

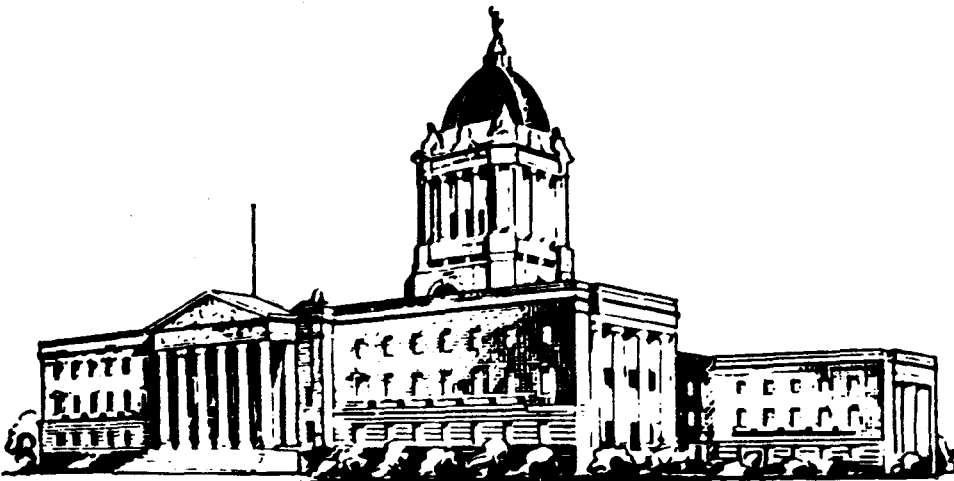


Third Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39-40 Elizabeth II

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The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 30, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Bruce Campbell, Jeff Hamm, Marilyn Catellier and others urging the government to consider the establishment of an Office of the Children's Advocate independent of cabinet and reporting directly to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of George Law, Heather MacKay, Evelyn Atkinson and others requesting the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider a one-year moratorium on the closure of the Human Resources Opportunity Centre in Selkirk.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Valerie J. Black, Patricia Wilson, Catherine Westwood and others requesting the government consider reviewing the funding of the Brandon General Hospital to avoid layoffs and cutbacks to vital services.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

The petition of the undersigned residents of the Province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba announced that it would establish an Office of the Children's Advocate in its most recent throne speech and allocated funds for this Office in its March '92 budget; and

WHEREAS the Kimelman Report (1983), the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (1991) and the Suche Report (1992) recommended that the province establish such an office reporting directly to the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, in a manner similar to that of the Office of the Ombudsman; and

WHEREAS pursuant to the Child and Family Services Act Standards, the agency worker is to be the advocate for a child in care; and

WHEREAS there is a major concern that child welfare workers, due to their vested interest as employees within the service system, cannot perform an independent advocacy role; and

WHEREAS pure advocacy will only be obtained through an independent and external agency; and

WHEREAS the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has unsatisfactorily dealt with complaints lodged against child welfare agencies; and now

THEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba strongly urge the provincial government to consider establishing an Office of the Children's Advocate which will be independent of cabinet and report directly to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Jack Reimer (Member of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): I beg to present the Fourth Report of the Committee on Economic Development.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as their Fourth Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, April 28, 1992, at 8 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building, to consider the Annual Report of the Communities Economic Development Fund for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1991.

Your committee has considered the Annual Report of the Communities Economic Development Fund for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1991, and has adopted the same as presented.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Reimer: I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

Mr. Jack Penner (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources): I beg to present the First Report on the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources.

Mr. Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources presents the following as its First Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, April 28, 1992, at 8 p.m., in Room 255 of the Legislative Building, to consider the Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the year ended October 31, 1991.

Mr. Walter Bardua, president and general manager, provided such information as was requested with respect to the Annual Report and business of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

Your committee has considered the Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the year ended October 31, 1991, and has adopted the same as presented.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Penner: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.**TABLING OF REPORTS**

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): I would like to table the 1990-91 Annual Report of the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation and the 1991 Annual Report of the Manitoba Telephone System.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of the honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us this afternoon Peter Muir, Tibor Bodi and Peter Aitchison. They are members of the climbing team who will be attempting the first ascent of Mount Manitoba in the Kluane National Park in the Yukon.

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

Also with us this afternoon, from the Margaret Park School, we have twenty-seven Grades 4 and

5 students, and they are under the direction of Paula Calado. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

Cet après-midi, aussi, nous tenons à vous signaler la présence dans la galerie publique de dix-sept étudiants de la neuvième année de l'École Provencher, sous la direction d'Ed McCarthy. Cette institution est située dans la circonscription du député de Saint-Boniface (Mr. Gaudry).

[Translation]

Also this afternoon, we would like to indicate the presence in the public gallery of seventeen pupils in Grade 9, from Provencher School, under the direction of Ed McCarthy. This school is located in the constituency of the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry).

[English]

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**North American Free Trade Agreement
Public Hearings**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): In the Speech from the Throne in 1990, the government said, Canadians said no to the old style of elite accommodation and closed-door politics. Mr. Speaker, since that time, the government has participated in a number, almost on a weekly basis, of trade meetings between provincial trade ministers and the federal minister, one of which is going on again today in a downtown Winnipeg hotel dealing with trade. The items the ministers have been dealing with on a weekly basis have included interprovincial trade and have also included the proposed trade agreement with Mexico.

We have been concerned about the secret negotiations on trade. We are concerned about the secret drafts. We are concerned about the secret responses from the provincial government. We are concerned about the secret analysis that has not been provided to the people of this province about the positive and negative impact of North American free trade with Mexico, which is going on right now in Mexico in terms of negotiations between Canada, the United States and Mexico.

I would, therefore, ask the Acting Premier whether the government will amend its terms of reference on

proposed free trade with Mexico to change their six conditions—which of course is a flip-flop from their opposition to free trade with Mexico from the election—to include mandatory public input for the Canadian people and the people of Manitoba on this vital trade agreement affecting their livelihood and their children's future.

* (1340)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Acting Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member has been told many times that the six principles that Manitoba put forward are the framework within which we intend to stand strong. They will not be violated, and they are hardly hidden from view.

The fact is that our Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) is involved on an ongoing basis with the federal authorities to put forward Manitoba's position strongly, to advocate on behalf of the industries that could be affected in this province, to make sure that our place is put forward strongly at the table. We will stick to those six principles. I think he should stop talking about hidden agenda. That, in fact, is a very public agenda.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the minister has not told us what industries are impacted, what areas of the province are impacted, who the winners and losers are, according to their analysis. They have an \$800,000 secretariat, and we do not know what they are producing out of the bowels of the Legislature in terms of what is positive and negative.

The terms of reference that the minister refers to do not include any public input from the people of Manitoba and the people of Canada.

I would ask the government why the public of Manitoba will not have any say in this matter and why this government did not include it in their terms of reference for the free trade agreement with Mexico.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, to begin with, Ottawa has made it very clear that this was their responsibility in international trade. Manitoba has made it very clear that we intend to be at the table to make sure that the conditions that we put forward are heard, that they are attended to and they are answered in any agreement that is ultimately struck. The research that we are doing and the work that we are doing is being done to support those principles, and we will stand by that basis.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I am not talking about Ottawa's conditions. I am talking about Manitoba's conditions, the ones that explain the flip-flop from no to the free trade agreement with Mexico to the maybe position to free trade with Mexico. Even the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) has advised the government that they are absolutely crazy to proceed with free trade negotiations with Mexico when we still do not know the impact of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States.

Judging from the bankruptcy numbers today, Mr. Speaker, which are the highest in March since the history of keeping bankruptcy numbers, which are on top of the bankruptcy numbers in February 1992, which are also the highest in the history of this province, one would think the government would start to pay attention to the public concerns on the economy.

So I would ask the Acting Premier, will they amend their terms of reference to include public input from this province on what our position is, what our response is, what the drafts say and what they mean for Manitoba and public input to their trade agreement, not the provincial government's trade agreement with North American free trade?

Mr. Cummings: First of all, the Leader of the Opposition chooses to misrepresent what is occurring in the trend of bankruptcies in this province. We are, in fact, improving. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition seems like he is not willing to listen to some principles that this province laid down as the condition upon which we would hold any potential agreement that the federal government may choose to enter into.

The six principles were enunciated. They are very public. They are being put forward very strongly at any meetings that our representatives are at, and if he wishes to throw out all possibility of trade, he should think about the fact that Manitoba had an opportunity, and I personally not very long ago had an opportunity, to question directly the minister responsible for administration of environmental matters, for example, at the minister's meeting in Vancouver.

Those are the kinds of opportunities that we have to seize on to make sure that our principles are being dealt with.

Education System Dropout Rate

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education and Training.

Mr. Speaker, the Economic Council of Canada has outlined a number of deficiencies in our education system and many which amount to four lost years under this Tory government. If literacy is a problem with graduates, then can you imagine what the problem must be with those that drop out?

What specific programs and measures are being undertaken by this government to deal with dropouts, specifically women who constitute the second worst dropout rate of any province in Canada?

* (1345)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): We do take the results of this study very seriously. We took it seriously enough to make sure that we had a representative in Ottawa yesterday when the study was released.

I would like to correct the honourable member in terms of this being an indication of four years of our government because, if he in fact reads the report, he will see the statistics are based on the years from the early '80s, through 1987, as well, the years of the NDP government. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask him to look again.

Let me also say that this government did recognize the issues that were raised in this particular report, issues such as high costs, skills of students, quality of teaching and a linkage to work and employment. We do at this point have a number of initiatives that in fact exceed the recommendations of the report which came out yesterday.

Let me mention one which I have mentioned in this House previously, and that is the creation by this government of the Student Support branch. We are the only government in Canada to have dedicated a whole branch to the issue of dropouts.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, will the minister outline what programs are in place, since she refused to answer the question, for women who last year constituted the second worst dropout rate in the country, to deal with the serious dropout rate in this province?

Because the minister for the whole last week has refused to answer the question in Estimates, will she tell us today what programs are in place to deal with the situation of women dropouts in this province?

Mrs. Vodrey: Let me answer again. In the first place, we have created a very specific branch. This government has recognized the concerns of at-risk students, people who are at risk of leaving school before their education is completed, and we have created the Student Support branch.

Through that branch, schools, local communities will be able to identify programs which they believe will be specific for their area, most helpful to their communities, and apply for grant funding. In addition, the department is there also to offer other kinds of supports which divisions might see as important.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the same minister.

If administrative costs to the province of Manitoba are disproportionately higher than in the rest of Canada, why is this government and this minister insisting on putting in place more bureaucracy but, more importantly, another level of school board to deal with private schools to increase the costs to the public of Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, the issue of accountability has certainly been one of the priorities of this government, and the issue of accountability we are attempting to address through a number of areas: one, the institution of provincial testing which the other side of the House has so firmly objected to, and the most recent study has said it is very important to ensure our standards.

In the area of the Student Support branch, there is over \$10 million of grant money available.

* (1350)

Education System Curriculum Revisions

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that there is death on both their houses because neither party, whether it be the Tories or be it the NDP, has given education the priority it deserves in the province of Manitoba.

I think it is important, however, to look at how this government has prioritized its expenditures on education, and I will use just one example. Last year they cut five curriculum consultants. This year

they are cutting an additional curriculum consultant. In their own supplementary Estimates, they list as one of the tasks of that particular branch the systematic updating of programs to ensure relevant standards.

Can the minister explain why this government is spending 17 percent less money on updating its curriculum so that it is relevant? What effect is that going to have on the quality of education for our young people?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think it is very important that we also maintain a sense of vision in terms of education in this province and that we do not fall into a sense of complete panic that things are all going wrong.

Let me inform the member of some of the initiatives currently underway. Curriculum revisions are underway in the K-8 mathematics area, with emphasis on skill development in that area. We also have plans underway to produce a province-wide distance education calculus course. We are making major improvements in the science curriculum. We are assessing the English curriculum this May.

So we are in fact doing a great number of initiatives currently underway.

Administrative Costs

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted at the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) who yelled across the House, more money, more money. Well, let me tell you what the Minister of Education has done.

The Minister of Education, while cutting curriculum consultants, has added 5.52 staff persons to Management Information Services. We are going to know how many kids fail, but we are not going to put any money into preventing them from failing.

Will the Minister of Education explain that?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): First of all, let me remind the honourable member that this government has in fact put more money into Education this year so that we can look at the issues relating to education.

In addition to that, we have several projects currently underway, legislative reform being one, and also our own government's strategic plan,

which points to the very issue that I think the member is raising, issues of accountability and making sure that our students come to a successful completion. So I do not accept the information in her question.

Core Curriculum

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Economic Council of Canada indicated that what we were doing was trying to teach the middle, that we had ignored the upper-end students and we had ignored the lower-end students.

Well, this government has taken a very critical decision. They have decided that in Grade 10 they will eliminate specific curriculums for bright children and middle children and those who have difficulties in learning. They have merged them all together in a core curriculum in the fields of language arts, social studies, history, geography.

Can the minister explain why they have gone to a core curriculum when it is very clear that a core curriculum is not meeting the interests of the vast majority of students?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): There is a core curriculum in Senior 1. We move then to areas of specialization in Senior 2 or Grade 10, and in that, we look specifically at specialization in the area of math and science. When we get to Senior 3 and Senior 4, there is a differentiation of curriculum. This is intended to give students—and we followed pedagogical advice to make sure that students in Senior 1 had a broad enough basis from which to continue their education and make important decisions.

We are supporting students in the Senior 1 and Senior 2 level with the Student Support branch because we understand that it is not the rigor of the curriculum that causes young people to disengage but other reasons supported by the Student Support branch.

GRIP Program Coverage Levels - Lentils

* (1355)

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, more and more farmers are painfully aware that GRIP in its present form is unfair and inequitable. We saw it yesterday when the farmers from Area 12 showed this government for its true colours, for its

mismanagement and hypocrisy with regard to GRIP.

Now we have the lentil fiasco, with the minister's blatant 12th-hour interference in the marketplace, something he says his government does not believe in. Yesterday a full month and a half after the contract called for making these announcements, Mr. Speaker, the minister continued in his contemptible ways by showing complete disdain for this Legislature—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Plohman: I ask this minister responsible for lentils why he did not at least have the courtesy to make the announcement with regard to the change in the coverage levels, the support levels for lentils in this House to the representatives. He should have made it months ago, but he at least—

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

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): There is great difficulty associated with doing what we had to do yesterday. The lentil acres in 1990 were 55,000 acres, last year 135,000 acres. This year it looked like it would be 400,000 to 500,000 acres.

Mr. Speaker, we have informed our signatories that the price set for lentils has been too high. We have been saying that for 14 months. We have received in the last three weeks a number of letters and phone calls from producers and producer organizations saying that we must do something.

The Manitoba agriculture societies said reduce it. The Manitoba Pulse Growers wrote and gave a number of conditions that were being basically violated in the marketplace by the program, and they said the current situation is brought about by an unrealistic target price in lentils. The president of the Keystone Agricultural Producers phoned me on Monday and said: For the integrity of the program, the integrity of the industry and the integrity of using taxpayers' dollars, you have to do something.

We went to the signatories committee this week—they met on Tuesday—and said: Would you look at the issue? They gave us a recommendation that we should do something in Manitoba, and that is what we had to do yesterday.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this minister should have known this a year ago. He knew there was an increase in lentils.

Why did this minister not make this announcement a month and a half ago? How can he justify the interference in the marketplace that he did yesterday after farmers have spent thousands of dollars on seed, and seed companies have purchased seed and inoculate for that seed? Where has this minister been for the last month and a half?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member of my answer to the first question that, for 14 months we have been talking about this, trying to get the National Grains Bureau and Agriculture Canada, who set those prices, to understand that the prices were unrealistically set. We have had a number of people in the industry, a number of people who are producers and farm organizations saying the same thing.

We sought legal opinion to determine if the contract was violated. We did what we did, and the legal opinion said that as long as changes were made before April 30, it was legally correct to do so. We did it in response to numerous inquiries from the industry and from producers.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this program is more of a mess under the management of this minister every day.

I want to ask this minister how he intends to compensate those farmers and those seed companies, such as the Farmers Co-op Seed Plant at Rivers, who have had 10 percent of their contracts, of their orders cancelled this morning, only this morning, since this minister's announcement at the last minute. How is he going to compensate them?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, nothing in our announcement prevented anybody from growing any number of acres they wanted to grow or any contracts they have signed. Nothing in our announcement violated that.

I would like to read what the executive director of the Manitoba Pulse Growers said yesterday. He said: Even after higher production costs are factored in, the support price for lentils guarantees farmers a significantly higher return than for other GRIP-insured crops, even after the reduction.

They recognized that the support was far too high, relative to other crops, and structurally, it was the right decision to take. We were promoted to do it by many people in the industry.

GRIP Program Coverage Levels - Risk Area 12

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister who is one of the most popular people in rural Manitoba because of what he has done to the farming community. First he broke his promise, and then he made a delayed announcement on lentils.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he is going to honour his commitment which he made in writing to the representatives of Risk Area 12, making a commitment to make an adjustment in their coverage if there were changes. Will he honour that commitment so they can go ahead and lobby the federal government to work on that for them as well?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, a year ago, I set up a process involving farmers to come up with some legitimate numbers that we could advance to the federal government. As I said yesterday, I have written the federal government twice asking them to understand that this was necessary to be done.

The committee has gone through its final report. I imagine the final report that all committee members approve will arrive on my desk shortly. We continue to ask the federal government to look at those numbers and see if there is some way they can address the problem that has been in place, the inequity that has really been in place, in that area for some 20 years.

* (1400)

Ms. Wowchuk: My question to the same minister is: Will this government live up to the word of their minister? Will they put the money in place and put the federal government on the line to see whether the federal government will stand up to his word?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, we have been talking to those growers for a long period of time, trying to find some mechanism that we could legitimately take some information to the federal government. I say, when that report comes in, we will continue to work with the federal government to see that the information in the report will be accepted for them for '91 or '92 or forever.

Ms. Wowchuk: My question is still to the same minister.

Will this government put the money on the line so that the federal government will then be obliged to

make a decision? They have a letter saying they will do this. They need somebody to stand behind this. I am sure many of his backbenchers would be happy to do it.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, in terms of putting money on the line, we put \$50 million on the line for GRIP premiums for Manitoba farmers last year. It has generated a payout of some \$300 million; \$240 million has already gone out. The average per-acre payment to all farmers in Manitoba under revenue insurance is \$44 an acre; Risk Area 12, \$51 an acre; and Risk Area 32, \$49 an acre. So substantive monies have been budgeted and already paid out to farmers to help them fight the incredible grain trade war that we are still in.

Economic Growth Building Permits

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, in each one of the five budgets that this Finance minister has tabled in the House and again yesterday, he continues to promise us that somehow prosperity is just around the corner, but his predictions to date have been rather faulty, to say the least.

Now when you look back over the last four years, when you look back at the statistics that are contained within Statistics Canada reports—population, share of national wealth, share of retail trade, total jobs, full-time jobs, housing starts, wages and salaries—you find that Manitoba has done uniformly badly. Yesterday the minister referenced investment.

I would like to ask the minister this question: How does he account for the fact that over the past four years, the share of total building permits in this country fell some 18 percent? In Manitoba they fell 28.9 percent. How does he account for that difference in the performance in this province versus the national performance?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member has taken me a little bit unaware. I thought he was going to ask questions on bankruptcies today. Obviously, he could not find a selective area that suited his particular questions.

As I indicated yesterday, when one looks at all of the statistical areas, one can pick and choose to set their own arguments. I would like to say to the member opposite that economic growth of our province as compared to the national average for '92—and I think Manitobans today are trying to

develop a confidence, indeed, all Canadians are, in their economy. I think they want to look forward, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say that I am assured that the American economy is beginning to pull out of its malaise. I am told by my economic advisers that if that occurs in the United States, then obviously consumer confidence will build here. Obviously then there will be an increase in housing starts, there will be an increase in permits taken out for construction, and in time, of course, the economy will rebound.

I say to the member opposite, if he wants to focus on four years of the past, if he feels that he is serving his constituents in the best manner and reflecting on four years of numbers that have occurred over the year, he could probably accomplish an awful lot more if he would attempt to, with the government, try and find the best ways and support the government in trying to make Manitoba businesses competitive so that there will be employment. Spending money in every other field of government is not the way to do it.

Mr. Alcock: Now, if I understand the minister's comment, Mr. Speaker, he is asking me to support his four years of failure, and I am afraid I am unable to do that right now.

I want to ask him a very simple question, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister explain to me why, after four years of his policy, we are doing worse on building permits in this province? A very simple question: Why have we done so much worse than the national average—

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

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, again the member wants to select into an area. Why does he not ask the question about the capital investment intentions well above those in Canada? Why does he not talk about retail sales up 7.4 percent in February compared with the year previous, third best amongst the provinces? Why does he not talk about business bankruptcy figures as compared to other jurisdictions in Canada, where we are the third best amongst the provinces and, in the first three months of this year, a 14 percent drop from a year ago? Why does the member not want to dwell on those numbers and try to give some balance to his question?

No, all the member is trying to do is once again destroy the confidence of the consumers and the

business people in this province for his own political gain, Mr. Speaker, and I say to him, shame. He has ulterior motives; he is out to destroy the economy in this province. He is contributing nothing.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, we have five years of intentions, and not one of them has proved out, not one of them.

I want to ask the minister this very simple question. He has put in place a plan; he has had that plan working now for four years. In the area of building permits, our performance is worse than that of the country. Can the minister please explain to us why that has occurred?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, it seems almost identical to the second question, which was identical to the first question.

I can give again the same response as I did on the second question, but I know, when you are in opposition, you expect there to be instant fixes. I know, Mr. Speaker, we have had requests from the opposition benches that we should bring forward a stimulation budget.

Of course, what that was, was asking the government to spend considerably more in almost all areas of government or to increase taxes and/or to do anything to employ people. I am here to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the approach that we are taking is the correct one as is reflected in the financial markets, in the manner in which our Premier (Mr. Filmon) and indeed our Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Stefanson) can now access corporate boardrooms in the country with respect to the message as to what is occurring in our province to make our regime more competitive. It is being reflected in the financial market, where today, for the first time in the history of Canada, our bonds are trading at a par and at a better value than Ontario's. Those are the measures of how our process is working. The course is the right one, and it is the course that we will continue to follow.

Sewage Lagoon - Oak Point Environmental Concerns

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radlson): Mr. Speaker, I have photographs with me today that show how a pit extended onto a previous landfill site has been used as a sewage lagoon near Oak Point. This pit has no liner. It is not complying with the regulations for lagoons, and it has been allowed to spill over onto the adjacent land.

Residents are concerned that the proposed lagoon to replace this area is not the proper solution. How will the minister resolve concerns that the lagoon that is supposed to drain into Lake Manitoba from this site will not wipe out the fish breeding area or the recreational beach in the area?

* (1410)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the member demonstrates why we need to work with a number of municipalities to make sure that their waste disposal and sewage handling processes are brought up to snuff. We have had an ongoing process in that municipality to site a new lagoon, to site a new waste disposal ground. The department has worked closely with them in examining the plans that they have put forward, the studies that they put forward. The department laid down the conditions of a licence regarding the standard of effluent. The time of discharge and all of the relevant information that was brought forward was taken into consideration, and a licence was issued.

It is under the conditions of that licence that we will control and regulate and make sure there is no damage to the surrounding environment.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): It is the minister's department that authorized this pit to be used in this manner.

Can the minister then table the environment impact assessment that is going to show that there will not be any effect on fish stock and fish breeding ground on the reserve across the lake which draws its water from Lake Manitoba and to show that there has been ground water testing in this area to show that there has not been contamination from this lagoon?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): All of the information that the department took into account in looking at the plans is public information. It was filed, and I am sure that the member can have access to that.

Public Hearings

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Since there was no public hearing where the residents could have their concern—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Ms. Cerlill: Will the minister hold a public hearing on the siting of this new lagoon in the Oak Point area?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I regret to some extent that the type of disagreements upon which the member is basing her questions end up being brought to the floor of this Chamber, because in many ways this is not an environmental issue. It is a dispute between two communities about where this site should be located. It is a planning issue as much as it is an environment issue. The environmental restrictions that we can impose, the standards that we will require of operation are the responsibility that we will deal with and make sure that there is no damage.

The appeal that the member is referring to, a number of those issues were raised and were dealt with in the licence. As so often happens, Mr. Speaker—and I do not for one minute deny it—when municipal service sites such as this are located, there is always some concern raised and some disagreement about the location of it. There certainly is a good deal of disagreement by a small group, but they were clearly heard. The environmental issues were raised, and we believe we have dealt with it.

Sewage Lagoon - Oak Point Licensing Process

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe that the Minister of Environment would say that this lagoon in Oak Point does not raise environmental issues. The fact is that the proposed lagoon is to be a nonstandard lagoon, with its outlet entering Lake Manitoba at a recreational and a fish-spawning zone. Many local residents have been and continue to be extremely concerned about the design and the effects of this lagoon on the local environment. It certainly is an environmental issue.

My question for the minister: Why, given these concerns which have been persistent from the very outset of this proposal from many of the local residents, did the minister not require a proper siting study of the project and did he not require a proper public hearing in front of the CEC to air those concerns and instead was content—

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

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, this has been a very troublesome process. The environmental matters that are associated with the siting of this lagoon, or any other service facility of this nature, have to be carefully watched. They have to be carefully designed and operations handled.

The fact that the original siting was used improperly is now being corrected. One of the reasons that this was not corrected over a period of time earlier was a disagreement about where a new facility would be most properly located.

Mr. Speaker, the issues that were brought forward were, there is a judgment call as to whether they are dealt with directly by the licensing process or whether they go to a Clean Environment Commission hearing, and this one was deemed to have been capable of being dealt with within the licensing process, and that was what was done.

Public Hearings

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Again, for the same minister, Mr. Speaker, the minister recommended to local residents when they met with him that they go to mediation with the R.M. The R.M. declined to participate.

My question for the minister is: Why, after recognizing that the concerns of the residents were worthy of a mediation proposal when it did not go ahead, did he not go the second step and in fact give a full public hearing process the opportunity for the residents to put forward their concerns to a board like the Clean Environment Commission to be heard and adjudicated upon? Why, after recognizing their concerns were valid, did he not do a full job?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Again, Mr. Speaker, while I do not think the member should characterize anything I said earlier as not being concerned about the environmental issues, there was also a planning issue that was within the jurisdiction of the municipality to make.

In the jurisdiction for which I am responsible, the licensing of any design and building and discharge that might occur in relationship to this facility was properly handled and will be properly regulated in the future to make sure, whether it is a city of Winnipeg discharge or whether it is a small community waste sewage collection site. They both have to be treated with equal care, and this one can be managed so there will be no impact on the surrounding environment, Mr. Speaker.

Licensing Process - Appeal

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, finally, for the same minister. An appeal of this licence by the residents is currently before the minister. We are advised that the minister has privately told the R.M. that they can start tendering this without having released publicly the results of the appeal.

Has the minister in fact made up his mind on this appeal, and if so, why did his department privately inform the R.M. before making the decision public in the normal course?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Again, Mr. Speaker, someone is either misinformed or has chosen to take a different tack on this.

Environment licence is valid during the time of appeal, and if the municipality chooses to proceed to go to tender or to get bids on construction of a site during that period, they are quite entitled to do so. The results of the appeal and the reasons behind any decisions that are made around that will be made public in the appropriate time frame, and all people involved will have a copy and full access to that information.

**Social Assistance
Off-Reserve Status Indians**

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's withdrawal of 100 percent social assistance funding for status Indians living off reserves will cost \$8.7 million a year for the City of Winnipeg, in addition to the capping of welfare rates, which will cost them \$5 million, for a total of \$13.7 million, which will result in a 5 percent increase in civic taxes if the city is forced to pick up all of these costs.

What is the Minister of Family Services doing to avert a crisis in the City of Winnipeg, which is the result of the Province of Manitoba doing nothing in the face of Ottawa's withdrawal of funding?

Hon. Harold Gillieshamer (Minister of Family Services): I reject that the province is doing nothing about the withdrawal of federal funding. We have made a very strong stand on this issue, and we used to have the support of the opposition. I am disappointed that they have changed their position on that.

We also have the Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs, the UMM and the MAUM organizations supporting us in our dispute with Ottawa. We do not accept this

change in funding and are continuing to reject it and will continue to make an issue of this until the federal government has agreed to reinstate this funding.

Bill 70 Amendments

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Will the Minister of Family Services amend Bill 70 in order to prevent a massive tax increase for city taxpayers, estimated at 5 percent?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): It is interesting that opposition members have yet to speak on the bill, and the member is asking us for an amendment. We have brought that legislation before the House and given it second reading and look forward to members' comments on that legislation.

If the member is here to solve some of the financial problems of a municipal level of government, I encourage him to speak with city councillors and maybe give them some direction on ways in which he would see them changing their budget.

We are working with the SARC committee, which has a member, a city councillor, on that committee. They have presented a report to government. We have basically accepted that report and are bringing in legislation based on that SARC report.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.
* (1420)

Nonpolitical Statements

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, do I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great sense of pride to rise today to wish a group of Manitobans the best of luck as they set off to celebrate Canada's 125th Birthday in a very unique manner. During the first three weeks of May, 11 Manitobans will attempt to climb Mount Manitoba in Kluane National Park in the Yukon Territory.

Mount Manitoba is 11,150 feet high and is part of a range of 14 mountains called the Centennial Range. In 1967, as a centennial project, the Alpine Club of Canada, which was founded in Winnipeg in 1906, organized a large expedition to first ascend all 14 mountains. The 1967 expedition, however, was unsuccessful in its attempt on our namesake mountain.

The present expedition will face many logistical, climatic and physical challenges during their attempt to climb Mount Manitoba. However, the rewards outweigh the challenges they will face. First ascents are a rare opportunity and a great honour, and it is only appropriate that the mountain that bears our provincial name be ascended first by Manitobans. This expedition has been well supported by many local businesses and individuals. Regardless of the outcome of the climb, we fellow Manitobans revel in the climbers' sense of vision and their resolve to once more bring Manitoba to the forefront of discovery and achievement.

Some of the members of the climbing team are with us here today. Tibor Bodi, a constituent of mine, is one of the three climb leaders, and Peter Muir and Dan Dunbar also comprise a part of this team. The other members of the team, who regrettably were unable to be with us today, are Peter Aitchison, Bob France, also both climb leaders, as well as Richard Tiley, Dennis Cunningham, Jeff Aitchison, Pat Dellistone, Raphael Munoz, Shane Petroff and reporter Catherine Mitchell, who will be along to capture the efforts in print.

On behalf of all the members of the House and all Manitobans, I would like to wish the expedition a safe and successful climb and emphasize to them that whatever the results of their attempt, all Manitobans can say with pride that Mount Manitoba is indeed ours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

I just want to again add other words of the Legislature to congratulate the team on its ascent on Mount Manitoba and the courage and the endurance and the physical agility that is necessary for this great achievement. We congratulate all members of the team, and we just want to add to the words of the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) to congratulate you on your accomplishment and wish you all the best on your many accomplishments, and may all of us have the achievement that you are able to achieve on behalf of the people of Manitoba on this very great accomplishment. Thank you very much.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

I, too, would like to add some words of support and congratulations to the team. It is ironic, when one comes from a prairie province, to think that we have an alpine club and an alpine team.

I would like just to reflect for a second on what they are about to take on. Mountain climbing is something that I have only limited experience with, but it is one of those pursuits that man throughout the ages has followed, in part, "because it is there." Is that not the way they say it? It is an attempt to show that we can conquer those obstacles that nature has put before us. But it is not a recreational jaunt; climbing an 11,000-foot mountain is not a walk. It is a very perilous and dangerous journey that they are about to embark on. I wish them all the support we can and Godspeed as they go to climb Mount Manitoba. Thank you very much.

* * *

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, do I have leave for a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand today to recognize the accomplishments of a group of students from my constituency.

On April 29, 1992, the Silver Heights Collegiate Reach for the Top team won the Manitoba provincial championships held at Dakota Collegiate. The team from Silver Heights won by defeating the team from Carberry. Mr. Speaker, I understand that Carberry is in your constituency, and all I can say is: Better luck next time.

The winning team from Silver Heights Collegiate was comprised of Geoff King, Rick Moore, Kaj Hasselriis and Mike Van de Vijse, and was coached by Mr. Ron Baillie. The team alternates were Yaw Amoah-Gyampoh, Jason Cook, Robyn Holmes and Kelly Cassidy, who have provided intense daily practice for the team and will likely comprise the team for the school next year.

The Silver Heights team will represent Manitoba in the national championships in London, Ontario, from May 22 to May 24, 1992. This win represents the fourth consecutive provincial championship for Silver Heights and their fifth win in the last six years. This is a feat that is unmatched in the rest of Canada and bodes well for their future teams.

I would ask that the members of the House join with me in wishing the Silver Heights Reach for the Top team the best of luck in the Canadian

championships next month and in their future competitions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to rise today and pay tribute to the two Manitobans who have been awarded the Order of Canada in this country and announced yesterday in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker.

Fred Penner has been appointed to the Order of Canada, and of course, Arthur Braid from Manitoba has been appointed to the Order of Canada. I was pleased to see this. I had the pleasure of attending the Happy Feet concert on Sunday with my daughter and Ginny over the weekend. It was my daughter's first concert. She is two years old. I think she knows the words to every song, which really scares me because I cannot remember the words to any song, as anybody knows from any of those lip-sync contests or anything else we have to do.

The concert was terrific. I think the adults enjoyed it even more than the children. He has a special infectious quality that has been passed on to families right across North America in his performances, whether they are on television, whether they are on tapes or videos.

I also know that the Cat's Meow Band that performs with Fred Penner is a terrific band. It is made up, of course, of Manitobans. Gordie Osland, of course, is the executive director of the Children's Festival. In fact, I think part of the concert this weekend was going to the Manitoba Children's Festival schedule in June of this year.

Many other members of the band, of course, have tremendous musical reputations as well as their reputations in performing for children right across, as I say, this continent. So congratulations to the Happy Feet of Fred Penner and his musical talent and to members of his band for this great achievement, the Order of Canada.

I also want to pay tribute to Arthur Braid. Arthur Braid has been a long-time crusader on behalf of law, on behalf of scholarship and scholars, on behalf of teaching at the university, and he has been very, very involved as the president of the Canadian Paraplegic Association and vice-chancellor of the Diocese of Rupertsland.

Many members of this Legislature will know Arthur Braid. He has been a member of the Board of Governors at the University of Manitoba for a number of years. He has also been very involved in presentations dealing with issues affecting disabled people.

He has been involved constantly in the formulation of law, the formulation of policies and the presentation of briefs and legal advice at committee hearings. So congratulations to two great Manitobans on their award of the Order of Canada in Ottawa, yesterday. Thank you very much.

* * *

* (1430)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave for a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Speaker, my message is not going to be quite as happy as the message that we just received from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer).

As I was reading my newspaper today, I read of the death of Brian Pockar. Brian Pockar is a figure skater, or was a figure skater and was a Canadian champion for a number of years. He died today of AIDS, which is beginning to strike all of us.

I have to say this was the first time it struck me personally. I taught Brian when he was a little boy, but more importantly, I remember Brian skating at the Winter Club when my children were out there on their skates, pretty wobbly.

Brian was one of those young figure skaters, and they are not always like this, less concerned with his own development than he was with the whole beauty and art of figure skating. I remember him many days coming by and picking up Jenny and putting her back on her skates so that she could make another circle around the rink or doing the same to Cathi when she failed as well.

He was a very bright boy, very bright. He had tremendous intellectual capacity, at one point considered seriously becoming a doctor but then became so involved in the pursuit of his athletic career that his academics were put on hold while he did pursue that career and was extremely successful.

I think it is important for all of us in the House today to recognize that AIDS is very much with us. It is something that each and every one of us has to deal

with on a personal basis as to our attitudes towards it, but now we are also having to deal with it on a personal basis, as those whom we know and care about find that their lives have been taken because of this dreadful disease.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) in the Chair for the Department of Health; and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Education and Training.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH

* (1440)

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Bob Rose): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Health.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 4. Provincial Mental Health Services, (a) Administration: on page 85 of the Estimates book.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the first question I have is with respect to the indication this past Tuesday from the minister that some announcement would be made today regarding the Urban Hospital Council and Misericordia specifically.

I am wondering if the minister could indicate when that might now be taking place since it did not happen today.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, late yesterday afternoon it was drawn to our attention that not all

the members of the Urban Hospital Council would be present today. Given that it was the first announcement and had some potential impact on the Urban Hospital Council, it was decided to defer the meeting until Wednesday of next week and that is when it has been rescheduled for.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I do not want to take up a lot of time on this, but I am trying to figure out just where the community health assessment fits into this process. The Wolseley residents committee is involved in some sort of health task force and doing a community assessment. Will the recommendations coming out of the Urban Hospital Council with respect to the Misericordia be it all made pending the findings of this community committee or how do the two processes fit together?

Mr. Orchard: Well, in many ways the two processes do not fit together as currently envisioned. When we established the Urban Hospital Council and tasked a number of specific issues to them, the process was to involve issue identification, government Urban Hospital Council members, striking of investigation groups, task force working groups to come around the issue, hopefully bringing together a significant amount of expertise around the issue and then make recommendations to the Urban Hospital Council, which would then choose to pass it on to government.

It was at the time that government makes the recommendation that we would have to consider public input into the decision-making process. At the time there was no specific forum and given the amount of discussion around the two issues in terms of Misericordia specifically, like the emergency room operating hours was one issue that was often advanced and the second one being the acute psychiatric beds.

The Wolseley Residents' Association called a meeting in the area to try and get some thought process around that. I was not at that meeting, I was unable to attend but my deputy attended. I believe following that, not prior to, I had a meeting. Following the public meeting, we had a meeting of myself, my deputy with the some of the key members of the Wolseley Residents' Association. From that, and they expressed some of the concerns because they did not appreciate that without a report from the Urban Hospital Council there was a lot of speculation around what was going to happen. With speculation usually only a

part of the information is available and usually it is the most alarming part.

When they saw that there was a lot more balance to the process, then their perception was, I think it is fair to say, they then wanted to know what role an association like theirs might have in terms of community involvement and community discussion of the issue.

That is being explored and the proposal that I think has come back is one of a community health assessment. Right now, there is a proposal that has been made to see whether we can support them with funding, and right now I have not made a decision on that, or government has not made a decision on that.

That is sort of where we are at, and I guess the Wolseley Residents' Association, as I indicated after the first meeting—I mean, I can remember that association going back to, save the Wolseley elms, back in my quite substantial youth many years ago. This is an association that has had a considerable amount of longevity, and for government to undertake a discussion process with them, there is some legitimate approach, and—I am looking for the right words—a legitimate request can be made.

Where I am concerned is that this will set an example where every community will then ask government, give us money and we will take on an assessment, and there is really no end to the bounds of that. The Wolseley Residents' Association, as I say, has history. Many organizations might come forward without the same focus on the community, without the same longevity. For instance, what would we do with the City Council structure of the—I do not know what the right name is—the community committees?

I could not entertain a request from community committees to undertake such a study. Before I accede to this—and I want to accede to this request by the Wolseley Residents' Association because of their history—I am careful that we do not create expectations that groups can come to government expecting fundings based on a precedent, but clearly, to answer my honourable friend's question, a year ago, had you asked how the Wolseley Residents' Association might fit in this, I would have said I do not know.

Today, they want their part. They want to understand the issue from the fullest standpoint; in other words, from what the challenges are behind government and what government's overall plan is

so they can offer critique as to where its strengths and weaknesses are, where it can fit or not fit and hopefully influence the decision of government in the longer haul.

I believe there is an understanding that some of these current issues are maybe beyond the ability because of an agenda that has been well established beyond the ability of the health study to influence, but their approach is to take a look at the community in terms of the context of the reform of the health care system. It is from that standpoint that I do see a purpose, but I do not know what the bounds are of who you would fund, how you would set up criteria to make decisions, and that is why to date no decision has been made.

I think my honourable friend can see the kind of potential quagmire of requests that government could find themselves in if you accede to one group which I do not think anybody in this room would say does not have longevity and legitimacy and have done a lot of things for that community. I have been in politics long enough to know that the first exception is the precedent, and that is what I am trying to get my mind around.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: The minister may not have acceded to any clear commitment to fitting the recommendations of this community health assessment into government decision making, but the government did accede to providing some dollars, as I understand it, to this community committee for a health needs assessment. I may be wrong or maybe that is still on.

Mr. Orchard: The proposal was there and it has been taken seriously enough to be advanced to myself, and I have questions around it before I can give the final approval.

My honourable friend seemstobe indicating there is an expectation that it is a done deal, and if that is the case, no, not yet, and for the reasons that I have specified, not the fact that they could not do a very good service to the community and assist government in many ways. It is a brand new venture and I want to have parameters around it so that we just simply do not open the floodgates.

* (1450)

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Two quick questions then. By when will the minister make a decision with respect to funding for the Wolseley Residents' Association, and, secondly, when does the minister now anticipate an announcement from the Urban

Hospital Council pertaining to the Misericordia situation?

Mr. Orchard: On the first question, with Wolseley Residents' Association, as soon as possible, but I will be very blunt. Estimates and a number of other agendas have not allowed us a full discussion around the precedent that we may be setting and how we contain requests like that.

As soon as we get a little freed-up time, we will be able to make that decision fairly quickly. As I indicated, I think there is some acceptance by the Wolseley residents committee that government, in terms of its planning agenda and the work that has been done on a number of the issues, particularly the psychiatric bed issue, will have to make its own decisions, so that their input at this late stage of the game—I do not think they are expecting that they would have the opportunity to influence the decision, but guide the implementation possibly or show the weaknesses of where some of the community planning comes in, but to fundamentally impact on the decision, no.

Second question, it is anticipated that the rescheduled Urban Hospital Council meeting for Wednesday next will present the recommendations around the psych beds for the city of Winnipeg, and specifically, I think it is no secret, around Misericordia.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I just want to get a sense of timing of a number of announcements that the minister has indicated he will be making. There is some indication, I think, from the minister that he would be by next week announcing some overall hospital policy or health reform policy generally. Is that still coming next week, or if not, when?

Mr. Orchard: Hopefully next week, and I say that because I think that may well be achievable. I wanted to have that done a month ago, and it has consumed an enormous amount of time developing such a proposal, but we are very close to having that completed, and I am hopeful that next week is the time when we can make the discussion paper and the action plan very public.

I simply say to my honourable friend that unforeseens may derail that, but it is my intention or my wish that we be able to do that next week.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: While we are on unforeseens, would the minister be able to tell us today when we might see the capital estimates?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I can do that. I was thinking we might pass Mental Health, and then we could get into the discussion, because I was expecting this discussion when we hit the next line.

A series of dynamics in terms of the internal planning, and I am going to make a proposition to both my critics, and I will make sure my second critic can—I am going to make a proposition. The sense that I have is that we are winding down Estimates, okay? I am not going to be able to present the capital budget by Monday if that was the anticipated day when we might complete Estimates.

The proposal that I would make is that we deal with the capital—and I have some logistical problems that are going to make the end of May the time when I think I am going to have the capital budget. I will explain why—and would it fit that we deal with the capital budget in concurrence motion? If that does not fit, I would suggest that what we could consider is passing the Estimates, and leave only my Minister's Salary open, and come back with capital estimates for a debate on my Minister's Salary and at the end of May when I expect to have capital planning developed, the reform paper, the reform agenda, will be there and it would open up a discussion for that as well, if my honourable friends want to. I simply say, that despite efforts, I will not have capital program for Monday. The sense that I was getting was that we would probably wind up the Estimates process.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Let me indicate that we will have to, at least from my perspective, want to think about this and I will want to talk to my caucus colleagues about it. I have to say that just when I had thought we could see the light at the end of the tunnel and we would be out of this awful process, I am not very excited about having to reopen all of this at the end of May, but I certainly will report back to my caucus that you do not expect the capital estimates to be ready until the end of May and that you are offering either the option of dealing with it in concurrence or keeping the Minister's Salary open, that line open, and dealing with it in May. Okay.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I think from my point of view and our caucus's point of view it will be good to have a committee and debate when we have a health care reform as we are with capital funding, but certainly I have to still check with caucus because I do not have the privilege or right to make those decisions. I do not want to pretend that I do have,

but certainly from a health care point of view probably it will make more sense if we can have both at the same time and then probably we may need some more time. If you are going to discuss the health care reform and if the package is going to come, I think that will be a good way of opening up the discussion and give us some more time rather than only a short time in Question Period. I would have no difficulty. It could be politically dangerous for the minister, but I think it will be good for us.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, look, I fully recognize that a month from now it could be a significantly more disadvantageous time for me to return to ask for my salary as a line of debate. Let me just tell you two things.

I did not do this with deliberation. We have been working on the reform paper and I simply tell you that is the major reason why my deputy, for instance, has not been at Estimates because he has been significantly involved in that. It has been a considerably greater consumer of all of our time and that is one of the reasons for the delay around the consideration of the capital estimates. But also, I will tell you straight out, capital estimates, because we have changed the location, you will recall a discussion we got into about why the capital planning is in Healthy Public Policy and not attached to the commission.

The reason was that when attached to the institutional side it was institutional driven. Moving it out, we have changed and we have challenged a number of proponents of capital projects to rethink the context from a system-wide standpoint because of where we are coming from, from a system-wide standpoint. That has added the second element of delay.

The capital estimates that I hope to present will show a greater direction than what they have in the past of sort of renewing facilities when the time expired, et cetera, et cetera. There will be a much greater, I think, degree of clarity in the capital estimate presented a month from now in the context of the reform of the health care system and some of the changes that we envision happening over the next couple of years. I think the document will be much more relevant to the future of health care than it would be if I was to rush one through.

I can tell you quite frankly that what I considered doing was simply bringing in a capital document that had two or three changes in it only and nothing else, and everything else on pause, without context of

balance and explanation behind it. All that would have done was raised a whole series of questions, why, why, why, which I would not be prepared to answer as fully as I think I will be able to be prepared to answer come the end of the month. So there was not anything deliberate.

* (1500)

I will tell you the other side. Even though it is a political downside for me to reopen Health Estimates after a discussion paper on reform is public and been around for a couple or three weeks, it also allows us to talk about where it is right and where it is wrong. I have said it, and I have had a number of meetings around the issue with professional groups and others, that, and I would say it to them very directly, health care is changing, and many of us recognize that. I mean, it was recognized yesterday in the presentation. Things are going to change in the health care system.

We believe we have put together an appropriate amount of underpinning to guide the change. I do not recognize, and I do not ever confess that what we propose will be flawless and universally agreed to, but what I have said to those who may well disagree with the process is I am listening, but not just for disagreement but for a suggestion as to how to do it differently and accomplish the same thing.

Even though it is a political downside for me, it is also a political upside for me in that I am going to challenge critics, both of you and your respective parties, that if you do not like what is happening, let us get around to talking about what we should do. If your suggestion is better than what we have been able to put together, I have not hesitated to accept that, but it is a debate that will not be just a hair pull. I am not even concerned about that, but I would far sooner have my Estimates done with, rather than come back.

If that is a proposal that both critics could take back to their respective caucuses, I have talked to my House leader, and he agrees with either process, either dealing with it on the concurrence motion or leaving the salary open and then coming back and debating it then. It does not matter to him which way, and so I can say the proposal I make, either one that is accepted by the opposition parties will be acceptable to us.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I think that will give us a good opportunity to put our views on the record also. My only concern is time,

how much time will be given, if the House leaders can work that out.

Also, I think if there was a possibility of the package being released in advance so that other people in terms of professionals and groups can come and participate and the media will have the opportunity more to scrutinize the whole process, and they can also develop their viewpoint, which is going to be a very important point of view—how the message will go across. I think that will be very positive for the taxpayers.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we could not open up this committee to public input, but clearly, by the time—let us say that it is the end of May or towards the end of May when we revisit the Estimates, by then I would expect at least three weeks of public discussion around the reform paper, so that those opinions will be out there and could be discussed in this committee amongst the two critics and myself.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Back to Mental Health Services, I would like to get an understanding of this organizational chart of who is who. I know that Mr. Toews is ADM for this whole area. I understand that John Ross is an executive director. Could the minister clarify for what?

Mr. Orchard: Well, you might recall that Richard Voss has taken about a 20-month, or thereabouts, contract with the government of Bermuda, and John Ross who—I am correct, John was in the competition originally, but Richard Voss was the successful candidate in the competition for that position. John was second place in terms of the competition, and rather than reopen the competition, we approached Mr. Ross to see whether he would consider taking on the role. We did that very deliberately because it was a very close competition. Either of the individuals, we were satisfied, could have undertaken the role quite well, but for a number of reasons, including where Mr. Ross was working, the decision was made to go with Mr. Voss at the time.

We are into a very, very advanced workload in mental health reform. We could not leave that position open for a period of time, and, fortunately, Mr. Ross accepted the challenge, came over and is occupying that position.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I believe Mr. Ross was in Family Services. My question is just simply, what

experience or background does he have in the whole mental health field?

Mr. Orchard: Program experience, of course, came from the regional, because he served both Health and Family Services in regional services planning, but management skills were equally as important to us in having the individual in the job.

As I said, in the competition from which Mr. Voss was selected, it was a close competition with not all that much to choose between the two, so moving over, we did not compromise the role and the undertaking. We had two very competent candidates.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: The minister had suggested a little while ago that if I had concerns about the cross-cultural counselling unit, that I should raise them again at this point, so I would like to do that briefly.

Since our last discussion, I understand that there has been in fact a decision made with respect to not a direct financial contribution from the government to the cross-cultural counselling unit but, in fact, a secondment of an individual from the department to this program for a considerable period of time.

I am wondering why that decision was made. What kind of cost-effective analysis was applied in that decision? What will it mean for the program?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we are working with Mount Carmel to try and see whether a secondment or an individual service might be made available. The decision may be in 10 days or so.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Is the minister saying that no decision has been made with respect to moving a person from the Mental Health Division, from his department, to Mount Carmel Clinic for purposes of co-ordinating the cross-cultural counselling unit?

Mr. Orchard: That is what I am saying. The proposal is under discussion.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, could the minister indicate, as part of that proposal, who the individual is and what salary he or she is now making.

* (1510)

Mr. Orchard: No, I cannot, and even if I knew that I am not going to indicate that today because we are in discussions and negotiations.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Could the minister indicate if he will provide us with some information once the

decision is made in terms of the individual, the terms of the agreement and an analysis from the point of view of cost-effectiveness? I am thinking specifically in terms of a fairly small grant request from this unit for helping them make a transition between no funding to United Way funding as opposed to a fairly, what I understand, high-paid civil servant being moved over to this program.

Mr. Orchard: I will provide the details of the arrangement when we complete them.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Just one more question on the cross-cultural counselling unit. The last time we discussed this, there was clearly a difference of opinion and we were operating from different perspectives around what had transpired over the last number of months or the last year or so. It was my understanding based on letters from the Mount Carmel Clinic Board and from discussions with people in the field that, in fact, there had been information passed to the department as early as the fall of 1991 and that there were discussions at the branch level and that there in fact was a proposal put forward from the branch to the minister for consideration of some sort of funding either on an interim basis or an ongoing basis.

Has the minister reviewed that situation? Can he indicate if that was the case?

Mr. Orchard: I am told that we were not considering provincial funding until a meeting that was held on January 22, 1992.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Well, I am not going to pursue it. Obviously, the part of my question concerning discussions taking place between the department and the program as early as the fall of 1991, the minister is going to ignore that part of it. I will not pursue it at this point. I do not think it really matters except I think it is important to not discredit any community group and to indicate that they were fairly rigorous about informing the government of their situation and seeking funding at the earliest possible opportunity.

I would like to ask just a couple of questions about the issue I was pursuing the other day and then make a suggestion that I had hinted at earlier. I went back to review material in this whole area of mental health services because of the attack I was under by both the Minister of Health and the Liberal Health critic about my questions pertaining to optimum number of beds and sort of an overall framework for making health care reform decisions.

Under such an attack, I start to question myself and wonder if maybe I have been off base and not retaining information very well, but upon pursuing numerous studies in this field, I realized that what I was asking for was not at all out of line or out of question, that it was very much a part of any planning process around health care reform. Every study I looked at talked about determining what is an appropriate number of beds in an ideal situation with the proper community supports in place and proper dispersal of those beds across regional lines.

Those numbers vary. I know from studies in the United States that an optimal number of beds is considered to be 19 to 20 per 100,000. I see from the Manitoba Health Organization's own study that this is a very active issue for discussion, that in fact the MHO report—and this is very recent—of May 1990 makes clear recommendation that the department carry out an epidemiological study so that there is a framework from which to make decisions about health care reform.

This MHO report talks about what is an ideal number of beds per capita. It talks about the ideal number of psychiatrists for a population base, it makes all kinds of recommendations and suggestions for further study to get at that information. I want the record to show for the benefit of both the Minister of Health and for the Liberal Health critic that it is a reasonable and sensible way to go. It is not ludicrous or silly or frivolous for anyone to be asking these kinds of questions and to be suggesting that the department has this kind of base information before it pursues a major task such as mental health reform.

I would assume that in fact the department has such undertakings and some base-line information and should be able to tell us the current state of affairs with respect to beds and patients, where they are at, what their needs are right now. Under ideal situations, with proper community supports and dispersment of beds and services throughout a province, like Manitoba, that provides the basis for further decision making and health care reform.

I am not about to now ask for all that information. However, I think it would be useful for the minister to provide us with the precise number of beds now, optimal number of beds based on the department's studies, precise number of psychiatrists per population now, ideal ratio between psychiatrists and population, the types of support services that should be part of any kind of health care reform

program, the gaps in programs right now, the recidivism rates of mental health patients, and on and on and on. Instead of asking all of that, I would make the following suggestion. We have all received questions provided by the Canadian Mental Health Association for the purposes of helping us through this Estimates process and giving us some suggestions.

They have sent these questions to all of us including the minister. In the interest of saving time and pursuing this whole area in a constructive way, I would ask the minister if he could provide us with a written response to all of those questions as soon as it is possible from the department's workload point of view.

Mr. Orchard: When did that survey come in?

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: You mean the request, the questions—April 23. It is very recent.

Mr. Orchard: I have to tell my honourable friend I have not seen the survey, but normally we try to reply to those surveys. I have no hesitation in making my honourable friends part of the reply that we would make back to the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Mr. Cheema: I wanted to ask some questions on the same survey, but I think it will be best that way, because each and every member does have the copies—if the minister would make the efforts through his department to get to some of the real numbers and some of the answers the Mental Health Association is seeking, and if we could also get copies of those surveys.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I presume each political party is to reply, and no doubt they would give me the same courtesy of having the ministry availed of the wisdom of their reply in the surveys as well. I am willing to share our thinking, if you can share yours.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Maybe the minister did not understand the actual question and suggestion. This is actually a set of questions that is prepared every year for all of us to help us through the Estimates process. They are questions directed in terms of the department's activities, and normally we would have the time and advance notice to be able to go through these questions to pick and choose and ask the minister directly for verbal response. In the interest of saving time, given where we are at in Estimates, my suggestion is that the minister take a look at this and wherever

possible, where the information exists and it is not a problem for him, to give us the written response to each of those questions rather than us taking up the time now to do it.

Mr. Cheema: I would agree with the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). The questions are in terms of the numbers and some of the things which are already happening within the department of mental health. They are not policy questions to each and every party.

* (1520)

So probably for us to go through all of them, if we have the time, I think we would love to do it, because it is quite important for them to know how the reform is coming along. I am sure the minister would like to have our views. They are well known, they are all over the place, and we are not going to change them today or tomorrow. They will be there until we die probably.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I just wanted to add a couple of comments. The member for St. Johns has said a few things, and she has expressed her views on what I said the other day. I think it is very important that if the target numbers and everything were known, if everything were functioning so well, why do we have a problem now?

We are having a reform because those things are not functioning. When you are reforming a system, you want to reform to the best of your ability and be flexible and make sure the patient care does not suffer. That is the ideal situation. But if somebody will be so ingenious as to give the numbers in reform, that person probably will get the Order of Canada in health care in this country right now. It is very difficult to find those numbers.

We are talking about the mental health system. I am not talking about, in general, the others, and there is other data available. The member for St. Johns has said that. I was specifically talking about the Manitoba health reform. I just want that to be on the record, because there was in no way a reflection on the whole process, but I think it is a very important point. Specifically, you do not want to target. If we would have a target point, then somebody would say: You know, I do not agree with your target; you have already made up your mind; you already know what you want to do.

So how do you reform? Reform has to have real meaning attached to it. That means consultation. That means making tough choices. That means

being flexible. That means being practical. That means having a look at the ability of the taxpayer to pay for the cost. I think those things have to be taken into account. I just want to add those comments.

My question is, the one I was asking the other day on the Brandon area, the Westman region, what kind of policies and things are going to be taking place there. I have received a letter—and so has the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and so has the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), and the minister, Jim McCrae, the Honourable Jim McCrae, the minister responsible—from the concerned citizens in the Brandon and area Mental Health Care Providers. Mary Wright is the president of the organization.

These are the group home health care providers for the mentally ill patients. They have a very serious concern and a very realistic one, and I would like the minister's staff to review those concerns because—[interjection]

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson—

An Honourable Member: What is the date on that?

Mr. Cheema: The date is March 11.

In fact, I met with the group the other day, and their concern is a very real one. The concern is that they have patients—how you want to call them?—clients, whatever name you want to give them. I do not want to alienate any group, naming specific patients, but certainly, with the number of patients they are taking care of in their homes, there are certain difficulties they are experiencing. Specifically why I am saying that right now is because, when the system is going to be reformed in that area, a number of patients who are already within the system, are going to go into the community to some extent.

If there is already a problem within the system, I think we should correct it and make sure that some of the major issues are respite care, hiring and firing people, quality control and assurance of mental health services, issues of backup system, issues of the crisis centre, issues in terms of providing security to the individuals who are going to be providing the care, whether they are going to get some kind of training.

Those are very, very real issues, and I would ask the minister, his staff, to meet with the group. They are not complaining. They are, they were, working on a nonpolitical basis. That is why they have sent

to all of us. I took the opportunity to meet with them, and I made a commitment that I will discuss the issue. We do not want to make any negative impact out of that.

I think we have to look at the problems and try to solve them, specifically the regional Manitoba health council, have a look at the letter and try to meet with the group and see what can be done right now. I think that will help, and they will feel more comfortable. There are a lot of patients they have in their care, a lot of them, I think about 60 or 65, probably more, but that is only one group. They may have more patients in their care.

I can give a copy of the letter to the minister and ask them to have a look at the system. I think that will help to come to grips with some of the changing needs of these patients, especially in that area and specifically in those communities where it is not easy for them to, in the case of urgent need, go to a given hospital and get the treatment; for example, somebody in Dauphin or other places where eventually the patient has to be moved.

If you do not have a backup system, you do not have a special client-oriented system, then we will have problems. It will probably take one or two patients to really go into the situation and then quote, unquote, the mental health system.

The interest groups will be very upset, and that may cause some problem, but that can be improved. The time is there. I do not think we have lost any time. That can be corrected. If it is possible for even the minister's office to be in touch with them and meet with the group, that is a major group. They are not just one or two individuals.

The families who are involved in their care are also concerned because of the many issues that are involved. As I said, the emergency care, the respite care and then, for example, if somebody has a mentally ill patient in their home for 365 days a year, it is very tough for them to continue to provide care. If they have to hire somebody else, how do they do it? Secondly, what kind of requirements are going to be put in place, and thirdly, what kind of training?

When are you going to release more clients into the community, there has to be some kind of training or some kind of expert opinion available as a backup system within the community, especially during the week after five o'clock, or weekends, or nights, there have to be crisis lines where they can reach and ask for simple advice.

That would be helpful because sometimes patients get very aggressive, and things can really get worse. I think that would be one pitfall if—and not only specifically with this group home system, but anything else. I think that needs to be looked at. I am sure the Regional Mental Health Council are probably already doing it, but I am not aware of that. If they can get in touch with this group, that would be very, very valuable.

I will get the copy both to the minister's office—

Mr. Orchard: Just to let my honourable friend know, the letter was referred to the regional council with the hope that they would meet. I do not know whether they have been able to arrange the meeting, but, yes, we take those concerns quite seriously because, I guess it is fair to say, we are not dealing with oftentimes easy to manage situations.

It is going to present, in my opinion, quite a different challenge than, for instance, respite care for seniors in the long-term care program. There gets to be significant comfort around familiar surroundings for someone with mental illness who is living in the community, and a disruption of that can be pretty traumatic and difficult to handle.

I guess what we are trying to do is develop a common-sense approach to handle the issues, to provide that kind of support with a sensitivity around how difficult it may be to manage in some individual cases.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, this is not one or two cases, and these are patients who are in the community already. Some of the patients are going to be released into the community when you are going to have changes at the Brandon Mental Health Centre.

These individuals are not negative or they are not critically oriented. I want to make it very clear. They just came to us because we were the first ones. We just made a call and we made an effort for them to come and speak to us so that we can get a first-hand idea. It was knowledge for me even personally to know that such and such things were happening.

* (1530)

They are concerned, and they said that they would like to have an input. They do not want to be negative. They want to have an input and want to make it clear. There is no way we want to alienate a major group and put them in "a political spectrum" which they do not want.

Mr. Orchard: No, I do not take my honourable friend's discussion to lead there at all. You are pointing out a recognition of an issue and a challenge that we need to get discussions and hopefully some resolution of. I mean, that is very appropriate.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell us how they are going to deal with the mentally ill patients in the acute situation in some of the rural hospitals and some of the northern areas? How are we going to have a system that will not only meet the acute care needs which it has not been met in the past, not a fault of a specific government, but the way the system was put in place because of the shortage of health care professionals, because of the shortage of no continuity of care because there was no community backup system, how those things are coming along? How does the government view their own policy would change the major flaws in the system?

Mr. Orchard: We discussed the issue briefly the other day when the member for St. Johns was wanting to know if there had been some numbers around designation of beds in some of our acute care facilities, particularly in northern Manitoba. That is part of the discussion that our Regional Mental Health Councils are undertaking right now.

In general terms, I think the way we see the opportunities unfolding is that in certain hospitals serving a region, there could well be a legitimate opportunity that could be met with the designation of several beds in a facility. The designation of the beds is one thing. It is the care that you are able to provide is the second area.

In that regard, we are approaching through, specifically, the human resources committee that we have working with the ministry. We have a number of areas where we are undertaking discussion. One of them, for instance, deals with family practitioners, general practitioners, and an opportunity to access six months to a year. I will not tie myself down to the months, but basically an opportunity for a family practitioner, general practitioners, to have upgrading in terms of their ability in psychiatry, so you would have a generalist specialist concept.

As well, I see a role for the psychologist profession, and I also see a role for—and this is very futuristic—but for a baccalaureate-prepared RPN, because we are working with the association over the next period of time on curriculum development

of the two-year RPN program and a baccalaureate four-year prepared program.

Now I am not narrowing the opportunities to that, but those are some of the immediate directions that are being envisioned so that you will have the combination of the opportunity for acute admissions, but that by itself does not solve the problem unless you have the ability to assist the individual while admitted. The three options are being discussed right now at human resources committee and other options may well be pursued from that committee and from ongoing discussions the department has.

Mr. Cheema: I just want to touch the issue of the mix of services in terms of the practitioners, the mental health workers, plus the RPN program to which the minister has already made a commitment. The issue—the minister also gave statistics, and that was, I think, a few weeks or months ago. It was said that 70 to 75 percent of mental health problems, through the Health Services Commission data, are seen by general practitioners.

There is a less amount of problems seen by the specialists, and they are seeing more acute and more complicated cases and setting up a system where the general practitioners in the rural communities and northern communities will have upgrading, six months or one year. I know the program is being evolved because I am practically part of that program already, personally.

We have functioned out of Seven Oaks Hospital for six years successfully, four general practitioners working with the four specialists doing the same calls, the same responsibilities. That way we have saved, and similarly I think the other hospitals are approaching the system. It is cost effective, but it is also a backup system. You have a certified specialist who is available in case of difficulty, but that has been functioning. That is in line with your own statistics that the general practitioners and family practitioners do play a role, a very important role.

I would encourage the minister to set up a program. I understand so far that the rural communities are being considered, but we as a professional group have also made a representation that the people who are already within the system in the city of Winnipeg should be given opportunity. Some individuals we have, I would not say myself, but other people have done more work than us for even eight or 10 years, specifically working on a

basis that is very, very cost effective on a sessional basis or a fee for service and has not caused the problem of shortage of specialists in any way.

What has been happening right now, the psychiatrists who work within the hospital system, their fee schedules are very low as compared to somebody where they have to perform more work and more responsibility as compared with outside the system. But then you have this backup or the general practitioner-specialist system that has been acting as a bridge for a long time. To reinforce that, to make it more logical and academic, you have to have a special qualification. I think those things will be very helpful if the program can start it, and, as far as I can tell, it is supposed to, sometime in June or July of this year. Then it can be done on a long-term basis so that you do not interrupt the pattern of practices. People can come and spend time and get their training, and then they have to pass the exam and get accreditation.

It can be achieved even in the Winnipeg teaching hospitals, and also part of the training can take place in a place like Dauphin or Swan River area and also in the Thompson area. For some of the physicians, it may not be possible to leave their full practices and come and get the training done, so we will encourage the minister to look into that. It will take care of many of the shortage problems, and it has in fact. That is why you are not seeing, again I would say first and third, stories of shortage of psychiatrists, because somebody else has filled that gap very well on a cost-effective basis.

We are not seeing major problems within the system as long as you have a back-up system. It cannot totally replace what is important, but at least one can substitute and one can complement, if that is the right word, and that has been functioning. Other jurisdictions are having a good look at the system because they are working for anaesthesia, they are working for gynecology, and now it is working for psychiatry. So we will ask the minister to look into that in a serious way and make it possible.

I may have interest, not a monetary gain here, but interest that some individual I have worked with for five years, six years, we are doing calls that the other individuals are doing on a regular basis, and doing the same work, and it has been very, very effective. I was told the Victoria Hospital is making the same plea, same as the Grace Hospital, and Misericordia was trying to get in the same kind of complement to

their own psychiatry level. I think that would be helpful, that experience has been proven very effective. I must say that the department took a chance then, five years ago, but it worked.

* (1540)

Mr. Orchard: I think that is accurate, and there is another avenue that certainly within the ministry we think is important to pursue and that is a liaison between psychologists and general practitioners. It appears to me that without the necessity of the general practitioner doing an upgrade, there can be developed, on the basis of regional availability of staff, a working relationship outside the city of Winnipeg with psychologists and general practitioners who can work as a pretty effective team, so that is why I mentioned that relationship in my earlier answer as well as the upgrade and the baccalaureate program for RPNs.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell us what kind of model—I do not want to pre-empt the whole process—they are having a look at in terms of providing counselling services where you do not need a general practitioner, you do not need a psychiatrist. You simply need a mental health worker, and setting up a system in a given community to provide those kinds of services.

Mr. Orchard: I do not think we can say anybody's model is particularly the one we are working towards achieving. I guess you would have to say it is a made-in-Manitoba model, building on a community mental health worker now and, as the process matures, having a greater opportunity for liaison and working relationships with other trained disciplines, as we have discussed already in terms of the general practitioner, psychology and baccalaureate RPNs several years down the road when that program as we anticipate becomes a reality.

I guess we have not varied in our thinking from our original presentation that we made back in fall of '88 with the first discussion paper in terms of the multidisciplinary team approach, because I think one of the clear—and my honourable friend has alluded to the success of the thinking, this is not an accurate statement, this is a general statement I am making. There has been a tendency in the past for mental illnesses of all severity to access the system at the most professionally trained point, the psychiatrist. That seems to have been a tendency in the past, and, clearly, successful mental health systems that we have seen have varying points of entry for individuals depending on the severity of

their illness. We do not always need to have the advice of the most highly trained professional to serve an individual's needs.

If fact, we probably waste professional expertise by having them undertake service provision that others could very well provide in certainly the opportunity for a more economic fashion, but certainly in a service delivery environment closer to the individual's home, hence the multidisciplinary team approach.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would like to ask the minister, has he or his department reviewed the report from the Law Reform Commission about sterilization in terms of the mentally incompetent patients?

Mr. Orchard: I am going to get an answer, but I have not received any briefing.

My ADM thinks that Dr. Rodger may have taken a look at it, and he is going to check and see whether he provided us with any written advice. I did not receive any that I can remember, but I appreciate I get a chunk of correspondence through the office. I am not always up to speed on varying recommendations, but I do not recall any coming in from the perspective of the ministry. We will check and see.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, it is a very controversial issue and very, very critically tough, and I would like the minister to at least have somebody review the whole thing and see, because when they asked for the review the then Attorney General was Mr. Gerry Mercier, and I think he asked for the review at that time.

It is a long, long process, for eight, 10 years these things were going on, and certainly a report came back and as far as I could tell the report was not very conclusive. They left it open. They said that politicians should be making the decision in the Legislative Building. So, I think the way it was started and they left it the same way, but they gave pros and cons and what should and what should not be done, but certainly those issues are going to come. Eventually a decision has to be made, but then I do not want to prejudge or myself even say something here and then be in hot water. I would just want to know if the minister has reviewed the report. It is quite educational in terms of when you start the process, and then everyone has their own views, and once they read and know the truth of life and so many facts come to the reality and everybody

backs off because it is very risky. They are asking somebody else to make the decision. That was my conclusion from the whole report, but certainly I would like to know the minister's view and if not today, maybe sometime later, once he has a chance to review it.

My next question is in terms of the Mental Health Review Board. Can the minister tell us what the waiting period is now in terms of if somebody is applying to review their case in front of the Mental Health Review Board?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, with the only exceptions being adjournments that are requested, all of our reviews are being accomplished within the 21 days. The only exemption that I am informed happens is where there is a request for adjournment for reasons of, obviously they are probably not prepared or whatever reason, and those take longer. Those go beyond the 21 days, but could be scheduled. Like, the scheduling part of it in getting the changes that we made, in terms of the roster system with the legislation, had allowed us to achieve that 21-day target that we had set up.

Mr. Cheema: Can the minister tell us, have they received any major complaints in regard to The Mental Health Act, the new amendments?

Mr. Orchard: No, I think that things are working fairly well.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, that is an indicator that things are functioning. We just want to know that what we did in this Legislative Building was a useful exercise for people, and if there are not many complaints then things are functioning.

Mr. Orchard: Well, you know, my honourable friend brings up quite an interesting issue, because we got into a fair little bit of controversy at the committee time. I guess, had my honourable friend not been balanced in his view we might have pushed through some amendments that we were not ready to bring through. Experience says that today it indicates that the legislation as amended has worked reasonably well, and I am going to pre-empt my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), but as long as he does not get tangled up in Calgary tomorrow, if he gets the opportunity on the Order Paper, he will be introducing the health care directives legislation.

* (1550)

An Honourable Member: It is already done.

Mr. Orchard: I tell my honourable friend, our analysis is that the legislation he is bringing in is very, very close to my honourable friend's proposal with the exception that you might recall the issue in terms of The Mental Health Act of the next of kin.

We have added an amendment that we believe meets with the concerns that were expressed last year at committee stage, so that the potential for the issue arising that was identified last year should be mitigated against with Mr. McCrae's legislation.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, one very important question and very practical one is: Can the minister tell us through his staff is each and every patient when they are admitted to a psych unit being read their rights?

Do we have a person in each and every hospital from the hospital's point of view that it may be their responsibility? I think we should make sure that patients are given a full reading about their rights and their responsibilities under The Mental Health Act, because some patients have complained and this is a practical problem. I think it should be looked at.

Mr. Orchard: I cannot answer that today, but we will check and endeavour to provide that answer.

Mr. Cheema: I am not aware whether that is a part of each and every hospital's policy. They may do that, but whether that is to some extent if the patient is asking, but the policy should be that to each and every patient who is admitted to the psych unit should know what their rights are in terms of The Mental Health Act.

It may have some problem in the beginning, but it will avoid a lot of problems for the staff and for the patients and for the advocacy groups, so they understand what is and what is not possible, and so they can have access to services, because after five o'clock they do not have access to any services and that is a major problem.

Mr. Orchard: Chair recommendation.

Mr. Cheema: I think my next question is not on mental health, but I just wanted to take the opportunity to ask about the issue of the LPNs report yesterday that the member for St. Johns (Wasylcia-Leis) did ask questions. We had the privilege of only two questions, so I could not get my question into the Question Period. I just wanted to know how this report fits into the minister's own

philosophy or the government's policy in terms of the future of LPNs in Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: I met with the president and the executive director of the association yesterday afternoon. Their report is wanting a response from government by May 1. I indicated that I simply was unable to accede to that. From some of the reasons behind our—the reason why I have not been able to get a capital budget that I am comfortable with presenting at the Estimates time, and I am going to try to—well, I told them we would respond to their report as quickly as we could get appropriate staff and have our appropriate discussions.

At the same time, there is a report that has come out of Education and Training which has some suggestions and some observations that we want to have an understanding of in terms of balancing a response to the LPN association report.

Mr. Cheema: So the minister is saying that it will take a few more weeks to have a formal response to the association, and if the minister would not mind sending a copy of that response to us also so that we would have some answer to our questions.

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I want to try to give them some kind of direction and response. As well, you know the issue came up about the moratorium at Red River Community College, et cetera, and again I reflect back to the employers' survey that we are undertaking so that hopefully we have that guidance. Right now I do not know whether we are on target, but we had hoped that we would have our replies all back in by the 31st of May so that we could by the end of June hopefully compile and have some sense around the employers' survey which would certainly help us in developing a plan of action around the LPN nursing education issue. There is no question the uncertainty is causing a lot of dismay and consternation and unease amongst the membership.

Mr. Cheema: I think one issue the minister can at least communicate to the hospitals is that they are trying to streamline their budgets, but when they are doing that, some of the positions which were occupied by the LPNs are now being taken by the health care aide workers and that is an major concern. It may look good for the short term from a financial point of view—I would not say very good but look comparatively good—but in the long run are those things going to be practical for the patients and their well-being?

I think those things have to be clarified, and there has to be direction from the minister's office making sure that the patient care should not suffer at the expense of making those changes at a rate, or when we do not know the outcome of so many health care reforms which are going to take place. I will give an example. It is a good idea to put all the patients who are panelled for a personal care home on one floor or put the patients for long-term care on one floor, and that will save a lot of staff. But, to replace every LPN with a health care aide worker, or significant health care aide worker who are replacing LPNs or they may seem to be replacing LPNs in the future, I think that is a realistic fear.

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

The issue here is the LPNs have asked me and they said that we do more than shake hands with the patient or talk to them. They said that we are performing duties which are very valuable and they are doing it in the North and other places where you do not have an RN and you do not have a doctor so they are doing all this work.

So basically it is a question of demand and supply, but there has to be some respect to their professional capabilities because if we do not use those resources, do not use their skills, they are going to go away. That is a serious concern.

I understand within the hospital they have to make a decision, but the government can send a strong message that just to save a few dollars in certain circumstances may not be good in the future, and if, for example, something goes wrong, then I think we will have a really terrible problem in terms of explaining why such action was not taken.

As long as there is approach with more caution in terms of approach with a more realistic view and approach to make sure patients best interests are kept in mind, I think that kind of letter from the minister's office to the institutions will be very helpful, will be reassuring to the LPNs that government is not after their job, they simply want to reorganize the system, and they have a role to play.

I think that is what the LPNs are saying, and they understand the system is going to change and everybody else does understand, but I just wanted to make sure that the minister's office has been aware of some of the things which are happening and in terms of not only dealing with saving some of

the tax dollars, but also making sure that you do not end up in a tragedy.

* (1600)

For example, a health care worker who has no qualification in terms of dealing with the patient care, it could be very dangerous if there are problems.

Mr. Orchard: Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I accept my honourable friend's caution but, you know, hopefully any decisions made in the staffing patterns by management will have been carefully thought through, so that those sorts of circumstances are not likely to emanate from those decisions.

Clearly the LPN today, if I could kind of reflect a general impression, I think they are really struggling as to whether they have got any friends anywhere. I mean, all of us have had our discussions with the LPNs. They are concerned about the support they have received from, for instance, the union.

They are very concerned about that. Right or wrong, they have relayed to me that they do not believe they have been supported adequately by the union. They make the case that in the workplace, the registered nurses in the supervisory position have often made decisions that they believe compromises their profession. I guess, to put it bluntly, there is an awful lot of turf war dynamics that is causing consternation amongst the LPNs. I think it is fair to say they are questioning whether government supports them, I support them as a professional care giver. Despite efforts to try and work through a number of problems that are certainly complex, there is no one single solution to some of the challenges that they face.

You know, there is even the impression, I think it is fair to say, that they do not trust government. They do not trust the registered nurse, they do not trust the union. They are really looking for someone who is going to provide some answers. In reality the association, I think, the leadership will take the issue on and try to come up with a reasonable working plan that provides some guidance to their membership and assures a place in the future for the LPN.

I have said I am willing to work with them in achieving those kinds of goals. I indicated that to them, you know, in the past. As with most professional endeavours, there is a lot of work that has to be done by the professional and their

organization themselves to come to grips with challenges.

Clearly the health care system is changing. There are financial pressures that were not there before. Managers are making decisions on the basis of that to the best of their ability and knowledge. We are into a dynamic of change. It is challenging, but it also is an opportunity, if viewed appropriately, and the effort is made to work in the context that change is going to happen and to make sure that you are part of the change rather than affected by it and that is all.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine): Item 4.(a) Administration: (1) Salaries \$396,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$132,000—pass.

Item 4.(b)(1) Salaries \$186,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$39,700—pass.

Item 4.(c)(1) Salaries \$1,052,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,483,500—pass; (3) External Agencies \$2,470,700—pass; (4) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$502,700—pass.

Item 4. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: (d)(1) Salaries \$993,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$161,200—pass.

Item 4. Brandon Mental Health Centre: (e)(1) Salaries \$20,300,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$3,023,200—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$2,549,200—pass.

Item 4. Selkirk Mental Health Centre: (f)(1) Salaries \$15,943,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,546,000—pass.

Resolution 68: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$45,677,600 for Health, Provincial Mental Health Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 5. Health Services: (a)(1) Salaries \$214,500—sorry.

Mr. Cheema: Did you pass the Mental Health Services?

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine): The item did not pass. Do you have a question, the honourable member for The Maples?

Mr. Cheema: Yes, we have lots of questions on this one.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, can I take the opportunity to introduce Mr. Frank deCock, Associate Deputy Minister of Health. I think he is no stranger to the committee.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, my first question is in terms of—we have been from the beginning, and the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) was very anxious to know, and I am anxious now to know—what is the policy of this administration in terms of the funding of the hospitals and what kinds of communications they have communicated to the hospitals so that the hospitals can have their budget for next year?

* (1610)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, back about mid-February we started discussions with the hospitals and gave them verbal indication as to what they could expect in terms of funding, hospital by hospital. I am talking about major hospitals. We did not do this with every facility in Manitoba.

Let us deal with the Urban Hospital Council membership hospital by hospital. We indicated a commitment which would cover existing contracts that had been negotiated, would give them an indication of the new program, if any, that was approved institution by institution and an indication on what kind of an increase budget on the supply side that they could expect, but at that time there was no commitment in terms of what we would provide in terms of funding for any new contract negotiations that were going on.

Subsequent to those discussions, circa mid-February, we have had two things subsequent to that. Bargaining mandate was given to the MHO on April 11, and within the last 10 days the Urban Hospital Councils themselves have received the formal communication as to what the budget allocations will be to the Urban Hospital Council members. Then we expect to have written communication go out to the balance of our hospitals within the next two weeks.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell us—I mean, he has said that they did not communicate as far as the new contracts are concerned, but what commitment have they made in terms of the numbers for each and every hospital? Can we go hospital by hospital, starting with Concordia, Seven Oaks or Grace Hospital, and let us first deal with a community hospital. I want to know how much each and every hospital is getting in terms of the dollars, and what was the request from each and every hospital to the minister's office?

Mr. Orchard: I guess I did not quite transmit the contents of the letter that went out in the last 10 days. With the verbal instruction that went out mid-February each hospital is developing their plan of action around the expectations of funding that was communicated to them in mid-February. The letters that have gone out in the last 10 days do not have the finalized numbers in them. Is that fair? We are expecting plans back, reaction back, from each institution.

We have discussed this issue because we knew that there would be—the indications I got from earlier on in the Estimates is that each hospital was going to be asked, okay, what did they ask for, et cetera. I am told by—and when I think about it, it is accurate. We have not dealt with individual hospital budgets and requests. So what I would like to do, if this meets with committee concurrence, is to indicate the level of funding last year that we had committed and approved in the budget and the level of funding that we are committing for this year, which includes capital, the total commitment, and to indicate what we see today because, remember, we have not got final numbers back from the hospitals in terms of what their year-end reconciliations are.

The best information that I want to share today is an indication of what the level of deficits are in the hospitals. This is where I think there has been maybe some confusion about what the level of funding is. We are budgeting—the figure is about 6.1 percent more in our hospital line this year over last year, and that is an expectation which is an amalgam of increases for known contracts. Included in that is the bargaining mandate that we gave on April 11, there is an estimate for a global supply increase, and there is also the capital retirement cost of any expansions that were commissioned in the last 12 months or that will go into this year or be part of this year's operating budget in some of the institutions.

So that 6.1 percent is roughly the \$53-million increase in terms of budget request that we are asking approval on. The first call on that, it is fair to say, will be the deficits that would have been incurred by the institutions.

We can give a global figure as to what we expect the deficits across the hospital system to be, to give you an idea. That was what the information development was to give us. That being the first call on the budget, it will then have to be retired first, will

give one the sense of how much additional budget is there this year for the new and expanded purpose.

I am not sure whether we can give my honourable friend—do we have a total of what the original requests were? We have not seen those yet? We do not have them.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, in these 40 hours this was the question which led to many, many more questions. I asked simply one question. I think there are many major issues here.

I would ask the minister, first of all, are they waiting for their health care reform package? Is the minister waiting for his reform policy before the major commitments are being made? Is that the line they are taking, or they are just waiting for hospital requests, and then they are going to base their decision based on the recommendation they have given to the MHO in terms of the contract negotiations and other expenditures and other operating grants?

There are too many things I am asking in one question, but basically I want to know if they are going to be guided by the principle of health care reform and when they are providing a specific budget to a given hospital. Secondly, are we going to see a health care reform package which will deal with the community hospitals as well as the teaching hospitals at the same time?

Mr. Orchard: Okay, a whole series of questions there. Basically, the communication that we gave to the hospitals back in mid-February indicated—and that was before. I believe we gave them that indication before we presented the budget and the Estimates. So the verbal communication gave the best indication that we could without compromising the budget as to how much our budget was going to go up this year.

* (1620)

Bear in mind, and this is where some of the confusion about whether it was a \$53-million increase or only a \$3 million or whatever the numbers were, because deficits come out of any increase. That is the way the policy has always operated. That is why I always indicated to questioners, have you asked the other side of the question as to whether there was a deficit?

Because that is first call and naturally—let us just pick a figure, let us say there was to be a \$5-million budgetary increase to a hospital, and they finished the last fiscal year with a \$3-million deficit. They

would have \$2 million essentially of new money to spend, because the deficit would be retired first. Conversely, any hospital that finished the year with—is it a 2 percent surplus?—if 2 percent of their budget was in surplus, they would receive an increase and keep the surplus for current year needs.

But the reform package, the reform paper is going to be across the system. It is going to involve not only the teaching hospitals, but community and rural in terms of how they will fit in terms of serving patient needs in a reformed system. This does not pick one area of the health care system and isolate it out. It tries to link the system into service provision across the board.

Budget targets are one agenda item, the reform is a second agenda item which complements and exceeds the budget. It is part of the budget, but it is not the only thing driving the budget. The reform package will see institutions change their service delivery over the next two years. The budget process is one, the reform process is part of it and added to it.

Mr. Cheema: I remember 1988 and '89 when the first time in the Health Estimates, we were discussing it. We went through the Health Estimate line, this part of the line within half an hour, and we had to face the minister for two years to say that we just spent \$990 million within half an hour. This time there are going to be more questions asked.

The basic question here is still that the minister has not answered, or probably I did not get it, the health care reform. When the minister is saying the budget is a separate thing and the health care is a separate thing, I want to know how the health care system is going to be guided, either by the health care reform package as the major principal player or is it going to be a budget of the figures, five persons or six persons on it. I think that is the issue because the health care economist and the health care workers and the public would like to know what is the basic principle. We want to know what is going to happen in two years time. The results will be only known if we know the principle. That is again my question.

Mr. Orchard: That is why I say that both processes have a separate agenda and life, but they certainly cannot be separated completely. The budget process year by year makes hospitals make decisions, because they do not get as much money as they ask for. Secondly, in terms of that decision

making, we superimpose, hopefully in the very near future, the reform plan which shows how the hospital system, the health care system changes with the patient at the centre moving budget with the patient.

I have test-flown off my staff the corny phrase, "patient care, not where." It got rejected rather quickly, as you can well appreciate. In other words, what I am trying to say is that it is the appropriate service that the individual needs, not where that service is delivered that is important. In the reform, we intend to lay out a blueprint that we think is achievable without compromising the quality of care and the appropriateness of care to the individual, but is going to see the system change from providing that care in a spectrum of high-cost institutions to lower-cost institutions in the community. That is a general policy guiding the reform.

Let me tell you on the budget side: I will give you some direct examples of some discussions I have had with some of the institutional managers. I have been around this system too long, and I say that affectionately. I can recall a circumstance going back about 13 or 14 or 12 years ago, it does not really matter, when the then Minister of Health reined in the system a little bit without granting the funding increases, and tried to put some funding constraints on the institutions, on the hospitals. The first and immediate reaction was closing beds and laying off nursing staff. That was, of course, the reaction that raised the greatest public furor, rightfully so because everyone was concerned about loss of service.

Post-analysis of that had some interesting utilization of budget, the redecoration of executive offices in one area while nurses were being laid off. We thought that was rather inappropriate, but of course did not have the handle on the system. We still do not have as good a handle on the system as maybe we would like. But, clearly, I have said, when you are asking for more money, we are not able to provide the kind of money that you request, and that has been the case every year. That is not different.

When my honourable friends have previously budgeted in hospitals, the requests were always higher than what government acceded to in terms of funding; but, in terms of how hospitals approach constrained budgets in Manitoba, we have asked to use the budget to provide the patient care first and foremost. The message has been fairly direct that we do not want to have the automatic decision being

made that you lay off care staff and curtail services to patients before you consider other areas within the funding of your institution. I will give you an example.

I have bounced the concept within government; we have combined Administration and Finance. That led to some layoff of staff, but we amalgamated the service, provided the same service as effectively, maybe some would say more effectively than before. We see opportunities for shared purpose within our urban hospitals, particularly. I have asked the simple question in terms of purchasing departments. Do we need separate purchasing department entities in all hospitals? I think clearly that there is an opportunity for amalgamation, a function there, which can save budget dollars without compromising one hour of patient care. I asked the same question in terms of personnel. Can we find common purpose across the system in personnel? We have a Civil Service Commission concept in the provincial government, which does central hiring for all departments. There is a lesser function attached—I lost my train of thought there.

We are really challenging the system not to use the normal response, not normal response, but the response of automatic curtailment of patient care services, which is the first response to government not acceding to as large a budget request as they have asked for. That gets us into management issues of the system. That puts us quite consistent with other provinces. I have taken great delight in quoting back statements in the past as we got to this line saying that we do not need more money, we need more management. It is quite a neoconservative statement that has not been made by a Conservative minister but rather a New Democratic administration. We are very much asking our funded agencies to consider all their management options in determining how they expend their budgets.

That does not mean that we are not going to be faced with some difficult decisions. I am not naive enough to believe that, with all that is happening in every province in Canada with significant bed closures, et cetera, we are going to be completely immune to that. I do not think that anybody would think we are going to be completely immune to that, but we have put some pretty significant challenges to our managers. Of course, within the forum of the Urban Hospital Council, we are working on

processes of common purpose that can help eliminate duplication in training in other areas without compromising patient care, but yet have a pretty significant impact on budgets.

* (1630)

So our approach is one where we are providing more money, not less money, not as much money as what the hospitals would like. We are asking very, very diligently of our managers to make prudent management decisions and we will assist them in any way possible and support them when they are the right kind of decisions, given the context of today's funding environment and health care provision in the province and in the country.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I just want to talk for a few minutes about the issue of what I think has to be—I will just wait for the minister's attention.

I want to go back to the same thing again. I am very much concerned that the health care reform package that the minister has said that we have a duplication of services, we have to streamline our management, we have to have an alternate care of delivery. That is fine, an absolutely noble goal, but we want to see how your goals and your principles are going to be having a real impact and in terms of how you are going to sell to the taxpayers, to the patients.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

I do not think we can separate the health care reform package from the budget at all, absolutely not. It may be good for a month or two, but eventually when changes are going to come, it is going to be very tough to sell. If things are not done properly in terms of when the budgets are going to be given to a given hospital, there has to be policy direction. The government does not want deficit financing.

The government rather wants to streamline some of the duplication of services. The government wants to see more early discharge or post-discharge claims. The government wants to see more efficient use of the emergency care. They want to see why a repeat visit to the hospital. They want to make sure that the tests are not repeated. Those basic principles have to be sold to the hospital.

I think they have to be told that this is part of the basic principles of the reform system, specifically if we are going to have next week some changes out

of Misericordia Hospital, say, for example, 10, 15, 20 beds are going to go and how you are going to give them a specific target of 5 percent increase or 6 percent increase. That is immaterial, because it may only last for a month or two months.

What I am concerned and we are concerned as a caucus that we want to see a reform package, bold steps, upfront explain to the taxpayers and to the people at large. They have to know exactly where you are going. I think as long as they can have that understanding, because issues are going to come tomorrow, we can pick the number, say, 5 percent or 6 percent and the hospital can say we asked \$20 million more. You are giving \$15 and you have lost \$5 million, but that is not the issue right now.

The issue is how we are going to sell and how you are going to sell as a government to the whole issue of health care reform. I think to sell that you have to justify us here. To us that that is the basic principle you want to follow and you are not going to deviate from that basic principle on short-term political pitfalls. Some difficulty is going to come there. That is why we want to see the reform package.

I would love to see something in writing. That is why we said if you want to come back in four weeks time and discuss the capital budget and some of the ramifications of the decision you are going to make. Everybody is asking us why do you trust Mr. Orchard? We were telling them, we will see the package and we will see how the reform process is going to take place. So it is very, very important for us to have a basic idea from the minister's office of how this thing is going to take place, because this, as you have said, can be done in isolation.

The hospital in Thompson is going to get an impact of what is going to happen in our teaching hospitals. What is going to happen in a community hospital will have an impact on everyone. All the professional caregivers are going to have some impact, and if they could get a better understanding and how the education can be done to the individuals and to the health care provider, that will make your program a success. Without having the knowledge of the full system, it will fall apart very easily, because it will just take a time for somebody to say, tomorrow, for example, in Question Period, well, you are giving 5 percent but in fact the cut is there because they are demanding more. Those things are very risky nowadays. It cannot be sold, because they are not realistic views.

When we want to have reform—and everyone says that Manitoba is going to bring health care reform. I see that \$990 million or \$980 million a year spending in the hospitals, whether in a direct or indirect cost, that is a large amount of money. People should be explained to, that if so-and-so services are going to be changed you will not lose your health care, but we will deliver it in a different way. That is why I would like to see something, a package, at least a basic principle. We are not wanting to see exactly the number, which is not possible, but at least to have a view.

For example, the first day in your remarks it was very clear that you want to target some of the beds out of teaching hospitals, the chronic care patients. You are going to move them—you would like to see them in the personal care homes or long-term facilities, but those things have to be put on paper and given as a package to the messengers, through the media. They have to be explained that this is what is going to happen. Then I think we can all make some informed choices and at least give some ideas, because to me to comment or ask you many questions does not make any sense because we have discussed those things for 40 hours.

One way or the other, we want to see where is the package and how you are going to reform the system. I think that is the question here, not this year's budget. It is not going to be a question of a separate hospital. It is in terms of bold steps and, as I said from the beginning, an open and frank discussion. If you can convince us, I do not think we will have much problem, but then we can tell to the people that is what we have, that is what the government wants to have, a direction. You make a choice whether you want to raise your taxes, you want to borrow more money, or you want to continue to do something which everyone is saying that was not effective. Everyone in this country is making tough choices. I am sure at three o'clock in Ontario they really made many tough choices. Other provinces are doing it so we want to see a package.

I want to be very blunt and very frank because for me to come here and ask you the same questions I asked for four years, asking which bed is going to close here and there, that is not the direction I want to take. We want to see the whole package.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to have that kind of opportunity for discussion with a paper out a month ago, because that is what we had originally targeted as a goal.

As we developed the discussion paper and Estimates came on, et cetera, we just simply are behind in the delay. I am genuinely hoping that next week we do have the discussion paper out in the public, because it attempts to deal with the whole system so that it is not hospital A in isolation, it is hospitals in the context of the system. It is personal care homes in the context of the system; it is community services in the context of the system; it is Continuing Care in the context of the system; it is nurses in the context of the system; physicians in context of the system. It tries to provide as much detail on why we are making these moves as we can possibly provide.

My honourable friend has been around this health care system long enough to know that the general statement that you can provide better services within the existing budget, as a global term maybe people sort of buy into it, but their first response when a problem comes up is, we need more money. If it happens at hip surgery at the Health Sciences Centre, for instance in January, the immediate response that we get in our office is, you know, you should be putting more money in. Today's environment says you cannot do that, add additional monies to resolve every problem, because we have essentially tried doing that for the last 20 years.

* (1640)

What we are diligently trying to do, and the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation has been part of that accurate underpinning of what we do in the health care system to allow us to make changes that we know are appropriate. The discussions we have had at Urban Hospital Council and the discussions we have had with experts in the various professions are guiding us to take the system across the board and make changes that keep the patient care foremost in our minds.

I think, and, of course, I would have to think this way or I would not be doing it, but I believe that we have got a paper, a discussion, a proposal, a plan with targets, with process, with deliverables in it, and with purpose underpinning it that is going to cause a great deal of public discussion and a greater deal hopefully of public understanding of what the goals and the agenda are.

Now, it is not going to be without controversy. It is going to be fraught with controversy, but I am very, very comfortable that there is absolutely no other province in Canada that will have a more informed process, where over two years we move the system

and have it substantially respond to health challenges and financial challenges at the same time and accomplish a degree of change within the system that probably is not going to be accomplished in any other province and probably not as successfully in any other province.

At the same time, we are underpinning that with an understanding and hopefully some direction on a number of professional issues, not the least of which is the supply of physicians; not the least of which is the way our fee schedule drives service delivery; not the least of which in terms of nursing is the disciplines and their expected roles in a reformed system, in an emerging community-based system.

I noted with interest my honourable friend's comment yesterday, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), about the provision of care in a community clinic setting. Whether we get hung up on what it is called, I concur with that concept, and that is where we intend to move.

At the end of the day, I am totally convinced that we can, within the budget that we currently provide, not compromise patient care at all. I am totally convinced of that. It is going to compromise where we provide that care, and we are going to see, there is no question, downsizing in some parts of the system on the institutional side.

I mean that is real. If you want to take a look at downsizing in the system, take a look across the border at the building binge in acute care hospitals in the United States, because of the profit motive, I mean it left literally a hospital in every corner. That is a vast exaggeration, but hospitals have gone financially bankrupt and are totally closed in the United States.

That capacity is gone, because there the drive was different. It was purely financial, I think it is fair to say. They established lengths of stay that we probably cannot emulate for a number of years, because we do not have the support systems in place.

In the United States the acute care system is contracted significantly. In other provinces of Canada, last year a number of provinces, Newfoundland, and others, had a significant contraction of their acute care system. That is ongoing right now in Ontario. There is great speculation that Saskatchewan is going to have a pretty significant reduction. Alberta, we do not get

any real feed from Alberta, but they sort of operate on their own agenda.

But British Columbia, the new government in British Columbia has accepted the Royal Commission report. That sets a goal of 25 percent fewer acute care beds over the next number of years in an environment where there are two dynamics that confound you—a growing population and an increasing seniors' population, both of which have led the traditional thinking to say that would lead you to more institutional capacity not less, but the new government in British Columbia is accepting recommendations from a report that the previous administration commissioned.

When we talk about an apolitical approach to health care, it is happening, it is happening right across Canada, and the process that we have in Manitoba—and I dearly wish I had my discussion paper out there, because I think it would have made these Estimates a much more meaningful discussion. It would have avoided some of the badgering back and forth that we got into earlier on, no question about it. Maybe we would not have ended up agreeing on what was proposed in the process, but I will tell you, if my honourable friends had, as a result of the debate, come up with a better process, I am listening.

If what we envision has flaws and is not workable and there is a better way to accomplish the agenda of reform, and with our eye on the fact that we are not going to have financial resources, I am listening.

I guess, a fallback, after my critics talk it over with their respective caucuses—I mean, we will have the opportunity post reform paper going out to see what the reaction is.

Basically, I have said to some of the professional groups, there are two ways that the health care system is going to reform. It is going to reform, as we see it in Manitoba, through the presentation to the system and to the people of Manitoba, of a reform paper which outlines where we think the system can go and how, or the second method is with the simple blunt instrument of budget.

We could have come in this year and instead of having—whatever the number is—\$950 million or \$947 million in the hospital budget, we could have come in with a 1 percent increase and had about \$900 million. Well, we did not do that, because we believe we need to show flexibility to engage the system in co-operating with government on an agenda that has to happen. If it does not happen in

the informed way and in a planned way, then clearly I would suspect budget constraints would make it happen the latter way, the blunt instrument of cutting the budget. We have not wanted to do that, and we have not done that, but the system is going to have to make some changes and they are going to have to do some serious soul-searching in a number of institutions to make those changes happen, because there is professional resistance and there are a number of resistance points in there.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not disagree with the minister on many things. I would not have any problems in terms of discussing the issue. For me all these things would have real meaning. If we did not have any reform, then I would discuss each and every section. I would like to know what is happening.

We are going to have a new whole thing, which everyone is saying and the minister has been saying and we have been saying that we wanted reform and the minister has made a commitment, and it is very tough for me to—I do not want to take time and impress all these people, it is not worth it, we have done that for four years. We have worked and I think for me to make any informed judgment, I want to see the reform.

I think it is not worth it to proceed in terms of—we can ask the minister how much you are going to give this hospital, that hospital. That is going to be changed. All these numbers are going to change, no question.

If you are going to have any serious reform, everything will change out of \$947 million. Each and every person is going to be affected. No question about it. If you do not do that, then you are not serious about your reform at all, absolutely not, because the patient is in the middle and you have professional groups, 40 or 50 of them, then you have the institutions, then you have the paraprofessional groups, then you have the bureaucrats, you have everybody else, but there is only one patient and the one taxpayer. That is why we wanted to go and to make any judgment, to see how we are going to support you in terms of the health care reform.

We want to see it, I simply am somewhat frustrated, because I thought we would have something at least in principle to discuss those things. It is not very positive, the timing. I understand it is a complex process. You need a lot of work and timing is involved, but you need—it is not going to be only one person, it is going to be, you

know, you need a professional group's advice, you need so many individuals whole, it is going to be basically a newborn child you are going to have and give to the people and ask them how you are going to raise this again. That is basically what you are asking.

It is going to be very tough, and I want to see a full package, and I would feel more comfortable saying yes or no. I would be able to tell you where we would have and would like to have discussion among the caucus members, because that is going to be a very important issue, probably one of the most important issues of the Constitution, and economy, as a part of your mandate this year for two years. The impact is going to be for a long, long time to come, and if you are not going to make any changes then I do not think we need to talk about this thing. It is not worth it because we have done that and just talking about how many individuals in the department are working, those things have a meaning to some extent, but we need a policy.

* (1650)

We need a road where we can see, you know, where are the bumps and how we are going to fix them and where we are going to reach. That is why I have been saying that we have no problem with your objective and goal, but we want to see how you are going to reach your goal so that we can assist you or we can raise some objections and lay our own views on the table. As you know, the polls are saying people want a reform and they want the truth, they want honesty, but to do those things we need to see something in writing.

Mr. Orchard: I understand what my honourable friend says, and that is why I think that the discussion of the reform paper and the proposal for reform is going to be a very, very interesting one in the province. There are a number of things—well, I guess in terms of general direction I cannot lay it out any clearer or with any more detail today than what I did in my opening remarks, because I took and gave a general thought of how we envisioned the system shifting and changing. Specific examples have been given throughout the course of the debate over the last number of hours.

I understand my honourable friend's frustration. To try and put this budget Estimates and balance it against where the reform or the system is envisioned to be and how it can happen makes for a difficult debate, because you might say to me on the hospital line, well, you do not need that much.

You may well at the end of this year be able to achieve a budget of less than that and have some of those dollars transferred back to a line we have already passed in terms of home care, and that process is part of the reform process. But when we go to print we have to give you numbers that you vote on and that you approve. Paralleling that and overlaying that is a reform process that is going to happen over the next two fiscal years.

Next year's budget will show, I think, some pretty significant shifts in the budgeting process which are our best guesstimate as we go into Estimate next year. At the reconciliation at the end of 1994 I think we will see a difference from what we print next year at this time, because we are into a moving dynamic.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we would have no problems in terms of on just going back to the same thing if we had a minister who had no vision, if we had a minister who did not know what he was doing. When the minister has been making changes, it would have been good for us to see something in writing so that we can assist you. We are not going to put obstacles. But to do that, and discuss everything today or tomorrow, and ultimately in six months everything is going to be changed. If the reform is going to be implemented, this is not going to be the numbers. If anybody in your department is dreaming these are the numbers, then we are not dealing with the health care reform. Then we are dealing with simply a patchwork, and that is not going to be very good for the people of Manitoba, and next year you are going to have more problems.

It is the middle of the mandate. Now you have two more years to do it, and I want to emphasize again that you have a chance to do it and you should be very, very bold and come out with the policy and lay it to the people and tell them. One example was yesterday. They said more money is not the answer, and we did not question you even once during these 40 hours, that something is going terribly wrong. We said things are moving well, but to comment on \$947 million and make informed judgment, I think I will be deceiving myself.

So I will ask questions, but I would be rather happy to sit at the end of May for four to six hours again, so we can discuss those things. Because giving each and every hospital a specific number and what is going to be done, it is going to be very tough. It is going to be extremely tough, but the question may

change even tomorrow depending upon what is going to come.

That is why when the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) was asking "target" for the Mental Health, that is why I was saying we do not know yet. We do not know what is going to be happening, so I would wait until Monday and the member from St. Johns can ask questions. I will have some questions, but I would rather have full time asking the issues of reform, because all those things are going to have impact. I would like to have something which would deal with all the aspects of health care in terms of keeping the patient in the middle and the insured services, and the hospitals, and the role of the lab tester.

I would like to see some kind of direction from protocols. I want to see what is required, what is not required, without setting the open-ended system with no protocol is a recipe for disaster, because patients want more and more, and physicians want to protect themselves. But if they have nothing to protect themselves, all the Medical Review Committee, anything you want to put in place is not going to work, unless you have specified protocols. That has been what everyone is saying in this country, but you have to take a bold step and say these are the protocols we want to be followed. Patients can feel comfortable, physicians can feel comfortable, hospitals can feel comfortable. Each and every person will know what they are supposed to expect and what is going to be delivered. Other than that, it is going to grow.

Many Ministers of Health have said—I have read about them for 20 years, who have done in this province, but you have the chance because you are in the middle of a political system where you could achieve those things. But if you do not come up with a policy which is bold, I would have a much tougher time to continue to say good things about the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), whom I have developed to like so much. I wanted to see something in writing.

Mr. Orchard: I think I probably lost the support that my honourable friend is giving me because I do not think I am going to be as bold as what maybe I should be.

I cannot prejudge how other people are going to view the discussion paper, its direction, and whether it is too bold, not bold enough, but we have attempted to lay out the system and where we think

it can change, and has to change and how we envision that change happening.

Like I tell my honourable friend, I am frustrated from the standpoint that I think these Estimates would have been exceptionally productive in the last 40-plus hours had I been able to have circa the 1st of April, the discussion paper, so that it became part of the discussions and the suggestions that could have come forward. Because I say to my honourable friend that from time to time when we have made changes, and the one I remember the most from last year's Estimates debate, we deinsured the reversal of sterilization.

There was a circumstance that my honourable friend brought up in this committee that led to a change in the way we put that regulation in place, because there was one aspect of it we did not consider. The general principle was maintained, but we put an additional level of protection in there, and that would have been again advantageous to myself and the ministry to have that sort of advice. We will get it at the end of the process when we table capital, et cetera.

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

* (1440)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training. We are on page 39, 2. Financial Support - Schools (a) School Grants and Other Assistance.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Chairperson, can the minister now table the School Grants and General Support Grants list that she committed to doing at our last meeting?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Chairperson, I do have to table the information that the Leader of the Second Opposition has requested. I have for the honourable member a list of the Level II grants, the Level III grants. I also have a categorical base supplementary support per eligible pupil including

phase-in, total special needs support. Is this the information the honourable member—okay. And then instruction and services grants. I also have government fiscal year from the Consolidated Fund.

Mrs. Carstairs: I do not think that the member indicated that there was also in that list the grants to independent schools. Is that list there as well?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is included in the list, and I would also like to take a moment to explain to the member opposite how, in answer to another question which was raised during the Estimates debate on Tuesday, April 28, I would like to explain to the honourable member how the Estimates evolve and why comparisons between this year's Estimates Supplement, which is the light green book, and the Estimates Supplement of prior years was not readily done and why it took some time to reconcile it outside of the House.

Between one fiscal year and the next, organizational changes occur including program realignments. This year has been no exception, and Education and Training has had a number of organizational changes that are reflected in the current Estimates. Any financial adjustments that are made to reflect the changes are all approved by Treasury Board. This is why there is a note on page 3 of the glossary found in the 1992-93 Estimates Supplement explaining the Adjusted Vote.

The current Estimates Supplement contains a 1991-92 Adjusted Vote which is a realignment of the previous year's vote to provide for more accurate and realistic comparisons from one budget year to the next. On Tuesday, I promised to respond on three main questions raised by the honourable member the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs): No. 1, to provide a reconciliation of the department's '91-92 printed Estimates to the '91-92 Adjusted Vote. Secondly, to provide an analysis of the differences between the 1991-92 printed Estimates for Administration and Professional Certification branch and the 1991-92 Adjusted Vote for the combined total of the Management Information Services branch, 16-1(f), and the Administration and Professional Certification branch, 16-1(g).

This analysis includes Financial Services, 16-1(e) to show how these changes were made. It also shows that the increases to 16-1(e), (f) and (g) over 1991-92 are two staff years, and \$161,200 or 4.5 percent. The 4.5 percent increase to these budget lines includes the additional funding provisions for

the September '91 general salary increase and all other changes to the subappropriations are internal realignments and do not represent increases to the department's overall allocations; and thirdly, to provide an analysis of the differences between the 1991-92 printed Estimates for the community colleges and the 1991-92 Adjusted Votes for 16-5(c)(d) and (e). This information can be provided when we reach the Post-Secondary, Adult and Continuing Education and Training division under 16-5, and I have those for the member now to table.

I also have to table today the Executive Support out-of-province travel which was requested on, I believe, it was Tuesday.

* (1450)

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for the tabling of this information. It is much appreciated by members on this side of the House for our deliberations in the Estimates process.

I anticipate that my initial questions are going to be geared towards the funding model and that approach, so I am just advising the minister and her staff that I think the initial parts of my questions this afternoon will deal with that funding model if the staff are available to deal with it.

My initial question is a general question. The advisory committee's report to the Minister of Education dated June of last year was never made public, and I am wondering if the minister can outline for us today why that report was not made public.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, in answer to the question, the report was an advisory report, the committee was an advisory committee. There had not been a commitment nor an intent to make that report public. We certainly welcomed the input of that committee, but in creating a new funding model the process does involve government as a whole. It was necessary to look at the information from the advisory committee in relation to all of government and then to come up with what we considered to be a good education finance model.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, just by way of a preamble to this particular question, I am going to focus a bit on the report itself, the advisory committee report that I have a copy of, and I think it is relevant to these Estimates because this is the budgetary year under which the report is being put

in place. It is also the culmination of four years study of the funding model by the government.

I accept the minister's response as to why the report was not made public. I do not agree, and I am sure we will agree to disagree. I just want to advise the minister that I have gone back. We have researched previous advisory committee reports and there certainly was a lot more information provided to the public with respect to the deliberations of the committees on previous occasions for previous advisory committees—that is of all political parties, both Conservative and New Democrat—than this particular advisory committee report.

I was a bit concerned because it makes the process very difficult to understand if the players in the field, and it is very complicated material to not have an opportunity to review the documentation. I would urge the government, at the very least for its own rationale and reasons, for very good policy reasons aside from any other reason, to perhaps consider releasing more information, not less, with respect to the advisory committee report, so as to allow the public to deal with these issues. I wonder if the minister might comment.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the honourable member is right, that he and I will have to agree to disagree on this particular matter because at this point we believe, with that advisory committee—and I would like to remind him that there were members of the representative groups on the committee, those representatives were there to give their opinions and to put forward a voice and a position from their organization. We also had representatives from the public in general, and I have read their names into the record as well to say that we had also members of the public there represented and to speak up from that point of view.

I would also like to remind him of our role as MLAs and that as MLAs when these are brought forward we also have the responsibility to look at all initiatives carefully and to bring forward matters of concern as people representing the public. I would also like to say that our government and I as minister certainly do support public consultation. I would like to raise to him again the Legislative Reform Panel which had extensive public consultation and that public consultation can occur in a number of forms.

It can occur either through face-to-face meetings, through public representation on committees or through a public hearing process. We make an

effort to use a number of forums when we are looking for that kind of input.

Mr. Chomlak: The problem, of course, with the nonrelease of documents of this kind is that it would lead elected members such as myself to somehow adopt concerns that perhaps the report was not released because the government was attempting to keep information away from the public for political or otherwise reasons. It certainly does raise questions on this side of the House as to why the report was not released.

I will cite an example. The original terms of reference on the committee, dated October 5, 1989, which is appended to the report, page 16, outlined a whole series of reviews, specifically: to do an examination, make recommendations, bearing in mind the issue of fiscal restraint. Fair enough, and: to completely examine education financing the issues, after November 1989, examine the issues of educational financing as a whole.

Those were the public terms of reference for this committee. There probably was—I was not elected at that time—I am certain there was a press release and much fanfare about the fact the government was examining education financing. But what happened subsequently was that the mandate of the committee was changed and the mandate of the committee was changed on March 22, 1989, and it is quoted in the report:

The original mandate of the committee was reviewed and changed. It was generally agreed that because the committee did not have the resources it would not be expected to develop a new funding model.

But this was not communicated publicly. That therefore leads me to conclude that perhaps the committee—well, I question the minister, why were those terms of reference changed and why was the public not informed of that?

* (1500)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I would like to begin my response by saying that good government can also mean a government that is elected to make the policy decisions, and we have made the policy decisions with input. I think that the input of this advisory committee has been very important, and now one of the very important parts is beginning. We are now at the implementation stage of the funding model, and we are encouraging input again at this point.

In every discussion that we have had about the funding model, we have described the funding model as a dynamic and evolving funding model. What we are saying is now, as the new funding model is applied to divisions—and I will remind the member that my department has met with every single division as they have begun to apply the model and has had a chance to have follow-up meetings with those divisions or at least telephone contact as they apply the model; that I, as minister with staff, have met with over 20 divisions to directly hear from them what their concerns are as they begin to apply the model; and that the input and the consultation and the direct effect are continually a part of the application of this funding model.

It has been such an important part that we have set up now some task forces as a result of these meetings to look at issues very specifically raised in the application of the funding model.

Mr. Chomlak: I could probably spend the afternoon debating this issue with the minister. I will attempt to limit my comments because there are many other pressing issues, but I do want to spend a little bit of time on this.

The minister is putting the cart before the horse. This model was studied for four years. The committee was given a mandate prior to the last provincial election. Several months before the election was called, the mandate of the committee was changed, and no one in the public was advised. Then the committee was told by the government that certain criteria had to be applied to the funding model, and they had no choice as to how these criteria would be applied.

There was an election. The government was re-elected. The government imposed the funding model, and now the government is setting up task forces to deal with how the funding model should be implemented. It seems to me the cart is before the horse. The funding model should have been able to be brought in in a smooth and efficient fashion without having to be revised three, four and five times before it went public and subsequently advised after it has gone public.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am really surprised by the remarks of my honourable friend. I am surprised that he indicates that he would implement a model which is extremely inflexible, cast in stone, in which he would hold back from implementing until he had determined that somehow he had, without ever the effect of implementation, been able to anticipate

every single issue that might arise and then assume that the model that he put in should then become inflexible, not evolving, and not dynamic.

The process that this government has stood beside is that the new ed finance model is, in fact, a model which is dynamic and evolving and in which there was a recognition that it would be almost impossible to completely anticipate every single issue that might arise in the application of a new funding model.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

So then the stage was set so that as divisions did begin to encounter issues that they could raise those issues with the department, and that they understood from the beginning that we would be taking a very serious look at those issues. That is the point of the task forces.

So I am surprised at a somewhat inflexible approach by my honourable friend. I stand by the process of this government which has been one of continued consultation, and let me stress the continued consultation.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate one single organization on the committee that has positively endorsed this funding model?

Mrs. Vodrey: I think it is very important to understand that the process of developing a new educational finance model is certainly one of consensus, where ideas are spoken about and modified in order to reach what is the best possible concept at the time. I can certainly tell him that, overwhelmingly, we have had a feedback that this model is a vast improvement over the previous model.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister table documents to that effect from those organizations that have indicated a positive, that they approve of this model?

Mrs. Vodrey: This information has certainly come in face-to-face discussions with school divisions, with representative organizations. I am sure that they would be equally happy to share those thoughts with the honourable member should he ask them.

Mr. Chomlak: Is the answer no, therefore? There are no letters on file endorsing this funding model from those organizations that were on the committee, that are somehow overwhelmingly in face-to-face meetings approving this funding model?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am not sure if my honourable friend is suggesting that the only authentic endorsement is one that is received in writing. I am wondering if endorsement in writing is the only process of consultation that he would agree with, because a process of consultation around the new education finance model that I, as government, and we, as a department, have gone forward with has been face-to-face meetings and face-to-face discussions and then a real effort to then work with the model.

I am surprised because my honourable friend seems to be focusing on some kind of an approval which then would mark the go ahead, and what I think is very much important is that we have received a great deal of approval for the new ed finance funding model and that has come through face-to-face discussions where people acknowledge it to be a vast improvement over the previous model, and then following that a real effort in terms of working with the model to then make it the best working model that we possibly can have.

Mr. Chomlak: I take it the answer is no. I must be speaking to different people from those representative bodies than the minister because there is not a great overwhelming approval for the new funding model that the minister seems to indicate.

* (1510)

Mrs. Vodrey: Perhaps we are speaking to different people, and I do not mean that lightly because I must say that we have taken this new finance model very seriously, and we have again as a department expended a great many hours in making sure that divisions have a good understanding of the model.

As they apply the model, they feel that they have an open communication through to the experts in the department for any assistance that is required where they have experienced some difficulties which were, and in some cases perhaps, unanticipated by them or perhaps by the committee or when they have simply run into issues there has also been an open communication and a very strong and direct effort both by this department and by myself as minister to appreciate what those issues are and to then look at some problem solving in the recognition that this is a dynamic model.

But regardless of those, in addition to that, I think it is very important for the member to also be aware of the fact that the last funding model simply did not work and divisions were not pleased with that model

and they recognized a vast improvement with this one.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate why the four-year phase-in was rejected in favour of a two-year phase-in?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, there was a general belief that the four-year period was perhaps stretching this out longer than was really necessary, and I am informed that basically people were saying let us get on with it, let us get started, because 43 of 53 divisions previous to the new model were on the guarantee. The old model was not working. People were anxious to get on with the new model. There was every effort with the new model to make the new model as responsive as possible, and in this two-year phase-in we are looking at it in a very dynamic and evolving way. The belief was that a further phase-in was really not necessary. We did not want to stretch it out and have it never really become a part. We felt that the two-year phase-in was a belief and, I am informed, was in fact probably the best way to go.

Mr. Chomlak: Does the minister have any simulation models about what the effect of the formula will be two years down the road when the phase-in ends?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am informed that we are in the process of doing that now. In fact, we are looking ahead as far as three and four years, but we are also very anxious to see the results of the task forces which are in place examining issues relating to rural divisions and also the issues of sparsity which have been raised by some northern and also some southern divisions. We are looking to see what the experiences of divisions are related to their educational needs in the first year, and also the issue of enrollments. Enrollments are also fluctuating in school divisions. So, in the first year we are looking very carefully at the impact and the effect and the experiences of the ed funding model, also with new information, looking to project ahead as much as three or four years.

Mr. Chomlak: Will the minister undertake to table those simulations when they are received?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that certainly these projections are quite detailed. I am not sure if my honourable friend is asking that they be tabled during the course of these Estimates, because it would be unlikely that they would be prepared at that time. However, when they are prepared they

certainly will then be presented to the advisory committee.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister outline for us what those task forces are, who comprises in them and what they are studying?

Mrs. Vodrey: The task forces are being worked on at the staff level, and they are gathering information from all school divisions. In response to the concerns and to issues brought forward, we have initiated a number of studies. I will give the member the names.

A transportation study, which will review transportation funding in the light of the work done by the transportation steering committee. It will review the rationale for funding rural and urban divisions differently and the issue of contract busing. Secondly, a FRAME task force will review instructions provided to school divisions for the completion of budgets and financial statements to ensure clarity and convergence with the SFP. Then a northern and remoteness study will conduct an analysis of cost factors and circumstances affecting northern divisions to determine if the amount provided under the northern allowance in SFP is adequate.

A small rural high schools study will consider adjustments to the SFP to better reflect the costs of providing high school programming in small rural high schools. Distance Education will develop options to allow for the funding of distance education, especially with regard to small, rural or northern high schools.

* (1520)

Occupancy funding will examine alternate means of funding operations and maintenance that better recognize the reuse of school building space. Assessment in the allocation of funding will review the long-term implications of allocating provincial funding according to assessment strength and weakness.

I am informed that on the frame study which I had just recently spoken of, that one is comprised of 10 secretary treasurers from school divisions representing various regions of the province plus staff.

Mr. Chomlak: Is the minister at all concerned, with respect to the new funding model, that of the 53 school divisions only three receive 50 percent or more of their special needs funding from the provincial government? The other 50 receive

considerably less in most cases than 50 percent, and is that not a concern of this minister?

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, I would like to reassure the member that the issue of special needs is of real concern both to this government and to myself as minister. It was in the special needs area in which I began working within the school system. So I am certainly well aware of the issues relating to special needs.

On one of the sheets that I tabled today, I would just like to draw the member's attention to the fact that we have increased our percentage. The province has increased our percentage of funding in terms of allowable expenditures from 46 percent to 59.5 percent for special needs. In addition to that, we have also provided \$10 million additionally in supplementary funding.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister specifically outline for me what the formula is to your phase-in, specifically what the formula is, because it has changed? There was an initial announcement and there was a subsequent announcement. I would like to have the details of the phase-in formula please.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, just to go back for the honourable member. In November 1991, a commitment was made to provide transition or fees in funding of up to \$8 million as part of the implementation of the Schools Finance Program in 1992-93.

A further commitment was made that in 1993-94 those divisions receiving phase-in funding for '92-93 would receive half of what they received in '92-93. Phase-in funding was included as part of the 1992-93 funding announcement in January of 1992.

Phase-in support for each division was calculated as the difference between the 1991-92 funding and the 1992-93 funding, after accounting for changes in eligible enrollment, less .75 mills on the school division's assessment. At that point, 18 of the 26 divisions experiencing a decrease in funding from 1991-92 to '92-93 were eligible for the phase-in funding.

However, a number of school divisions did request some additional assistance to ease their transition, and so in March 1992 additional phase-in funding was announced. The phase-in funding was recalculated as the difference between the 1991-92 and 1992-93 funding, less 0.5 mills on the school division's assessment.

Under the new calculation 23 divisions became eligible for the phase-in funding.

Mr. Chomlak: Will the minister table a list of those divisions? Oh, I see I have it in the press release. That is fine. The minister also announced in the March change to the phase-in program that there would be a new grant within the funding formula to assist divisions that incur additional costs as a result of enrollment increases in excess of 1 percent of their total and open a new school. Can the minister outline the specifics of those formulas, please?

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, just to give the member the information that I think he is requiring, a grant for school divisions that has the following two characteristics, first of all an increase in enrollment from, in this case, September 1991 to September 1992 in excess of 1 percent and at the same time a new school opening during, in this case, the 1992-93 school year, and if a division qualifies by having both of these characteristics, the grant is \$7,500 for each new classroom. Based on present information, it was only the St. Vital School Division which qualified. They qualified for 14 new classrooms for a total grant of \$105,000.

* (1530)

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those responses. Returning back to the special needs grant issue, I am looking at pages 61 and 63 provided by the minister this afternoon, and I am looking at the totals at the bottom. Can the minister explain for me the difference in total special needs as a percentage of allowable expenditure which is 59.5 and the total special needs of actual expenditures which is 37.6?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that grants for special needs went up across the province 37 percent. Secondly, the percentage of actual expenditures by divisions went up 59.5 percent. That is a percentage of actual expenditures.

Mr. Chomlak: I am not sure if I made my question clear enough to the minister. The actual figure of 37.6 which is at the bottom of page 61 is actual expenditures for special needs, and the 37.6 is the component provided by the provincial government centrally to special needs expenditures. The 59.5 on the bottom of page 63, I assume, is the allowable vis-a-vis the provincial government formula the divisions qualify for under the funding formula.

Mrs. Vodrey: Let me clarify. First of all, 37.6 percent is the grant in support of special needs, and that is how much the grant increased under the new model versus the old model. The 59.5 percent refers to how much of the special needs cost that we pay for in the new model versus the old model. I think the honourable member can see that there is in fact an increase.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I think the minister's statement is wrong. The grant to special needs did not increase 37 percent. It may very well be that the grants to Level II and Level III special needs increased 30-some-odd percent, but the combined grant of Level I, Level II and Level III, of which the total is at the bottom of page 61, did not increase 37 percent. The figure at the bottom of page 61 is a figure of 37.6 percent which is the provincial share of total special needs cost, that is Level I, Level II and Level III, and the actual increase over last year is only 2.7 percent.

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, I am informed that the information that I am giving is correct, and I am informed that the percentage includes both Level I, Level II, Level III support. It also includes other support in relation to special needs, including clinicians, and that in the '92-93 budget there is an increase of 37.6 percent over last year with our new funding formula model.

Mr. Chomlak: I am wondering why the decision was made to include Level I funding within the base funding under the new formula?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the Level I funding was included in the base funding to indicate that it is a type of funding which has been universally required. This decision was made following meetings with the advisory committee, discussions across the province, and our new ed finance model is really now looking at the classroom. So we have a funding model based on support that is necessary for the classroom and that also indicates the realities present in schools today.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that response and return to my previous question. I believe the minister is correct. I was wrong in my determination of the figures. It does appear that there is an almost \$20-million increase, so I stand corrected on that particular portion, which leads me to the issue of why the instructional unit class size decision was made with respect to this particular funding model?

* (1540)

Mrs. Vodrey: In answer, all the research that has been done has suggested strongly that we needed to look at a model which combined finances with pedagoguing, and we had to look in that combination of then how best to fund through an education finance model.

All the research points again to the fact that the classroom was the basic unit that was missing in terms of the funding and that children, in fact, or young people or adults exist in classroom groupings; that this is, in fact, the fundamental unit, and that all else exists in support of this particular unit. So I think that may explain the answer to my honourable friend's question.

Mr. Chomlak: Why was the divisor of 20 chosen?

Mrs. Vodrey: In the readings that I have done individually and also that have been part of the research that was done in terms of this funding model, there has been information that numbers of 25 or less are reasonable numbers to use in terms of a classroom unit. There was consensus on the committee that the number 20 was very close to the reality of the experience in this province, and that this divisor appeared to meet with approval from the committee and also from discussion around the province.

Mr. Chomlak: Does the minister indicate that she has data or that the department has data that indicate what the classroom sizes are in the province of Manitoba and specifically the city of Winnipeg because the divisor varies outside of Winnipeg?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am advised that at the moment we do not collect data specifically on the classroom unit size. We do have a pupil-teacher ratio, or PTR, but that is in fact a different figure. It is arrived at differently by taking the enrollment of the division, and it includes in the divisor all nonclassroom in support as well, including principals.

The number was arrived at by consensus, by the committee. It is seen to reflect the actual reality as seen by the advisory committee members across the province.

Mr. Chomlak: I would accept that, except that I do not know where the number came from. The minister said that the literature says 25 or less. The minister indicates that the committee thought 20 was the appropriate number, but I just wonder what the empirical or what the data and the basis of the arrival of that figure was.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the literature simply narrowed the range, but I am informed that when we were looking at what the number would be for our model in Manitoba, we then also looked at the sense of reality that the members of the committee were able to bring to the committee and chose a number that appeared to reflect accurately, as accurately as possible, what the reality is in Manitoba schools.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, with respect to the actual enrollments per school, wherein it is determined the divisor is divided into, how is the enrollment determined on the per-school basis?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that every school division does now submit its enrollments to the department. They are diligently checked in terms of their accuracy.

* (1550)

Mr. Chomlak: Just by way of example so that I understand, school X would submit an enrollment at some point in time, and I am questioning what point in time, to the department of say 500 students, and at least for the initial base funding the divisor of 20 into 500 would be calculated as 25 units.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that schools submit their enrollment to school divisions. School divisions, through the secretary-treasurer and the superintendent and sign off on that enrollment and it is submitted to the department. The date used is September 30 to then determine the eligible enrollment.

Mr. Chomlak: The formula is clear for urban divisions, but the divisor is 20. When we get outside of the city, that is for nonurban divisions, the divisor drops down depending upon the number of students. Is there any other differentiation other than—how does that formula work outside of the city of Winnipeg specifically?

Can the minister perhaps table a document or something that could clarify it for me? As I understand it, if it is outside of the city of Winnipeg, if it is more than 250 students, the divisor is 20; 200 to 250 students is 19; 150 to 200 is 18; 100 to 149 is 17; 80 to 99 is 16; and fewer than 80 it is 15. I am wondering if those are in fact the figures, and if they are applied across the board or whether grades or any other differentiation applies.

Mrs. Vodrey: Just to make sure that my honourable friend has the completely correct and up-to-date information, the full-time equivalent or

FTE instructional units are calculated for Grades K to 8, and Grades 9 to 12 are Senior 1 to Senior 4 as follows.

In the Divisions 1 through 10 and 12, which are the city divisions, you divide the FTE enrollment for the school division by 20. In the divisions 11 and 13 to 48 plus the school districts 2264, 2309, 2312, 2355, 2439 and 2460, if the FTE school enrollment in Grades K to 8 or 9 to 12 is, first of all, more than 200, the divisor is then 20. If it is 200 or less, but more than 100, divide by 19. If it is 100 or less, but more than 18, divide by 18. If it is 18 or less in Grades K through 8, one full-time equivalent at one full-time instructional unit. If it is 18 or less in Grades 9 through 12, or Senior 1 through Senior 4, divide by 18.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for answering that question. I wonder if it is possible—although she might have read the entire formula into the record—could that be tabled perhaps?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, the funding booklet is public information, and I will be happy to table for the honourable member the whole funding booklet.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. It will give me something to do on the weekends.

Will the funding booklet also include the eligible enrollments by division so that I can spend time figuring out the recognized instructional units per division? Will it contain that, and if not, can I have those?

Mrs. Vodrey: I would just like to remind the honourable member that the funding booklet sets out the model for the funding which gives the formula. At the moment, we have the enrollment by division not by school. I could certainly table the enrollment by division if that would be helpful.

Mr. Chomiak: I appreciate receiving that information. Just with respect to the funding formula, this—and I stand to be corrected—is the first time, I believe, that an actual funding model has allocated funds based on a per-school calculation. I am wondering if the minister might comment on the significance of that.

* (1600)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am advised by the staff here today that, by memory, prior to 1967, there was funding school by school in rural areas only. Presently this particular model also is very similar to that pre-1967 model, looking at the

needs of rural areas in that way, and it is the only model where pedagogy is really a very considered and prime factor in the funding process.

Just for the member's information, we have been asked by other jurisdictions to share the basis of our model because it is seen as having been an extremely important change.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I certainly recognize that there are some aspects of the funding model, for counselling and guidance, school library personnel, et cetera, that are quite favourable. I wonder if the minister might elaborate for me, therefore, what she is referring to when she talks about the pedagogical significance of the funding formula.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, to start with, the focus is the classroom grouping and funding in terms of the classroom grouping. The other funding is the funding that is considered to be in support of that classroom grouping.

My honourable friend has named some of the funding which does go in support of that classroom grouping, things such as library and counselling and guidance, which have been identified very specifically as being in support of classroom activities. In addition, administration is in support of the classroom activity. Occupancy and the place where students study is also considered to be in support. Professional development for staff members is also considered to be in support of that classroom unit and an effort of a financial model to recognize significantly what the needs and the supports are necessary for the classroom unit.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, just for the administrative purposes of the minister, I can advise that we will certainly be on this item for the balance of the afternoon. I am not certain if that changed the staff allotments, but we will be on this line, all things considered, for the balance of the afternoon. I do not know what the minister wishes.

Just returning to the issue that the minister raised previously, of course I suppose one of the most significant considerations upon which the model is based is the classroom size of 20, and whether or not that reflects the reality situation is a key factor in the success or failure of this funding model. I am still not at all certain that the classroom size of 20 and the subsequent components of that model is in fact appropriate.

I would like to see more information on that determination, although I also recognize I have asked that question before and there may not be any additional information.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the literature does not provide us with a definite or a finite number for classroom size. So what was done in the case of this model was then for us to look to our practitioners and experts within our province. This was the number by consensus that was arrived at by those groups.

Now we are reviewing classroom size as it relates to the sparsely populated and remote divisions, because some of those divisions have raised concerns regarding the divisor in their areas, and we are also, via MAST or Manitoba Association of School Trustees, receiving formal feedback from every division in the province.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, when the minister provides me with the funding formula, I assume it will outline for me the basis on which the allocation is made, for example, to the students at risk program. Will it provide that information? If it does then I do not have to ask those specific questions, but if it does not I will be asking some specific questions.

Mrs. Vodrey: The model sets out the broad area but the details that I think the honourable member may be wishing to ask about would probably best be found in the PDSS line, Appropriation 16-3. The students at risk branch will be refining and updating the students at risk school eligibility data collection.

Mr. Chomlak: Then I will reserve my questions to that point in time. I am quite interested in the supplementary formula and I am wondering if the minister can provide us with a division-by-division breakdown of the supplementary funds allocated for '92-93.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, we do have that data.

Mr. Chomlak: Could you table it, please? Can the minister provide us with copies of that, please?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, we will attempt to have the data prepared for the honourable member in the next Estimates sitting.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that data. I am wondering, will the basis upon which the supplementary funding is calculated be provided in the data which will be tabled on the funding formula

that I am going to be receiving next Estimates process?

* (1610)

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that will be in the booklet which I will provide for you.

Mr. Chomlak: Thank you. I recognize the minister will be giving me division-by-division breakdowns of the supplementary funding. I am wondering if the minister can tell me today what the total is for '92-93 in terms of supplementary funding, and how that compares to the equalization funding of last year.

Mrs. Vodrey: In 1991-92, with the guarantee, the funds were \$85,129,047, and this year the estimate for '92-93 for the supplementary funding is \$33,223,785.

Mr. Chomlak: Just for purposes of comparison, I am wondering if the minister has a table in front of her that also shows '90-91 because that would be more appropriate in terms of comparison because of the base model put in.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, the numbers for 1990-91 are \$84,541,085.

Mr. Chomlak: I am wondering if the minister might want to comment on that divergence of what effectively are equalization funds and the reason. The minister has identified that some rural northern divisions are studying the loss of funding. We have divisions like Kelsey with declining enrollment that have been fairly dramatically affected by the formula. I am wondering if the minister might comment on the significantly less amount of money available in this component of the funding model vis-a-vis other years.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, I am happy to comment on that. The previous model provided funding at the end, and sometimes that was helpful to divisions, but the difficulty was that money was not flowed through any kind of a structure or any real criterion base.

Under the new funding model, we flow a great deal of that money now directly through the base funding. So under our current funding model we are either paying by grant or equalizing 83 percent of divisions' net operating expenditures.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, has that figure changed or been adjusted since the initial November announcement of the funding model?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the answer is no.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, last year the minister provided us with a division-by-division breakdown of the special levy and the increase or decrease on a year-by-year basis. I am wondering if the minister has that information this year.

* (1620)

Mrs. Vodrey: Could I just clarify, would the honourable member like the special levy mill rates or the special levy dollars?

Mr. Chomlak: I would appreciate both.

Mrs. Vodrey: In tabling this information, I would just like to say for the honourable member's information that the total school taxes for the homeowner in the province went up only 0.8 percent, and total property taxes, which is ESL plus special levy, went up only 1.5 percent. That is including commercial in the province, and that is the lowest ever.

Mr. Chomlak: I think that the taxpayers are very appreciative of that, given last year was probably the highest ever in terms of increase.

Mrs. Vodrey: I would just like to say again, that we are pleased that the total property tax was low this year. I am very pleased to be able to say that to the taxpayers.

Mr. Chomlak: Last year, the minister gave me statistics on the number of teachers employed in the province and the year before. For 1990, the minister gave me a figure of 13,062, and 1991, 12,850. I wonder if the minister this year might have the statistics with respect to teachers employed in the province for this school year.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the total eligible teacher count in the province for '92-93 from our sources is 12,691.

Mr. Chomlak: One of our concerns with respect to the classroom unit size is that we might be placed back into a situation that we were placed in in the 1970s, under the previous GSEP, wherein we were in a situation where we had authorized and unauthorized teachers and all of the dilemmas that were faced by divisions with respect to that process.

I am wondering if the minister has a response or a comment with respect to that concern. I have had it for sometime. I think it is going to happen in the province of Manitoba, and I am wondering what the position of the department and the minister is with respect to that.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I would just like to say that I do have a number of discussions with the Manitoba Teachers' Society. As I stated the other day to the honourable member, I do meet on a very regular basis with the MTS. They have, as I told him, prepared a series of agenda items, and they have raised, in a general sense, all of their agenda items at one point. Now we are going through those agenda items, issue by issue, to make sure that they and I have had a very full conversation regarding this issue.

The issue that the honourable member has raised I know is a concern to the Manitoba Teachers' Society. It is something of a concern that I think that we need to certainly be aware of and that we need to monitor carefully.

We are convinced that our model is sound. Certainly it is not the intention of this model to have this happen, but we will be looking at it carefully. In the past model this seemed to be more of a difficulty, but under the new model we are only using instructional personnel. I think that that is an important change in this new model.

Mr. Chomlak: I do not know if I understand precisely what the minister means by: we are using instructional personnel on this new model.

Mrs. Vodrey: I hope this will clarify. Under this model the instructional personnel referred to are the classroom teachers. In the past, it was anyone who held a teaching certificate, and that may have been at that point then administration counted in. In this case we are trying to not use that kind of a count, but instead to use actual classroom teachers as a count.

Mr. Chomlak: So that excludes teaching assistants?

* (1630)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed, yes it does.

Mr. Chomlak: That excludes clinicians?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, it does exclude clinicians.

Mr. Chomlak: That excludes special education co-ordinators?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, it does exclude co-ordinators, I believe was the last mentioned by my honourable friend, and again I would say to him that our focus has been on the classroom teacher.

Mr. Chomlak: But the minister did take note of the fact that we have had a three year decline in

teaching employed personnel in the province of Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I see by the numbers presented by my honourable friend and then the numbers that I presented for this year. I do not believe he can suggest that the new model is the reason for this as the new model is in fact in its first year of application.

Mr. Chomlak: No, I am only suggesting that the new model could very well—it is a concern of members of this side of the House and not just Manitoba Teachers' Society that the new model could result in a situation of the kind that I described earlier with the authorized-unauthorized situation with school divisions being forced to pick up the cost of so-called unauthorized teachers.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I have acknowledged to the honourable member that that is a concern and is one of the issues that I and my department will be monitoring.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate when she expects the regulations for the SFP to be published?

Mrs. Vodrey: As my honourable friend knows, this is a major rewrite of the regulations. We do believe that the funding booklet which we will provide to him is really quite accurate and that regulations will only serve to confirm what is in the funding booklet. We are in the process of working on those regulations now. We expect to have them prepared by the late fall or certainly by the end of the calendar year.

Mr. Chomlak: Last year, the minister indicated to me that, and I do not agree with this figure, the net operating revenue provided to you by the department of school divisions constituted 69.2 percent of the operating costs of school divisions. I am wondering if the minister can provide for us a comparative figure of what the net operating revenue to the divisions are from the provincial government this year.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes. I am informed that, compared to last year, which my honourable friend raised, at 69.4 percent, this year the figure is 69.6 percent. Now, if we also wish to factor in, under the new funding formula, the equalization, then the amount rises to 83 percent.

Mr. Chomlak: What does the minister mean by equalization?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, just to clarify. Equalization in the new funding model constitutes about 39.8 percent of the total support

and represents an increase of 31.5 percent from 1991-92. Equalization is provided in three ways.

Number one, the Education Support Levy is raised uniformly across the province by two mill rates, one for residential property and one for commercial property. The amount collected, together with funds from the Consolidated Revenues, is distributed to school divisions by the Schools Finance Program.

Secondly, the 7.9 mill uniform levy is a reduction to support based on total school assessment. Recognized expenditures are reduced by 7.9 mills to determine support.

Three, supplementary support is provided to school divisions in four categories: special needs, transportation, vocational and occupancy. If a school division spends more than the grant available in these four areas, and this is a formula, then 80 percent of the unsupported cost is provided based on a formula which ensures that a low-assessed division has access to the same revenue as the school division with the highest assessment per pupil.

Mr. Chomlak: I am having great difficulty with this figure, this 83 percent figure, and I would appreciate if the minister could outline for me what she means by 83 percent? Is the minister saying that 83 percent of the operating costs of divisions are now being met by the Province of Manitoba?

* (1640)

Mrs. Vodrey: To clarify it for the honourable member, the operating expenditures for school divisions is \$1,079,119,669. In terms of their operating support the province provides categorical funding support for '92-93 of \$100,909,752. We provide block base funding at \$563,614,923. We provide equalization supplementary funding at \$28,270,970.

This year there is no guarantee as there has been in other years. We have also provided phase-in funding of \$8,000,000; in fact, it will be slightly more than that this year. Then with the 7.9 mill uniform levy which is \$135,399,302, that brings the total support to \$836,194,947.

When you take that figure and you divide it by the \$1-billion figure which I gave my honourable friend, that does bring us to a support of 83 percent. If the 7.9 mill uniform levy was removed from those numbers, that brings us to the figure of 69.6 percent.

Mr. Chomlak: Last year the minister provided us with a Categorical Block Equalization and Guaranteed Support by division. I do not notice that in the package of information that was provided to us. I am wondering if the minister would provide us—those were actuals the minister provided us with last year. I am wondering if we could have those figures.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I can table the information I believe that my honourable friend would like and it is by school divisions.

Mr. Chomlak: I appreciate that. I will have considerably more questions in this area, but I want to review the documents because I want to be quite specific. I want to discuss this in greater detail with the minister, but I want to turn to another topic briefly, and that is the fact that the minister has indicated in the data that she provided to us that the actual increase in dollar value of total special needs support this year over last year is \$19.6 million. The figures that the minister provided according to my calculations of subtracting 52 some-odd million dollars from \$71 million equates roughly to \$19.6 million, which is the increase the minister is stating in total special needs support this year over last year, apples to apples.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the \$19.7 million is based on the information that school divisions have forwarded to the department at this time, but the \$22 million is the estimated amount of money that may be required to provide totally through the school year, and we do not have yet the figures which tend to come in in January for the Level II, Level III young people who come in at that time.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I am curious about this figure, because the Estimates book indicates that there was an increase in operating support to divisions of \$19.6 million, and it just so happens, I presume coincidentally, that the special needs figure is \$19.6 million. Just commenting on that, one would suggest then that can one make the argument that the total increase in operating support to school divisions this year has been basically, if those two figures are correct, focused entirely on special needs or exceptional students?

* (1650)

Mrs. Vodrey: I think I understand the honourable member's question in that we did put approximately \$23 million more into funding this year, and I think

he is asking is the 19.7 money for special needs the total place or the only place that money went. The answer, I am informed, is no, that is not the case, that there was also a redistribution as a result of the new model.

There was money from the guarantee also to be redirected so there has been a reconfiguring also of money previously directed in other places, and I do not think that he can assume that the \$23 million all went to special needs because it is a new model.

Mr. Chomlak: That is correct. I agree with the minister. For example, the equalization went from \$85 million down to \$33 million and that was obviously the money that had formerly gone into that particular area. An allocation has been shifted around to different areas and to different components of the formula.

Mrs. Vodrey: As I said, yes, there has been a reconfiguration, a reconstitution, under the new funding formula model. It did include removing the guarantee. There were 43 school divisions as I explained to the member previously on the guarantee. There are now no school divisions on the guarantee, but that \$40.6 million then becomes available for the new funding formula model.

Mr. Chomlak: We have received now a copy of the document, page 29 from the minister's book, entitled Categorical Basis and Supplementary Support including Phase-in for '92-93. Just for my own understanding, if we look at the first item, Winnipeg School Division No. 1, which has been estimated this year at \$115,958,064, that will be the sum total provided to Winnipeg School Division No. 1 from the department. Is that correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am informed that this does account for the major share of the funding and other than funding which might come into the at-risk programs on a by-project basis.

Mr. Chomlak: So for my own understanding again, it does read Categorical Basis and Supplementary Support and the Phase-in and there is a \$10-million package of at risk that may or may not be included in this formula?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am informed that about 7 million of the 10 million at-risk dollars are already allocated across the province, and there is approximately \$3 million which remains to be allocated for additional special projects.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister. So, the bottom figure of \$694 million accurately reflects the

provincial expenditures towards education this Estimate year?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the \$694 million is for the school year '92-93—the school year would be the important word—and that it does include the categorical and the base funding, supplementary funding and the phase-in funding. What is not included in that is the approximately \$3 million still to be allocated on a by-project basis for students at risk programs. Also, there is still capital grants and D grants to be added in.

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

Call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., it is now time for private members' hour.

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): The Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same, and asks leave to sit again. I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave of the House, if it would be okay, for private members' hour, to have Bill 66 for second reading called first, with leave of the House?

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to move Bill 66 forward?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave is denied.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 16—The Health Care Directives Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema),

Bill 16, The Health Care Directives Act; Loi sur les directives en matière de soins de santé, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [Agreed]

Bill 18—The Franchises Act

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

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [Agreed]

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, if I could speak on that, Bill 18?

Mr. Speaker: On Bill 18?

Mr. Ashton: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Leave has been granted to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine).

Mr. Ashton: I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill. I wanted to, in particular, reference this bill, in fact, a number of bills, that the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) has brought before this House in previous sessions and in the current session, which deal with consumer matters. I must credit the member for Elmwood for his activities in this regard. In many ways, Mr. Speaker, the member for Elmwood has become a major champion of the rights of consumers in this House, and I think he should get credit for that.

In fact, the member for Elmwood, some of us would suggest, has done for the consumers than the minister responsible for Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), who seems to respond to consumer concerns if there is an I-Team report, but is not looking at the kind of substantive changes that we have seen from the member for Elmwood, supported by every member of the New Democratic Party caucus, fighting for the rights of consumers, Mr. Speaker.

I want to go further and say that I believe in many ways that in the difficult times we are faced with, the bottom line is that we need this kind of legislative initiative. We do not have to spend tremendous amounts of public funds to protect the consumer. We have the proper legislative base. If we had the

kind of bill that we see before us, Bill 18, The Franchises Act, we do not need to spend massive amounts of money. In fact, we do not need any additional funding, no additional funding, to perform a major public service by protecting the rights of consumers.

That is something that I think everyone has to recognize. We are all aware of the financial situation of the province. In fact, I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) reminds us of that on a regular basis.

Some of us on this side certainly say it is no surprise that we have a worsened financial situation because of the decline in the economy. We look to the government and their failure of the past four years economically to deal with the economic crisis we have been facing, a crisis that is worsening. The bottom line is we have seen a government that has allowed us to end up in a situation where we are in a deep economic crisis in this province. We know there is not funding available for grandiose schemes that might protect the rights of consumers.

So why not this kind of legislation, Mr. Speaker? It does not require additional public funding. This bill, Bill 18, has been introduced. It has been ruled in order because it does not involve public expenditure of funds. If it did, it would not be in order. We would not be debating it at the present time. We have a golden opportunity here. Members of this Legislature have the opportunity to follow through in the kind of thing that we saw yesterday.

We saw all members of this House support a private member's resolution that was brought forward by the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) which was subject to a friendly amendment by a Conservative member and was supported by the New Democratic Party in addition to the Liberal and Conservative parties. All three parties supported that resolution. Why can we not have that kind of approach on bills such as Bill 18 and other bills before us, an all-party approach?

Mr. Speaker, I will go further. If the Conservatives have concern about specific provisions, we can put it forward to committee. We can make amendments in committee. The bottom line is we can deal with specific concerns, but why not have an all-party approach? Why not for once in this Chamber have an all-party approach in private members' hour. Why not for once have a vote, allow us to have the ultimate say.

I look to the government following the precedent that was set yesterday, the kind of precedent we saw when we had a minority government, when we did have votes on private members' bills. I ask them to consider very carefully this particular bill, and I ask them to allow it to go to a vote, because they know they have the ability to block this bill. They can stop this bill from going forward in terms of the normal debating process and having the vote on second reading. They have that ability, Mr. Speaker, but they can if they are reasonable, if they are fair-minded, allow us as members of the Legislature to debate this particular bill.

* (1710)

I say to members opposite, particularly members who are not part of the Treasury benches, they have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, if they will discuss this and persuade their cabinet colleagues not to bring down the kind of stonewall we have seen on so many other bills, if they will just allow them to allow this matter to go to a vote, they have the opportunity to decide themselves, because surely a bill such as this should not be subject to government discipline. This should not be subject to the Whip. This is private members' hour.

I look to the private members opposite. They are as important in terms of debate on bills such as this as anyone else in this House. In fact, I will go even further. They have more of a role to play than the Treasury benches, because members of cabinet through cabinet discussions and the resulting cabinet solidarity have their own legislative agenda. They have their own legislative agenda, Mr. Speaker. In this case, it is not one that is doing very much for the consumers, but they have their own legislative agenda.

There is nothing in the parliamentary traditions that binds the government private members from doing what we as opposition private members are doing and that is to say we are looking objectively. We are developing our own initiatives. We are developing our own agenda. The bottom line is they have that opportunity as well.

Let us look at this bill. What does this bill do, Mr. Speaker? First of all, let us look at the fact that this bill, while unique in Manitoba, has been adopted in other provinces. We are not the only jurisdiction to have a franchises act. Why have other jurisdictions looked in introducing a bill such as this? The bottom line is because of the abuse, the financial abuse, the activities that have bordered on fraud that have

taken place involving franchises, and the loss that many unsuspecting Manitobans, many members of the public, have had to face because of the lack of protection of their rights, their rights as consumers.

The bottom line is we are seeing it on a continuous basis. We are seeing franchises that offer a great deal in terms of promise, that often are grossly inflated in terms of the kind of cost that is attached to one having the franchise. We are seeing that many of those so-called promises have bordered on the fraudulent.

There have been many examples here in Manitoba, and concern has been expressed—travel agencies being one where the approach of those is to be so grossly inflated levels of franchise fees, to then adjust those according to the ability to pay of whoever is unfortunate enough to be considering investing in that kind of franchise, and then indeed saying, well, perhaps the normal franchise fee is \$100,000 but in your case we will lower it to \$50,000 or to \$35,000 or \$20,000, knowing full well that the \$100,000 fee was totally and absolutely out of line with the kind of financial reward and benefit, the kind of investment return that members of the public looking at purchasing a franchise would expect. We are seeing, too many times, franchises where the franchisers have not lived up to the kind of promises that have been made.

I note that this particular bill has several different aspects to it. It is a comprehensive bill. It deals with the regulation of franchise trading, Mr. Speaker. It requires a statement of material facts which is, I think, a significant matter, a registration of the application prospectus which would once again provide greater control, greater rights for the consumer. It goes into detail in terms of the prospectus. It requires a certificate of full disclosure and also deals with a number of other areas relating to salespersons, in particular, and also to a number of general concerns about representation as to registration.

There is also a section that deals with enforcement. That is important, because there is no use, as we have found, of having consumer legislation unless there is the ability of the member of the public that has been unfairly treated to receive some sort of redress, unless there is some sort of penalty, Mr. Speaker, for those who would abuse the rights of consumers.

There is a whole section of this bill that deals with liability of directors and officers, that deals with what

defences would be applied. Also, in particular it deals with a kind of fines, and deals with some very substantial fines, up to \$25,000 of someone who is guilty of an offence.

That is important because toothless consumer legislation is no better than no legislation at all. It provides provisions for investigation and action, Mr. Speaker, which is important, specific provisions in terms of dealing with the appointment. It is fair, it provides an appeal commission, and that is a mechanism open to any person primarily affected by a direction decision, order of ruling, of the director that is appointed by this bill.

There is a section on administration which is once again part of the comprehensive approach of this bill. This is a comprehensive bill, Mr. Speaker, and I once again give credit to the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for introducing a bill such as this in the Manitoba Legislature.

I ask the question why the government is not doing anything to prevent people from being ripped off as they are on an almost daily basis by those, Mr. Speaker, who are misleading them about their abilities to deliver the kind of promises we have seen in terms of franchises. Why is this government not acting? Is it going to take an I-Team report before this government finally realizes that it has to act on behalf of the consumers in this particular area?

I know a number of people personally who have been in the situation of, I quite frankly would say, being ripped off by individuals who have set up franchises, who have made promises that have not been delivered, Mr. Speaker. I have seen that happen, and does it take more people to be affected on a personal basis? Does it take more people to be ripped off before this government will act? Who is this government protecting? I ask that question. Why will it not act itself and bring in a bill as a government bill? Why is the government not now speaking to this bill, and why will they not give a commitment, something they can do very easily, to at least having this go to a vote?

If they do not agree with the bill, they will then have to be accountable for their actions. What we have seen too many times, Mr. Speaker, in this House, in private members' hour, is the government hiding behind its ability to stonewall legislative initiatives from other members, to stonewall, to debate out the bills, to wait until the end of the session when those bills are still remaining on the Order Paper and have them die on the Order Paper.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Do not put so many on the paper.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance says, do not put so many on the paper. If the Minister of Finance will guarantee there will be votes on a specific number of private members' bills, which he has the ability to do, I am sure that we would probably see more focused discussion in terms of bills. When we know our chances of getting a bill even to a vote that would have the bill defeated by the government, if that was to happen, the odds of that are pretty slim.

The only significant number of private members' bills that have gone to a vote took place when we had a minority government. The government had much less choice at that time in terms of being able to block those kinds of bills. We have had the occasional bill in the early 1980s, but I look to the minister. Outside of the private bills, when was the last time that this government said, yes, we will allow it to go to a vote.

Mr. Manness: We had a vote last night.

Mr. Ashton: Well, indeed, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance makes my point. There was a vote last night on a resolution, and what I said earlier in my comments was, let us have a vote on this bill. Let us have a vote that allows each and every member of the Legislature, even those who do not wish to debate, to state where they stand in terms of the protection of the rights of consumers in regard to franchises. Let us have a vote, Mr. Speaker. Let us follow up on that principle that was established yesterday that saw all-party agreement on a resolution.

We had all-party agreement on a resolution a few weeks ago, proposed by a government member. A similar resolution had been on the Order Paper in regard to post office, and why not have the same approach on this particular bill? What does the government have to lose by putting this bill to a vote? What does it have to lose, even if it votes it down, which I perhaps sense may be the case? What does it have to lose? In fact, I would say the people will gain, Mr. Speaker, because they will at least have some accounting from the government for its actions. I say this because governments of all political stripes have done this.

It is time in private members' hour that we got back to the original purpose of private members' hour, which was to allow matters not just to be

debated—this is not a debating club, this is a decision-making body.

In Ottawa they brought in reforms that allow private members' bills and resolutions to go to a vote, a number every year. Why not do the same so that Manitobans will see where we stand on Bill 18, The Franchises Act, an important piece of consumer legislation, brought in by the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), supported by every member on our side, a bill that deserves the support of all 57 members of the Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1720)

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the government is prepared to see Bill 66 come forward for second reading, if indeed it is the will of the House to do so.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to bring Bill 66 forward at this time? [Agreed]

Bill 18 will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), as previously agreed.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 66—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 66, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, this is really a very, very simple bill. In fact, I think it amounts to one line in a change to the present legislation. It is a bill that affects the post-adoption registry.

At the present time, if a young person is adopted and they wish to make contact with their former family, there is a process in place. It is a very complex process, as it should be. There is nothing wrong with the present process, because it protects not only the rights of the adoptee but the rights of the birth parents, because they have given up this child for an adoption purpose. But should it be clear that the adoptee wishes to make contact with the

birth parents, and if it is equally clear that the birth parents do not mind having contact with that child, now perhaps an adult, then that process is made possible by the Department of Family Services. It has worked very successfully.

I know, for example, of a man in his 30s who is going to be reunited with his mother on Mother's Day this year, not having any contact with that mother for some 32 years, but they both agreed that they would like to have that contact and they are going to have that contact on Mother's Day of this year. In addition, the same kind of contact can be made with the siblings. If a sibling is with a birth parent then that sibling can, in fact, also achieve contact with the adoptee.

Where there is a breakdown and where such contact is not allowed is if the adopted child has a sibling who has also been adopted, that contact cannot be permitted at the present time. Even though we are suggesting the same controls should be in place if that adopted child is not an adult and if that adopted child does not want to have contact, then, of course, the contact should not be made. But if a child who is also adopted wants to have contact and if, in fact, it is a birth sibling of another adopted child, then what this legislation would permit would be for that kind of contact to be maintained.

We do not want to see any lessening of the controls. We think the controls are appropriate. What we do want to ensure is that if anyone has been adopted, but they have a brother or sister who is, in fact, a birth brother and sister and that birth brother and sister has also been adopted, they will be entitled to have contact with one another should they both wish that contact to take place.

It is a simple piece of legislation. It is not one that I think requires a great deal of debate. It just requires a willingness for those of us in the House to decide whether we want to extend the rights presently in law to include others who have been adopted. I would just ask this simple question. If it is acceptable for an individual to have contact with a birth sibling who has not been adopted, why is it not acceptable for them to have contact with a birth sibling who has been adopted?

Surely, the relationship is exactly the same. They have never known this brother or sister. They have

never had previous contact with this brother or sister, but we are limiting their ability for a brother and sister if it is still living, if it is not any longer living or never did live with the birth parent.

So I would ask the members to consider this. I do not expect them to make quick comment on it, because it is an idea that they have to think about and consider before they do make contact, but I think it is a reasonable suggestion. I think it would give the kind of contacts to one group in particular above all else, and that is the number of aboriginal children who were adopted outside of this province and outside of this country. That has been referred to as genocide by none other than a court judge in the province of Manitoba.

As a result, we have made very considerable changes in the way we deal with aboriginal children. I think we are now dealing with them in a much more appropriate fashion, but many of those children were adopted, and many of their birth siblings were adopted. They would now like to unify their families, but they cannot make that unification because if the parents are no longer living, they have no avenue to make that contact because they are prohibited from doing it under the present legislation.

So I would ask members to consider it, and I would ask that in a short period of time they also participate in this debate and that they give passage to this bill, because this is no condemnation of the present government. This has been an ongoing problem for a great many years. It is just a further recognition that we must move into this additional area as we have moved into other areas that are similar but not exactly identical. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

An Honourable Member: Six o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Six o'clock? Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: It is agreed. The hour being 6 p.m. this House now stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning (Friday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Thursday, April 30, 1992

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