \$66 million. Of course, some of that was through CIP funding, which is the joint funding between the Province and the federal government, but, also, there was some private donation, is my understanding, with that as well.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Madam Minister. So the Richardson centre, the building itself, who owns that building?

**Ms. Selby:** The University of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Ewasko:** I just find it interesting that when I went on a tour there that for a facility that basically is there for the teaching of students, also, with the different, the various labs, and the very nice-looking restaurant—even though I didn't have a chance to eat there at Elements—[interjection] You did have a chance? Okay, I did not. But I just find it interesting that there's quite a few rooms at the Richardson centre that seem to be—seems to be that they're being rented out to outside agencies or businesses. I'm just wondering if the minister can make a comment, or—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Honourable Minister.

**Ms. Selby:** That sort of decision is entirely within the university's authority and is not something that the department or the minister dictates to the university.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Madam Minister, for that answer. We're talking \$66 million and it just—to me, it looked like—I mean, I'm not a scientist, but to me it looks like there's some deficiencies in the way the building was constructed. And I'm not quite sure if the—not the qualifications, the recommendations from some of the possible people who are in there every day had actually been listened to, but I definitely encourage the minister to go back for a nice little trip and check that out because I'm not sure if the animals are actually in the vivarium yet.

Now, just switching over a little bit to midwifery education, I'd like to know what happened to the northern training program and if the minister can provide the history right from COPSE approving the program up until it folded.

**Ms. Selby:** I also—I would like to point out, though, just to go back for a moment when the member was talking about the Richardson science building. I

think it's important that the building is built with the future in mind, and you certainly wouldn't want to build it so that there's no room for growth. And I think that's an important thing to keep in mind. We know that enrolment has gone up by over 50 per cent in the last 10 years, and it's important for the university, when planning new facilities, to keep in mind that the future will also be looking at growth. We know that some debt in that particular building was to be repaid with revenues and it was something that the university was up front about.

As—switching topics now to the member's second question, definitely, there have been some challenges getting the UCN midwife program up and running. We knew that it was going to be difficult going into it, but sometimes doing the right thing isn't easy and it's important to make sure that we continue to support it. We know that it's important that the midwife program support the communities that it wants to benefit, and we know that people who are trained at home in Manitoba are more likely to stay in Manitoba as well. And we know that also that we do have more midwives practising than we had. We know that there was certainly some frustration with some of the students who enrolled in the northern midwife program. It seems there may have been a breakdown between students and UCN as there was a number of students who left for personal reasons. There was some difficulty in finding the number of clinical hours necessary in order to license a nurse practitioner, but, instead, one of the important things that we did was consolidate the two cohorts into one, making sure that the program would continue.

We are committed to looking at more programs to being offered in the north including having a distance format for midwives that would be based out of Winnipeg and The Pas as well, but we are pleased to see that the southern program is moving well, has a relatively new director and new facilities, and there were certainly some challenges. We do admit that. You know, it's easy to put down the program. What's more difficult is to support it through the challenges which I think that we are doing. We are going to see as many as 16 to 19 midwives training in Manitoba by this fall. Currently, about 12 full-time students in it, and I'm feeling quite encouraged as we see that students from outside the province are now looking to our program as well.

The program has now moved into the U of W in the new annex building. They were welcomed. The

U of W was quite positive in their remarks in bringing in the program and quite happy that we've been able to work with both U of M and U of W in the transition to make this happen.

But certainly the new program has had some bumps along the way, but we continue to work with it and can see that the southern program is doing quite well right now.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Just a quick comment on the program was initially set up to fill a void in the northern part of the province. Now we've moved it down to the southern part of the province. How many midwives were serving as mentors?

**Ms. Selby:** And I can get back to the number—to the member with that specific number. But it has—we have seen a significant number of the practising midwives in the province helping out in the studies of this, as I—and as the member pointed out, that, yes, we certainly want to make sure that the north, both the students and the population, are well served. Unfortunately, for a various number of reasons, in some cases, personal reasons, in some cases, just difficulty finding clinical time, the program in the north was consolidated to the south. But we are committed to still looking at programs in the north and looking at a distant learning and hoping to move forward with that as well, because our goal is, of course, to make sure that women in Manitoba have choice when it comes to having babies and where and who they'd like to give birth with.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So the amount of births that a midwife actually has to observe each year, what is that number and was it happening?

**Ms. Selby:** It's not a magic number that once you've attended a certain number of births, that suddenly you have that expertise. It's measured in the competency of the student rather than the number of births, which can vary from student to student. As you can imagine, one of the challenges of learning to be a midwife is you have to have babies being born with midwives and it's—although we certainly see a—quite a few midwives practising and quite a few people choosing to give birth with a midwife, it's not something that you can schedule in September, of how many you'll have done between September and May. Babies have a way of messing up those kind of schedules when you try to make them.

But, as I said, it's not a number that can be measured in how many births one attends, so much

as the 'compency' they demonstrate during that clinical experience.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So, then, there is no actual number of certain births; there's no minimum, maximum. I'm just thinking to, you know, possibly people coming into this profession and into this training, I would think that they'd want to know exactly the different types of things that they'd have to—as far as hoops or anything else, that they'd have to jump through or to qualifications to finish off on. It's interesting that there isn't a set number.

**Ms. Selby:** I can certainly get to the member a typical range of how many births one attends and, of course, it is a curriculum that is recognized by the University College of the North and, therefore, would have very specific 'compency' levels expected before one would be allowed to practise in Manitoba.

**Mr. Ewasko:** We know that Manitoba has interprovincial training agreements with the veterinary of medicine, with the University of Saskatchewan and others, with western provinces for optometry, with the University of Waterloo. I'd just like to know why the NDP had opted out of the interprovincial training agreement with another university for midwifery, given that the WRHA feels that there's a demand for about 200 midwives in Winnipeg.

**Ms. Selby:** Well, we do know already that Manitoba has more midwives per capita and the highest proportion of births attended by a midwife. Very different from when midwifery was not even a regulated health profession in the 19 and 90s. We also know that people—and this is true not just of midwives, but we find this with nurses, we find this with doctors, as well with many people that—people who are trained at home are more likely to practise and stay in their home community, which is why we want to train them.

It is an intensive program, but it has succeeded in the fact that we have a number of students participating in it right now. We'd have seen some students from out-of-province, now, looking towards our program, and we will continue to support our program and to see it grow and, as well, to see it return to the North, which is important to us as well.

But we do have a—quite a high, as I said, highest proportion of births attended by a midwife in the country. So Manitoba is on the right track in terms of supporting midwife and births through midwives.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

### FAMILY SERVICES AND LABOUR

\* (14:40)

**Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff):** Good afternoon. This section of the Committee of Supply will continue with the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Family Services and Labour.

Would the minister's staff and opposition staff please enter the Chamber.

This department is listed beginning on page 85 of the main Estimates book.

As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner. Floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Well, always a great day when one sits in Labour Estimates. It was my first critic portfolio when I started here at the Manitoba Legislature, and that was in the good old days when we actually had over 300 hours of Estimates and, boy, do we ever yearn for those days.

I believe Becky Barrett and I were in Estimates for six weeks that year. We sat, I know, all of July and a bit of August, and I don't know if the current minister, if she was a staffer at that time for Becky. Oh, those were just—and it was a—it was one of those beautiful stifling hot summers, no screens on the windows, so we got to enjoy all the wildlife that could get through the windows. It was an amazing time, quite a learning experience, and got to appreciate what the Department of Labour does and what, you know, what's all involved to keep the province running.

It was a very interesting—at times very trying—time, but it's great to be back in Estimates and always a great time to spend a bit of time with the Deputy Minister Jeff Parr, who—this is probably the second senior deputy minister whose career I am now going to ruin by praising them. I finished Jeff Parr off the other day; I praised him in Estimates. And I certainly appreciated Deputy Minister Parr and the work that he has done with the Department of Labour. We had many days and evenings and even went to a meeting of the architects' association at the University of Manitoba. And the deputy minister actually even drove us. It was the—I think it was the current Minister of Labour and I, we went and spoke to the students there about issues that they were very concerned about.

So, anyway, always great to be here, and appreciate the professionalism of the department and what the individuals do for our province.

Now, with the Office of the Fire Commissioner under the Department of Labour, as well, and the kinds of changes, and I believe I was critic at that time when we did a lot of those changes and a lot of it very positive—who was responsible, who had to do what in case of an emergency. And there were long meetings and long discussions, but it was well worth it. And, you know, congratulations to the department and the kinds of things that they do. So we certainly appreciate the time and the effort put on, through you, Deputy Minister Parr and onto your staff, and certainly come to appreciate and respect what the professional public service does for this province, so.

There, now that I've thrown another deputy minister under the bus by complimenting him—no, no, no. We—it's all good. I'm sure the minister appreciates—well, she was there for a lot of it, actually. She was staff person. I remember her at briefings and all the rest of it. The briefings were always very articulate and to the point. The questions—the previous minister, Becky Barrett and the current minister always were forthright and always had upfront answers, and we always appreciated that, certainly, in the briefings. I can't say as much for question period, but certainly in the briefings they were really good.

And, you know, if the public would view more than just question period, I think they would see a different side of politics where the business at hand is taken care of here and things get done and we move important legislation through. Not all of it that we necessarily support, but, you know, there is legislation that's put forward, and I'd say, in large part, we actually support the legislation. A lot of it just goes through, so.

And I have a whole series of questions that I wish to ask, but by agreement with the opposition parties, we agreed that the honourable Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), would get an opportunity to ask some questions. So till about quarter after, twenty afterish, if that so pleases the committee I'm going to hand over—unless, of course, the minister would like to make a few reflections on deputy minister Parr and the staff. Then after that we could pass it on to the member for River Heights.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** Well, I share the member for

St. Paul's affection for the deputy minister, and I will not be swayed by his kind words. I'm going to—*[interjection]* Whoa, it's spicy day here in the House. I'm going to keep him anyways. So he's done a very good job, indeed, for this government, and like all public servants, really, for the public of Manitoba, that's really who they serve.

I do—just before we get started, a couple of things. I just want to clarify with the member for St. Paul whether he's going to be, when he resumes questioning, asking about the Family Services part of the department or the Labour part. *[interjection]* Family Services. Okay, so I've got the right people here.

And, also, I just have a couple of things that the critic had asked for last week that I have available now, so I can give them to him to pass on. I don't know if I need three copies. I just have one copy. Do I need three copies to table or can I just give you the one? *[interjection]* You need three, okay. So I'll get more copies made and then we'll table them. All right. And that's it. I'm ready for questions. Can you? Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Let me start with one of the issues that we had asked about last year, and there were a lot of delays in getting answers, and that is: How many children, as of March 31st, 2012, were in the care of the Province of Manitoba?

**Ms. Howard:** I don't have the number for March of 2012. I'm told we would usually get that late summer, early fall, so I can make it available to the member then.

I do have the number, of course, for the year ending March 2011, and in that year there were 9,432 children in care, which represented an increase over the previous year of 3.4 per cent, which is among the lowest increases since 2003.

A number of those children in care include children who were on extensions of care—youth who were on extensions of care. So these are youth who've attained the age of majority, the age of 18, and then they stay in the system, because they're pursuing education or training, or they're pursuing some kind of treatment or healing, and it's felt to be in their best interests to remain in care while they're doing that. This has been, historically, a recommendation of the Children's Advocate to look at doing more of these extensions of care. I think we all share the concern about what is happening to the

kids who age out of the child welfare system. We want to make sure that they can have better outcomes than they do currently. And we think that one of the ways to do that is to keep them with supports while they're able to get some education or training, complete their high school, continue on their healing journey, get treatment for issues that they may be going through. We think that by doing that we can help them as adults have better and more successful lives.

So that's the number for the year ending March 31st, 2011, and we will make the number for March 2012 available to the member when it's available.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, my concern is this: That there is—seems to be an undue delay in being able to provide that number; surely, the agencies, and through the agencies, the department, should have that number very quickly after March 31st.

You know, the—under this government, it was my understanding that children were to be checked up on a pretty regular basis, that the numbers, you know, should not be a problem. Why is it that the, you know, there's been such a delay, last year and again this year, in getting those numbers and making them available?

**Ms. Howard:** I'm informed that it hasn't usually been the case in the department to have the number of children in care released right at the end of the fiscal year. It does take some time to work with the agencies to reconcile the numbers to ensure that we're providing accurate information.

\* (14:50)

The member opposite is correct, we do expect agencies to have regular contact with children in care. That is a standard of the system and something that we have asked agencies to continue to do. And I want to make sure that he gets the most reliable information possible, and so when it is available we will make it available to the member opposite.

**Mr. Gerrard:** There was, of course, a particularly long delay last year. In previous years it was usually available in September, as I recall, but last year I think it was not available until—into December. And there—it seems to me that the—there may have been a particular problem last year, and perhaps the minister can explain that, but, certainly, one would have anticipated that—you know, we're talking the end of March that, you know, within a few weeks, that that number should be available instead of having to wait months and months and months. So, you know, I

think it's disappointing that there's not been, you know, more accurate and more quicker information available.

One of the things that the minister appears to have done is with regard to freedom of information requests, is to have all freedom of information requests to authorities go through the department rather than directly from the authorities. Why is that?

**Ms. Howard:** Well, Mr. Chair, certainly the FIPPA requests do not come directly to me. I don't have anything to do with how those requests are responded to. They come in and will go to a designated co-ordinator within the department who will determine what the best way is to provide that information, to provide the accurate information in as timely a manner as possible. I think, often times, what will happen is that a request will involve several different authorities, and so the FIPPA co-ordinator will help to make sure that those responses come from all the different authorities and they go out to the person who's requesting it. I imagine it's just found to be the most simple and straightforward and timely way for people to get their requests answered.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, I note that the minister has quite an extensive communications budget for the department—for the different areas in the department. I believe, last year, it was a little over \$2.2 million and this year, there appears to be budgeted something over \$2.6 million. That's a—quite a large communications budget for a single department, and I wonder if the minister would provide, you know, an explanation for the size of the communications budget and for the, you know, very significant increase this year.

**Ms. Howard:** Yes, it would help us probably answer the member's question more accurately if there's a specific page number he's referring to in the Estimates book.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, you know, I don't have it right available, but what I can say is that my understanding is that where those numbers come from is to—you have different sections of the department and there are many different—you know, practically each one has a communications budget. And that one adds up all the different sections of the budgets in the departments, that you add up to a substantial communications budget.

And I don't think it's listed in one figure because of the way that the budgets are broken down, but

because you have, you know, individual communications budget, which, you know, vary quite considerably in size, but, in total, add up to a rather large amount. You know, maybe the minister could explain why such a large communications budget is needed.

**Ms. Howard:** Probably the best way for me to provide the member with the most accurate information would be for him to either provide a list of the specific lines that he's looking at, and then I can provide him with information about what's in those lines.

It's difficult—you know, I understand what he's asking about is an aggregate number that has been added up from different lines, but without knowing what those lines are, I can't really tell you what is in those costs.

Generally, some of the things in communications would include things like informational brochures for the Early Learning and Child Care program; could include newspaper advertising that's done to let the public know about updates to regulations, for example, the minimum wage is going up in October, there'll be some newspaper advertising required to let people know about that; it may be some of the lines he's looking at may include telephone and cellphone communications; something that will be new to the department will be the spending that occurs in Workplace Safety and Health on prevention, education and prevention messages.

\* (15:00)

So—but I would say, if he wants a specific accounting for what is in each of those lines, then really the best way would be for him to provide me with the lines that he's looking at, and then we could provide him with the information about what those lines account for.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Okay. Well, thank you, we'll do that. I'm, you know, disappointed the minister's not a little bit more up to speed, but we'll get that information and look forward to a response.

One of the important goals, it seems to me, in terms of looking after children in Manitoba is the full implementation of Jordan's Principle. Now, there's a report just out in the Canadian Medical Association journal in the last week or two, and Dr. Noni MacDonald, who wrote this analysis, basically says that most provincial governments, including Manitoba, are paying lip service to the Jordan's

Principle and, in fact, they're a long way from really having it fully implemented as it should be.

This, of course, was, you know, a hot topic, particularly a number of years ago. It's still a hot topic. I had introduced legislation to implement this, which the government decided not to follow. The government had a memorandum of understanding with the federal government, but that memorandum of understanding doesn't—hasn't led to the kind of implementation of Jordan's Principle, which, you know, which we should have seen. So I wonder if the minister can tell the Legislature what she's doing to, you know, ensure that we have a much fuller implementation of Jordan's Principle.

**Ms. Howard:** Mr. Chair, I share the member's concern about the rate of progress on Jordan's Principle. Of course, you know, this is something that Manitoba has taken up because, you know, it was, it is named after a young man who was a Manitoban and whose situation is not something that we think is the best way to serve vulnerable children, children who are in need, children with complex medical needs.

I don't have to tell the member how complicated it can be when you enter into negotiations with the federal government, especially when it comes to First Nations issues and the discussions respecting jurisdiction and how to deal with that.

We are making progress, I believe, on Jordan's Principle. All of the departments that have a role in the department have been working, and have worked to come up with a report that talks about how to implement formal case conferencing, talking about situations where there is a need to co-ordinate services and a need to move forward with services and then sort out, of course, who's responsible for payment later; also been working on a resolution process.

We are still waiting for a formal approval to move forward with that from the federal government. We've also recently invited the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to come and participate in this work. I think that's been an important development, that they also have a seat at the table. And there is now continued work ongoing, looking at what services are available to children with disabilities living on and off reserve, and what gaps and disparities there might be there.

So I know the member opposite wishes things would move forward more quickly. I think we on

this side of the House do too. But I can assure him that the members of the government and the members of the public service who've been involved in this issue, are working extremely hard, and are looking to get some progress on moving forward Jordan's Principle as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Gerrard:** When will the minister expect some really significant progress on this?

**Ms. Howard:** I'm not sure I can give the member some specific time. I think the reality of this work is that it's ongoing, and certainly many service providers now and staff within the federal government and provincial government do work together to co-ordinate services to children with complex needs, have worked together in the past, will continue to do so.

In many ways, what Jordan's Principle does is formalize that to put in place some protocols and, I think, a dispute resolution mechanism so that we don't have a situation that occurred with the young man that the principle is named for.

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has just recently been invited into the process, and they are currently reviewing the work that's happened to date, and we certainly want their input into this process.

We also want to make sure that we have a very carefully worked out communications protocol so everybody knows what happens in these situations, families know, staff know, service providers. So that's part of the work that's also ongoing.

But I don't want to leave any suggestion on the record that the staff who provide services to kids with complex needs aren't already working in the spirit of Jordan's Principle and continue to do so. But what we do have to move forward on now is making sure that we have the formal agreements and protocols in place.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, just—we have coming up fairly soon the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry. Ask the minister how the costs are being split between her department and the Department of Justice, and are there any other departments which are involved? And what is the minister's current estimate of what the final cost will be when everything is added up?

\* (15:10)

**Ms. Howard:** Of course, this will be a very important inquiry in Manitoba. It'll be a very important inquiry for the child welfare system, and I think that it will have many—I am hopeful that

Commissioner Hughes will have many recommendations for how he can strengthen the child welfare system. I also think, in the process, you know, it will be seen that there have been many initiatives undertaken since the death of Phoenix Sinclair to strengthen the child welfare system, to strengthen accountability within the system and to move forward on what we can do. But I also think it's very important for the public to understand what happened in this case and to also, it's important for the system to be able to learn from it. And so I think that—I'm hopeful that the inquiry will have those kinds of outcomes.

Much of the cost related to the inquiry is with the Department of Justice, and so I would refer the member to the Department of Justice to ask the questions with respect to the costs for the commission carrying out the commission's work. There are costs within the Department of Family Services and Labour for our own legal costs and administrative costs related to the inquiry. Some of that work is to provide documents to the inquiry staff so that they can prepare for the inquiry, so that they can prepare with the full understanding of the child welfare system. Some of it will also be for our legal costs. And so in our budget, I believe, the line is \$1.04 million out of the Family Services budget. I—it would be impossible for me to provide the member with a projection of how much the inquiry will ultimately cost. Much of that will be in the hands of the people who participate in the inquiry and what their costs are.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The department has a RentAid program which, as I understand it, provides some subsidy for certain individuals or families who in—I've seen two different brochures. One brochure says that people on social assistance are not eligible for RentAid and the other says that people on social assistance are eligible for RentAid. And so I'm the asking the minister, you know, who is eligible for RentAid and what are the criteria, and what's the budget for this year?

**Ms. Howard:** The Employment and Income Assistance programs were recently transferred to Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, and RentAid is one of those programs that was transferred there. So I don't have that information here. But the member could probably ask that question in the Estimates for Entrepreneurship, Trade and Training which, I believe are coming up maybe some time this week.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The portion of the budget in Child and Family Services which goes towards supporting children and families as opposed to apprehending children and families and looking after children in care, can the minister indicate, you know, what proportions of the budget would be part of these direct support for children and families as opposed to the apprehension of children and families and looking after kids in care?

**Ms. Howard:** So we have been working very much with the authorities, and the authorities have been working with the agencies to put in place the family enhancement stream of service so that—I think as the member was saying—so that when a family comes into contact with a child welfare agency, there's a determination made whether that family is in need—the child is in need of protection, and that's always the paramount consideration is what is in the best interest of the safety of the child.

But even families that may not be in need of protection are still offered service. A family that—where the child may not be in immediate need of protection but may still benefit from some services from the child welfare agency itself or other services that are available in the community, I think that work is progressing along well. A big part of that work has been working with agencies on the structured decision-making model so that we can ensure that children and families are getting the right kind of service. We want to make sure that kids who are in need of protection—immediate protection—get that, and we want to make sure that families who would benefit from additional support get that.

So we do have, in the new funding formula that's been made available to agencies, a case ratio of 1 to 20 on the family enhancement side so that we recognize that those families need—may need some intensive help.

But I would also say that I think in many situations you will find a child who comes into the system because they're in need of protection, that their social worker is also working with the family that that family—that that child came from and is working with the family to help them resolve the issues that led to that child being in need of protection, and those issues can be myriad. Sometimes it might be looking for addictions treatment. Sometimes it might be looking to deal with domestic violence in the home or other parenting strengths that that family may be in need of.

So I think in, you know, when the best examples of child welfare work, you won't find a differentiation really that a worker will say I'm going to spend this amount of time helping the child and this amount of time helping the family. They will be looking at that entire family.

But, if I look at some of the statistics in terms of families in receipt of family services, and we look at children in care, we see that, you know, we had 9,432 children in care last year, and we look at those in receipt of family services or some other kind of support, we're over 10,000. So certainly I would say the bulk of the families that come into contact with the child welfare system receive some kind of support from the system that doesn't always lead to a protection order or that child be taken out of the family.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Gerrard:** Given that the number of children in care in Manitoba is proportional to the total population is as high as it is, and that this is, as has been pointed out, very substantially greater than most jurisdictions including the United States, New Zealand, Australia.

What is the minister's perspective on, you know, where we should be, and is it her goal to continue to have this large number of children in care? Or is her goal to reduce the number of kids in care?

**Ms. Howard:** I would say that my goal is to have Manitoba children grow up in a healthy and safe environment and to make sure that kids who are in need of protection get that protection.

And, I—you know, I think that we all look at the number of children who are in care and we know that that means that we all have to do a better job, all of us in society, in strengthening families, in making sure that the rights of children are understood and respected, in making sure that issues that, from long time in our communities, have gone unspoken, issues like the sexual abuse of children, that those issues are addressed.

And, so, I think that a lot of the work that the department is doing, whether it's dealing—trying to deal with sexual exploitation of youth, putting together public awareness campaigns on that sexual exploitation that provides a strong public sanction, that says that that kind of sexual exploitation is not acceptable. I think that can help to reduce the need for taking kids into care.

I think a lot of the work that is done throughout government on strengthening families, whether that's through some of the positive parenting training that goes on in family resource centres, and child and—parent drop-ins, it happens; the work that happens through early childhood education, with kids and families, trying to strengthen the family unit; certainly, the work that has gone on in this government, with respect to providing education and training to people so that they can have a better quality of life; all of that, I think, is important to strengthening families.

So, you know, I think, you know, I look at the number and I'm concerned for each one of those kids and I'm primarily concerned that they are getting protected from risk and from potential abuse, but I'm also concerned that there are services available to their families so that we can fix what's wrong in some of those families.

But I'm also not naive enough to believe that every child can be returned to their family, that that's in the best interest of every child. I think, many of us, in this House, have direct experience working with families or working with kids, where it's very clear that having the child out of the family is in the best interest of that kid.

And, you know, early on in this portfolio, when I was meeting with someone who worked in the child welfare field and was talking to them about all the horrible things that happen to kids, and how difficult this job was, and they reminded me that, you know, there are times when you talk to a youth who's come through the system, and they'll tell you that their social worker literally saved their life.

And I think that it's also important to remember of our system; that there are many, many children who are saved from harm, grievous harm, because the child welfare system stepped in and apprehended a child and put them into a safe place.

But we also have a role to play in terms of strengthening families and that's why, I think, looking at the family enhancement model is very positive, looking at some of the changes to the funding formula so that we're providing resources for prevention and for strengthening families, that's also a very important development.

So I can't give the member an either/or answer. My goal is safe and healthy kids. And I believe that safe and healthy kids, a big part of making sure that they are safe and healthy, is making sure they have

healthy families, but it's also making sure that there is a robust and accountable child welfare system to step in when something goes wrong in a family and a child needs protection.

**Mr. Gerrard:** If one looks around the province, there are some communities where the proportion of children in care is much higher than other communities. And I would ask the minister whether she is addressing, in any particular way, the communities where the rates of number of kids in care is particularly high.

**Ms. Howard:** Certainly, the child welfare authorities and agencies are well aware of the trends and know that certain communities have challenges that have led to higher percentages of children being in care. And so those authorities and agencies work with various community resources that are in place. Oftentimes, it will also involve working with federal partners to make sure that they can put in place resources, work with the community leadership, who is also very interested in making sure that they're addressing issues within families that lead to high apprehension rates. And also, through the new funding formula, really, for the first time, we're able to make resources available for prevention, for the prevention of child abuse and child neglect and for the prevention of kids coming into care. And so I think that is also going to help those communities deal with some of their issues.

But, you know, I would also say that one of the things that I've come to learn in this job, you know, particularly dealing with the high percentage of children in care who are Aboriginal, that we're often—we are dealing with generations and generations of parents not being allowed to parent, whether we're talking about their residential school situation, where parents were taken—where children were taken away from their parents, or the '60s scoop that saw children being taken out of their communities. We know in other families as well, oftentimes, when you look at the family history, you're dealing with generations of family breakdown. And, particularly within the Aboriginal population, that family breakdown is because of very specific policies the government's put in place. And so I think, you know, we're working hard with the leadership of those communities. We've put in place resources, also including resources for on-reserve communities to deal with prevention. We continue to work with the federal government in trying to get the resources those communities need to deal with their issues, and, I think, working all together, we're going to be

able to start to reverse what has been, really, a generational tragedy.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I thank the minister, and I will turn it back over to the MLA for St. Paul.

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, that was fast from the member from River Heights. And it's always important for all members of the Legislature, all political parties, to have an opportunity to ask some questions. I will keep my questions, you know, fairly short, because I do have a substantial amount of them.

So, first of all, I'd like to ask a little bit about the backlog for the Child Abuse Registry checks. What is the current wait for a Child Abuse Registry check today?

\* (15:30)

**Ms. Howard:** There had been a considerable backlog within the Child Abuse Registry, and I know that members on all sides of the House had constituents who were inconvenienced by that backlog. And I want to really commend the staff that have been working in that office to clear the backlog. We were able to hire some temporary staff who were able to help with that.

I think now, generally speaking, you should be able to get your check within about two weeks. Sometimes it will take longer. Sometimes the applications aren't filled out fully, so sometimes it may take longer, and in situations where it's taking a very long time, I know members in the past have brought that to the attention of my office and we're sometimes able to figure out what the delay is.

In this budget there is provision made to hire three additional staff permanently in the Child Abuse Registry office with the hopes that we can maintain the progress that's been made and be able to continue to get people's checks out to them in a timely way.

**Mr. Schuler:** Has the minister staffed up for the summer rush that comes when university students are finalizing summer employment?

**Ms. Howard:** We do have additional staff in place who can respond when there is a spike in demand for registry checks, and we also do have a process in place where we can get additional temporary staff to respond in those times. So I'm very hopeful we'll be able to meet that demand.

**Mr. Schuler:** Yes, in the last budget, the NDP government raised fees for Child Abuse Registry checks by 50 per cent, and the Minister of Finance

indicated that those fees were going to go for hiring more staff to make the process go quicker. Can the minister confirm that all the new monies raised through the—increasing the fees by 50 per cent, if all those funds will go into the Child Abuse Registry check or are they going to go into general revenue?

**Ms. Howard:** Generally speaking, in the past, the revenue received through Child Abuse Registry check fees has been less than the costs associated with running those checks when you look at the staff involved in doing that, as well as the registrar that keeps the registry intact.

This year, of course, we're adding three additional staff, which will likely be in the range of 150 to 180 thousand dollars to add those staff, so that will increase the cost. So the fee going up from \$10 a check to \$15 a check will help to defray some of that cost.

I would also say, the other part of this to keep in mind is that there is a clause in the regulation that allows for volunteers to not pay the fee for the check if the organization has applied for that waiver. And so about 30 per cent of the checks that are done, there's no fee received for those checks. Those are done free of charge because the people applying are volunteers.

**Mr. Schuler:** Can the minister tell us, what was the complement of staff January 2012?

**Ms. Howard:** So January was certainly one of the high peak times for trying to clear the backlog. So, at that time, we would have five permanent staff in doing that registry check and about 15 casual positions in place that were focusing on clearing the backlog.

**Mr. Schuler:** And what is the complement as of today, like, right now?

\* (15:40)

**Ms. Howard:** There would be eight permanent positions, including the three in the budget. Those three positions are posted now, so they're not filled. And there's a number of casual positions still in place. I don't have the exact number, but we'll get that and provide it to the member.

**Mr. Schuler:** I guess the question is, for instance, as of January 17th, it was 13 weeks waiting list and, eventually, evidently more people were hired to process the request. Why did it take so long? And the problem was that there was a direct impact on

students who couldn't complete their practicum. Why did it take so long?

**Ms. Howard:** There was certainly some time required to recruit the staff to help to clear the backlog, and then there was also time required to train the staff. I think the member opposite will know that, you know, this work is very important, and making a mistake, you know, for example, saying that somebody isn't on the registry who is on the registry, or vice versa, could have serious implications, not only for that individual, but also for the organization that they're working with. So it was important to do good training with the people who were coming on board and being recruited.

I think the positive news is that people have, through that work, been able to deal with the backlog and, certainly, we keep—we will keep a watch on that. And, if we need to add staff in the future, I think we'll be able to respond more quickly.

I would also say that the number of checks requested rose quite rapidly over a short period of time, and I think, you know, that could be due to more organizations believing that this was an important thing for them to be doing, that hadn't previously requested those checks before.

But, you know, I think the member's correct. There were people who were inconvenienced by the length of time that it took. I think, you know, the department acted in response to the backlog, acted responsibly to make sure people were trained and equipped to be able to do that work. And we have been able to get that backlog under control, and we're adding new resources in order to make sure we can continue to deal with the volume of requests. And we'll also keep an eye on what happens in the future so that if we see another spike in demand, we'll be able to respond to it.

**Mr. Schuler:** And the minister is absolutely right. You can't get this one wrong, either way, because you could put a lot of individuals at risk if you go wrong one way, or you could actually destroy somebody's career if you get it wrong the other way.

So what is the process in very simple layperson's terms? What is the process to actually do the check?

**Ms. Howard:** So somebody will apply for a Child Abuse Registry check and that will be received in the office, and then they'll provide basic information, their name and contact information, and that'll be verified. And the folks in the office will check the Child and Family Services Information System to see

if there's a record of that person, if there's prior contact with the child welfare system, and if the individual has been placed on the Child Abuse Registry. And you might be on the Child Abuse Registry, of course, if there's been a criminal charge, if there's been a criminal conviction of child abuse.

We also have child abuse committees who are made up of professionals in the field—social workers, medical folks, police. So we'll also determine who should be placed on the Child Abuse Registry. If there is a provincial investigation of abuse and it's found that abuse occurred, or there's a police investigation and it's found that abuse occurred, even if there aren't charges laid, you can also be placed on that registry as someone who, on the balance of probabilities, has committed child abuse.

**Mr. Schuler:** Can you register online to have your name checked?

**Ms. Howard:** No, you can't apply online.

**Mr. Schuler:** Is it something that the department's looking at?

**Ms. Howard:** There has been some investigation of that possibility. It's a very costly possibility. It would probably lead to us having to increase the Child Abuse Registry fee by more.

I know, recently, I did—I had to do a Child Abuse Registry check, and I had to do a police records check and I—in order to move forward with a adoption—and I could do the police records check online, but there was an additional cost for doing it online. I think the cost was in excess of \$40 to do the police records check and, of course, the cost for the Child Abuse Registry check at that time was \$10.

So I think, you know, it was much more convenient and I think that's something we'll give some thought to, but it also does add to the cost of doing it.

**Mr. Schuler:** Is this a process, then, that individuals have to review the name against the list manually, or do they just do a name check on the list? I guess what I'm trying to get at is, like, why does it take so long to get these checks done?

\* (15:50)

**Ms. Howard:** I do think, you know, the current reality for most people, the turnaround is within two weeks. For some people it's less than that.

I know that, sometimes, it's able to be a very quick turnaround, indeed. But, really, I think the time

that's taken is the time that's necessary to make sure that the information is accurate and correct.

So, sometimes, what will happen is an application will be received. The first step is verifying the information on the application to make sure you've got all the correct information, and certainly, if you send it in by mail, you have to provide copies of your identification, you have to make sure that that—the copies are verified by someone, so I think there's some amount of verification that goes on to make sure of that.

And, then, if there is something that is found either on the information, the CFS information system or on the registry itself, there will sometimes be an additional check where the staff will go and talk to the agency that's been involved in the situation to verify the information. It does sometimes occur that you'll have people who will apply who have the same name as someone who's on the registry, and you want to be very cautious, I think, in that instance, as, you know, for the reasons we both outlined. You don't want to tell somebody they're on the registry when they aren't, and you don't want to tell somebody they aren't when they are.

So I think the time that's taken is what's necessary to make sure that the information is accurate. You've got the right name. And then, of course, once we—we have the information about whether or not you're on the registry, you have to process the application and then you have to mail it back to the individual who applied.

So I think a two-week turnaround time is probably an acceptable time frame for all those things to happen.

**Mr. Schuler:** Yes, and I appreciate all that, but the question was: Like, do they actually type a name in and it does a check against names in the registry? Is this something that's done manually?

**Ms. Howard:** Well, I think, you know, it depends very much on what application you're looking at. The information is available electronically, but, as I said, sometimes what will also happen is there will be phone calls made to agencies or checking directly with child welfare organizations to verify the information that you may have electronically, but you want to make sure that you've got the right information.

So there's often a second check that's also done, but it's not a situation where I could go in someplace and push a button and find out if I'm on the Child

Abuse Registry or not. I mean, it's a more involved process than that.

**Mr. Schuler:** Okay. I don't want to belabour this issue and we've spent a lot of time on it. Not that we spent a lot of time on questions and answers. I understand there's a process of getting the right answer to the minister.

So am I to understand it's more than just a list? Like, I thought there was a registry that said a name comes in. It has to be checked against the list and then the name is checked. Like, do all 65,000 names then get phoned to all the different organizations to see if they're not on the list or if they're on the list?

**Ms. Howard:** Again, I think, you know, it depends very much on the case that we're talking about. There certainly is a list. There is an actual Child Abuse Registry that has people's names on it, and when you submit for a check, your name is checked against that list. It's also checked against the Child and Family Services information system that has the listing of people who've come into contact with the child welfare system.

But let's say, for example, Joe Smith applies for a Child Abuse Registry check, and we do that and we find that, yes, indeed, there's a Joe Smith on the registry and there's a Joe Smith who's had contact with this child welfare agency. I think oftentimes it would make sense to verify that we're talking about the same person. The reality is that in Manitoba there's several people that share the same name, and so you'll want to make sure that you've got the same person. And so you may want to do additional verification of that. I think that would probably be a responsible—or a responsible thing to do.

**Mr. Schuler:** Back to the wait time. As of March 5th, we had heard that the wait time was still 12 to 14 weeks. Is it actually coming down? Like, the minister said it was down to two weeks. Has it come down in the last couple of months that it's only a two-week waiting list, because Red River community students at that time were reporting that it was a 12- to 14-week wait.

**Ms. Howard:** I think, generally, people can expect a turnaround within about two weeks. Sometimes it may take longer. It depends on the application. If the application isn't filled out correctly, if there's additional verification that has to happen on the application, that can take longer. But I think, generally speaking, the backlog issue has been resolved. If, you know, there are applications that

members are aware of that are taking a longer period of time, people are concerned about them, we have in the past been able to take that information and find out what the delay is and, where possible, make sure that we get that information back to people in a timely way.

But my information is that generally we're within about a two-week time frame. There always exceptions to that. And where it's a concern for people, we will do our best to look into it and make sure that people are getting those checks done in a timely way.

**Mr. Schuler:** Yes, can the minister tell us how many registered checks have been carried out in 2011-2012?

**Ms. Howard:** I don't have the number right here, but we'll get that to you.

**Mr. Schuler:** Could the minister tell us what was actually spent for the Child Abuse Registry check department in the last year? What was the actual amount spent?

**Ms. Howard:** I think we're continuing to do an analysis of, certainly, the casual staff that was hired and the cost for that, the cost for overtime that was incurred to deal with the backlog. So, once that analysis is done, I'd be happy to furnish that information to the member.

**Mr. Schuler:** So that's not yet been accounted for, the 2011-2012 budget hasn't been closed yet?

\* (16:00)

**Ms. Howard:** There's not a separate section in the budget for the Child Abuse Registry office. There's not one line that says that's what it's for. So we can get that information for the member. It's just going to take some time to pull it out of the various places where it is.

**Mr. Schuler:** Because, evidently in the last three years, the revenue alone from that registry check was \$650,000 and increasing the check by 50 per cent will increase the revenue to nearly a million dollars. The question is, is how much does it actually take to run the office?

**Ms. Howard:** We'll certainly get for the member—kind of verify the revenue that he's talking about and we can look at what the costs for that office would be. But I would, you know, just remind him that 30 per cent of the checks that we do are free. We don't take any fee for those, so we just have to be

cautious about how we calculate the revenue. But we'll certainly endeavour to get that information to the member.

**Mr. Schuler:** Yes. Moving to something—this is a—more of a follow-up from Thursday. The minister was going to provide information about which staff moved over to Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade. And I just want to clarify that is one of the pieces that was given to me today. Is that correct?

**Ms. Howard:** Yes, I believe that's the table with the names on it.

**Mr. Schuler:** And thank you, I wasn't part of that conversation. So I just want to be clear on that.

And then also flood-related costs for EIA, Employment Income Assistance, that—what was billed to the department for families displaced as a result of the flood. Was there supposed to be some information forthcoming for that?

**Ms. Howard:** I don't recall that question being asked or ask committee to get that information. I don't know if the better place to ask that might be the ETT estimates, since they now have the EIA program. But we can make a note of it anyways and see if we can get you that information.

**Mr. Schuler:** Yes. And the question is, what was billed to the department for families displaced as a result of the flood? And that has to do—cost relating to EIA. So, if they could look into that, because some of that still probably would have been the minister's department before the shuffle.

**Ms. Howard:** Yes. We'll make a note of that and we'll try to find which department would have that information.

**Mr. Schuler:** At committee in 2010, the OCA indicated that foster parents were also leaving the system as they bounced from agency to agency, trying to find the support they need to care for the children placed in their home. And they are terrified that children will be removed. There is an inconsistency in support and resources between agencies, which frustrates foster parents.

The question is, how many families have left the system since the OCA was last at committee?

**Ms. Howard:** Certainly, there's been a great deal of work go on in terms of recruiting foster parents, something that I think the former minister is quite justifiably proud of that work that went on to get more foster parents into the system. There was a lot

of public awareness building around that to get foster parents involved in the system. We continue to work closely with the foster family network and others and in communication with the Children's Advocate on ways that we can improve recruitment for foster families, improve training for them so that they continue to provide the much-needed care and the much-needed stability for foster kids.

So, if we look at March 31st, 2011, we had 11,938 spaces available for foster kids and that's compared to 9,629 the year before.

**Mr. Schuler:** Yes, two years ago the acting CA said there was still a weakness, especially if it is a First Nations child, in ensuring that there is a well-developed case permanency plan in which foster parents are given a say and treated as partners in the process. Based on the OCA annual—2009 annual report—it appears that case planning remains a major issues.

Can the minister tell us what solutions does she suggest to ensure all children have a case plan?

**Ms. Howard:** Certainly, the ability of agencies and agency staff to do good case planning for kids that are in care, that is an important goal that we share with those agencies and that staff. We have worked with them on that and one of the things we worked with—we have worked with agencies on and authorities is stressing that that case planning should start right away when a child comes into care with the intake process.

Some children will need a very short-term case plan; others will need a more longer term one. We have made sure that agencies have access, that their staff has access to training in how to do that case planning.

\*(16:10)

We've also worked with the Foster Parents Association on curriculum and training for foster parents who are dealing with difficult challenges with their kids so they can support those kids.

And also, through the structured decision-making model that agencies are now working with, there is an emphasis and a focus on paying attention to what strengths there are in families and what strengths children have and putting together a plan to build on those strengths so that we make sure that we're serving both the interests of children but also the interests of their families.

**Mr. Schuler:** Could the minister explain the main issue of disagree/refusal of and with CFS, and how would she address that challenge?

**Ms. Howard:** I wonder if the member can be a little more specific. I'm not totally sure what he's talking about.

**Mr. Schuler:** When there's a disagreement, when there's a refusal of a foster parent or a disagreement with a foster parent of and with CFS, I mean, obviously, there's—it's a real friction point for foster parents in the system.

And how's she going to address that challenge? Certainly, our offices get individuals calling up and they're terribly frustrated with the way the system's being handled and why they were refused or, you know, they have a disagreement with them and—like, obviously, there has to be some kind of a more proactive approach to conflict resolution. How is she planning to address that challenge?

**Ms. Howard:** I think it's probably the case that the majority of foster families, a vast majority of them, work well with the agencies that they are working with. They provide excellent care to the kids that are in their charge, and, really, the child welfare system could not function without people who are willing to, oftentimes, make a tremendous sacrifice in terms of their own time to look after children but also to put themselves in what can be a very emotionally vulnerable position, because I think for fostering to work well, you expect there to be an attachment between the foster parent and the child.

But also I think foster parents know well that, you know, they have to both form an attachment with the child with the understanding that that child is very likely to, at some point, be removed from their care and either returned to their family or, in some instances, go on to more permanent care arrangement.

So, you know, I think it's a very, very difficult—emotionally difficult thing. I'm not sure I would be capable of doing that, and the people who are capable of doing it deserve a tremendous amount of credit and thanks.

When there are instances where a foster family and a child welfare agency will have a difference of opinion, sometimes it might be over what's in the best interests of the child or other things. There is an alternate dispute mechanism that the agency can use that can help to mediate that dispute and help to reach a resolution. I think that we would like to see

better usage of that by agencies and are working with the agencies in seeing that happen.

Beyond that, of course, there is an appeal mechanism that foster families can also use when children are removed from their care, and that appeal mechanism can also give foster parents an opportunity to voice their concerns with the removal of a child.

**Mr. Schuler:** The OCA is receiving calls about foster children being moved without any warning or any kind of plan for the family. How has the number of calls regarding children being moved without notice changed since last year?

**Ms. Howard:** Mr. Chair, I don't think we track the number of calls that go to the Children's Advocate office. I'm not sure that would be appropriate for us to be doing that since they're an independent office, but, you know, there is an opportunity for the Legislature to ask questions of the Children's Advocate when she appears before committee.

I would say that when we look at the number of appeals from foster parents, there hasn't been a tremendous increase. Now, I recognize really the appeal mechanism is the last-ditch effort and so, you know, there are certainly more concerns raised than there are appeals. And we also recognize that there are situations, and we've heard of situations as the member opposite has, where we haven't seen the best practice happen with the removal of a foster child, and the foster family hasn't had notice and there hasn't been a plan in place.

It's our expectation for agencies that they will follow that standard, that they will ensure that the foster family is involved in the planning for a child, that they get notice of the removal. Sometimes it isn't possible and the paramount consideration is supposed to be the safety of the child. And so sometimes, I have learnt that when removal happens very quickly, it's because there's some overriding safety concerns that we as individual MLAs may not always be aware of, but the child welfare system is aware of. But sometimes it is a situation where the appropriate standard wasn't followed, and it is our expectation, as we work with agencies and authorities, that they will follow the standard and they will be involving foster families in the case planning for their foster children.

**Mr. Schuler:** I thank the minister for that answer. The AG has identified temporary placements as going on too long. What steps have been taken to

ensure children have placement plans and that aren't subject to long-term, temporary placements?

\* (16:20)

**Ms. Howard:** Certainly, we want children and youth in care who are in a temporary placement, we want that placement for the shortest period of time possible. And I think a lot of the recruitment that's been done to increase the number of foster care spaces is helped with that. But there are some children and some youth who have very specific needs, who have—may have very high needs and, as a result, they may be in these temporary placements longer than we would like. We are focused on reducing the incidence of that, working with the authorities to identify either foster care placements or treatment placements for these high-needs kids and youth.

We have funded additional staff at the authorities to work on developing foster care placements and other placements for these kids so we can get them out of the temporary arrangement and into something more permanent. Because I think it's well known that a key for kids in care, a key to their flourishing and moving on to a more successful life is having some permanent attachment to their caregivers.

And so we want to strive to create that. But there are some kids and some youth who have very specific and very high needs, and sometimes it takes longer than any of us would like to find a good home for them and a good place for them to be.

**Mr. Schuler:** Can the minister indicate how many of the more than 9,400 children in care currently have temporary placements?

**Ms. Howard:** Yes, I'm going to ask for a little more specificity from the member. I think some children who are in care, of course, are temporary, you know, they're not all permanent wards. In fact, I think, probably the majority of them aren't. And so, I guess, by definition, their placement would be temporary. So I'm not sure if what he's looking for—I'm not sure exactly what he's looking for in terms of a breakdown.

**Mr. Schuler:** You know what? Is—we are really running out of time quickly. There are a few more other questions I—we'd like to get to. If we need more than what the minister has just given us, we can always do that in writing or through an FY, because clearly we're not going to get through all the questions. So we'll just move on.

Could the minister tell us how many youth are currently staying in care after they are 18, and that would be for 2011?

**Ms. Howard:** It's over 400 kids who are on extensions of care. I can get the member a more specific number.

**Mr. Schuler:** Yes, please. And is the minister confident that agencies are following the provincial standard in offering services to youth transitioning from care to adulthood?

**Ms. Howard:** I do think this is one area the Children's Advocate has rightfully identified that we need to do more work on with the agencies and the authorities. There are some, of course, agencies and authorities who do a very good job of this, making sure that kids who are transitioning out of care have a plan in place. I do think, you know, one of the things the Children's Advocate has recognized is the growing number of kids who are on extensions of care. That is helping with this, helping make sure there's time for that plan. I know there is a protocol in place for the planning to happen, but it is—it's something that we're going to have to spend some more time working with agencies and authorities on, to make sure that they are able to meet that standard.

**Mr. Schuler:** OCA indicated in 2010 that it often occurs when the youths are aging out of care in a manner of weeks, when the plan should have started years before that, so the extension of care plans or aging out plans are not in place.

Has there been any improvement in ensuring youths aging out of care plans—has that improved since the OCA was last before this committee?

**Ms. Howard:** I think the latest report that the Children's Advocate put forward, which is a follow-up to her report on looking at services for youth in care, she did recognize that there's been some progress made. A big part of that progress has been the decision to make extensions of care more available to kids who are aging out of the system so they can maintain some support up to the age of 21, so they can get the support that they need as they finish high school or enter into other training or deal with other healing and treatment plans that they're involved in.

But that's not to say we don't have more work to do here, and I think, you know, recognizing that we want those kids as they leave the system to be in a much better position to be successful in life. We are dedicated to doing that work with the agencies and

authorities to make sure that those plans are in place. Oftentimes I think those plans have been happening in a less formal way, and I think what the Children's Advocate is looking for is more formalized and documented plans, but there are some situations where there's not enough attention paid to planning for a kid as they leave the system, and so certainly that's something that we want to see agencies and authorities pay some attention to, and it's something that we plan to pay some attention to over the next while.

**Mr. Schuler:** According to the 2010 LAMC report, as caseloads increase, more social workers are leaving the child protection field.

Can the minister tell us what current—what are the current social work caseloads?

\*(16:30)

**Ms. Howard:** The new funding formula that's in place funds for a case ratio of 1 to 25. I don't think that's to say that every agency, every time is hitting that mark, and it would depend very much on the case mix for the individual. And it would also depend a lot on what the agency—how they organize themselves, what they see as their priority for the funding that they receive. But our funding is based on a 1 to 25 ratio.

**Mr. Schuler:** In 2011-2012, it's our understanding that the Osborne House provincial funding is \$1,223,600. Is that accurate?

**Ms. Howard:** Could you repeat the number for me?

**Mr. Schuler:** One, comma, two, two, three—*[interjection]*—gesundheit—comma, six hundred.

**Ms. Howard:** Yes, so that's 2011-2012 funding, that's my understanding of the right amount. That's correct, I believe, yes.

**Mr. Schuler:** And what is the provincial funding this year for Osborne House?

**Ms. Howard:** The funding for this year is \$1,229,400. I'm not sure if that includes the per diem funding or if that's in addition to that. Yes, this is core funding. So shelters are funded—some of it comes through core funding; some of it—they are also funded on a per diem basis depending on the number of women and children that they serve. And so their funding can go up and down depending on usage of the facility.

**Mr. Schuler:** So the 2011-2012 number, is that core funding or is that everything in?

**Ms. Howard:** I believe that would be core funding.

**Mr. Schuler:** So in 2011-2012 what other additional funding did Osborne House get?

**Ms. Howard:** We'll have to get that number for the member.

**Mr. Schuler:** And the other funding, it's called a per diem funding?

**Ms. Howard:** Right. My understanding of the funding, so it's a—be a per diem model. So a shelter is given a certain amount of core funding and then they're also given a funding for each night that they're serving a woman or a child's bed stay—nights, I think, is how it's phrased. So they're given a certain amount per day also to recognize the usage of the shelter. And I'm not sure that they have any funding that comes from Housing, but, certainly, Housing also provides services in terms of looking after the physical site that they don't have to pay for.

**Mr. Schuler:** Can the minister tell us why the Osborne House ended up getting into such a financial crisis this year?

**Ms. Howard:** Our understanding from the financial statements of Osborne House is that they aren't currently in a debt or deficit position. They have seen a decrease in the fund—in the private fundraising that they have traditionally done, and, I think, that has certainly caused great deal of alarm for the board and for supporters of Osborne House and has resulted in an increase, not an increased amount, but, certainly, increased activity in fundraising, which I think is good news for the shelter.

But we also are working with them directly with the board and management. I've asked Marlene Bertrand, who is the current chair of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, and, I believe, a former director of Osborne House—certainly, a former director of the Family Violence Prevention branch, to work directly with the board and management at Osborne House, to strengthen their financial situation and their operations. They're also working with the Agency Accountability and Support Unit on those plans. We think that Osborne House provides a very critical service to women and children in this province and so we want to make sure that they're as strong as possible.

**Mr. Schuler:** So it wasn't the provincial funding that was the difficulty and it wasn't necessarily an increase in demand. It was that their fundraising hadn't been as successful as in previous years? Is that

just because of economics, fundraising being more difficult in this economic environment? Like, what was it that hurt them so badly?

**Ms. Howard:** I think there had been a decrease in the usage and so that would have resulted in less per diem funding to them. I think, since that time, their usage is back up at a more historical level.

My understanding is, really, just from public reports that they had an issue. They have experienced less revenue from fundraising that they have—than they have in the past. I'd be speculating as to the cause of that. I know it's something that many non-profits and charities are dealing with. Some of it may be a result of some of the more challenging economic times, that donors are not as able, as they once were, to give as large sums of money.

But I do know that many people have stepped up and offered to help Osborne House either by giving money or throwing fundraising events themselves, and I think they're to be commended for that.

But we're working with Osborne House to determine, you know, what some of the challenges that they face are, and how we can help with those. Part of it is also looking at a review, province-wide, of the funding formula for shelters, which is part of the current domestic violence strategy review that's going on, to make sure that we have the right kind of funding formula.

Different provinces fund in different ways, and, you know, we're going to look at those and determine if there is a better model for funding shelters.

But, you know, I don't think I'm in the best position to say everything that has contributed to some of the challenges of Osborne House. What I can assure the member is we're very interested in helping them figure out what some of those challenges are and how they can best address them.

\*(16:40)

**Mr. Schuler:** And the minister is right that Osborne House is very important to a lot of people, and it's important that it be a service that's available. And I think it's worthy to spend even more time, you know, in Estimates to discuss it. However, we are running a little short on time, and I would like to move on to the next topic, and that has to do with child daycare.

Can the minister tell us the locked-door policy? How many of the centres are in compliance with the locked-door policy?

**Ms. Howard:** I believe that they're all in compliance. But I—I'm just going to take a minute to confirm that. So the member can go on to another question and, once I have it confirmed, I'll let him know.

**Mr. Schuler:** How many centres are operating with a provisional licence, and why would that be?

**Ms. Howard:** We'll have to get that number for the member.

**Mr. Schuler:** According to the online registry, how many children waiting—are waiting for placement?

**Ms. Howard:** The latest information I have is as of March 31st–30th, 2012, and that, I think, is available on the website. And that lists just over 9,400 children province-wide who are registered on the online Child Care Registry. That would include almost 600 children who weren't yet born, who were on the registry. And certainly, I put my kid on the registry before he was born, so I think that's a wise move by lots of parents. And then, I think there are also—on the website there is another number that looks at registrants who are requiring care in three months, so would be requiring care by the end of June, 2012, and that number is 4,550.

**Mr. Schuler:** Could the minister provide that data by region?

**Ms. Howard:** That information is all available, I believe, on the website, broken out by region. But, if the member has trouble accessing it, we can also provide a written copy of it.

**Mr. Schuler:** We'll poke around and see if we can find it. If not, we'll speak with the minister's office.

According to the 2010-2011 annual report, there are 19,846 preschool spaces—that's 0 to 5 years. How many of those spaces are infant spaces?

**Ms. Howard:** Yes, I'm just not completely clear on the question. So the member said there are 19,000 preschool spaces, and he wants to know how many of those are infant spaces? But I'm not confident that the infant spaces are contained within the preschool spaces, so I might just have to provide you that information—make sure that we're talking about the same numbers.

**Mr. Schuler:** Parent fees. With fees going up in July of the next two years, will there be any changes to fundraising child centres—child care centres are permitted to carry out?

**Ms. Howard:** We don't dictate how centres fundraise or how they're allowed to fundraise, so there'd be no change coming from us on that. I know that a number of centres have expressed the hope that with more revenue coming to them they won't have to do as much fundraising, but that's entirely up to the centres.

**Mr. Schuler:** There are a lot more questions. Perhaps we could go through the process of winding up and then, if there's some time at minister's salary, do a few more questions, but we want to make sure we wind up yet today, so you can proceed.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Chairperson:** Resolution 9.2: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$18,183,000 for Family Services and Labour, Labour Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 9.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$444,280,000 for Family Services and Labour, Disability Programs and Early Learning and Child Care, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 9.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$420,051,000 for Family Services and Labour, Child and Family Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 9.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$135,190,000 for Family Services and Labour, Community Service Delivery, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 9.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,892,000 for Family Services and Labour, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 9.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$216,000 for Family Services and Labour, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013.

**Resolution agreed to.**

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the department is item 1.(a) the minister's salary contained in resolution 9.1.

At this point, request—we request that the minister's staff and the staff from the Official Opposition leave the Chamber for the consideration of this last item.

**Mr. Schuler:** I—yes, if it so pleases the committee, I have a couple of questions that I would like to ask before we get to that particular resolution, and we might need the staff here yet for that.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, if it's agreeable, then, we will discuss resolution 9.1 without getting to the minister's salary and, if it's agreeable to all, staff will remain until we get to that point.

Is that agreeable? [*Agreed*]

**Mr. Schuler:** Can the minister give us a list of all political staff, including name, position and FTE, whether they are full-time—could she give that to us?

**Ms. Howard:** There is Felix Meza, who's full-time; Meghan Gallant, who's full-time; Jeannine Kebernik, who's full-time; and there's also my executive assistant, who's Courtney Maddock, who works in the constituency office, and she's also full-time.

**Mr. Schuler:** I just want to go back to a question that I asked the minister in regards to online registry work—how many children waiting—are waiting for placement? And then a regional update, and, from what I understand is those aren't available online, and maybe it's just we're looking at the wrong place, but could the minister give us a specific list of staff in the minister's department and the deputy's minister's department? That would be non-political staff.

**Ms. Howard:** We'll make sure that we get the regional breakdown, then, to the member. I thought it was online, but we can certainly make it available.

So in my office, administrative staff, non-political staff, there's Kathy Dobriansky, who's the appointment secretary; there's Kelly Davidson, who is an administrative assistant; and also Christine Shachtay, who also does intake in the office. In the deputy minister's office, of course, there's the deputy minister and then there's Cindy Fawley and Sarah Obaid and Jan Doerksen and Kim Stewart, who were administrative and assistant staff to the deputy minister. And then we also have a STEP student

working in the deputy minister's office, Genika Loumbera [*phonetic*].

**Mr. Schuler:** And to the minister, it seems to be that we can't find the wait times online, either for the Child Care Registry. Again, it could be that we're not looking at the right place, but if it's not available online, could she provide us that number?

**Ms. Howard:** I don't believe that wait times are available. Each centre manages its own wait-list. So the wait time can vary for a trial. I think what should be on the website, but I can happily give the member a copy of it, there'll be a table that will talk about all the kids on the wait-list, as of March 30th, and then there'll be a table talking about kids who require care in the next three months. So it gives you a sense of the more immediate need, and that is broken out regionally. And then there's also a list on there of placements that have been made of kids who've been on the wait-list, on the registry, into child care as of March 30th, 2012.

But we can certainly—I can certainly either send the link to the member or provide him a written copy.

**Mr. Chairperson:** No more questions at this point, we request the minister's staff and staff from the official opposition leave the Chamber for the consideration of the last item.

The floor is open for questions.

Seeing none, shall the resolution pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

Okay. Excuse me.

Resolution 9.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,638,000 for Family Services and Labour, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This concludes the Estimates for this department.

The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the committee are the Estimates of Local Government.

Is it the will of the committee to call it 5 p.m.?  
[*Agreed*]

The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 22, 2012

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