



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
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
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
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
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	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
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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
<i>Vacant</i>	Rossmere	
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 14, 1993

The House met at 8 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(continued)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The committee will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 4.(c)(1) on page 39.

When the committee last sat, it had been also considering the following motion: It was moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) that the committee condemn the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) for her failure to plan adequately for students in need before cutting the Manitoba bursary program.

Question? All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The Nays have it. I need a seconder for that.

An Honourable Member: It is seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Okay. A formal vote has been requested. I will report the matter to the House.

The committee recessed at 8:03 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 8:34 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We are dealing with item 4.(c)(1) Salaries \$1,549,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$577,300—pass; (3) Assistance \$10,000,000—pass.

4.(d)(1) Salaries \$136,600.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Chair, I wanted to ask how many appeals there were this year and what the rate of success was. I should say, what the rate of acceptance of the appeals was. Success is a bit too open to interpretation.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): In 1993, being the school year that we are still in so the numbers are estimated: appeals received, 1,000; appeals approved, 300.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister compare that to the previous year?

Mrs. Vodrey: In 1991-92 there were 1,055 appeals received, 370 appeals approved.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 4.(d)(1) Salaries \$136,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$24,300—pass.

4.(e)(1) Salaries \$503,300.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to begin by looking at the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement. As the minister knows, we have asked a number of questions about this over the last two years. Our understanding was that in 1991 we began to see reports from this department that we were close to signing an agreement, that an agreement was imminent, that negotiations were continuing and were showing headway. Yet it has been two more years before any agreement has been signed and I am concerned about the delay, as the minister knows. I think it has put us at a disadvantage vis-à-vis other provinces.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know if this Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) went to the Tory convention or not, but I think the schmoozing has got to him. Were you there?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: That was it. Well, I am glad there is a rational cause for it. I am glad to hear there is no other reason.

Mrs. Vodrey: Manitoba did not rush into the signing of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement with Canada because we

wanted to make sure that agreement reflected the needs of Manitoba, and until those needs had been negotiated we were not prepared to sign the agreement.

The fact that Manitoba did not sign the agreement immediately and waited until we had an agreement which we believed was more reflective of Manitoba and also was not just a straight boilerplate type of agreement, but rather an agreement which had been shaped on behalf of Manitoba, then there has been no negative impact on the province of Manitoba.

With respect to the direct government-to-government purchase of training, Manitoba's '93-94 allocation is precisely what it would have been had we signed the agreement one year ago.

Ms. Friesen: The minister has frequently said this is a made-in-Manitoba solution and we do not have a boilerplate plan. I wonder if she could indicate to us what the differences are between this particular plan and those of other provinces.

* (2040)

Mrs. Vodrey: This agreement, we believe, marks a significant departure from the previous agreements. The previous agreements focused on a buyer-seller relationship between the two levels of government in the area of training. This new agreement is a much broader agreement. It encompasses a greater array of labour force development activities.

First of all, it stresses the joint planning or the collaboration. It also stresses co-operation, and it emphasizes the need to reduce overlaps and duplication, a complementarity in programming in services offered by government.

Furthermore, the agreement stresses the need to focus training activities more strategically towards economic development rather than being reactive in its approach to labour force development. The federal and provincial governments have agreed to assign a higher priority to training activities which will enhance Manitoba's economic competitive position.

The agreement calls for joint planning. It calls for consultation and co-ordination of activities between the two levels of government. It indicates the intention to involve our labour market partners in a meaningful way and labour force development planning in the future and also to foster a training culture in the province.

It addresses specific measures to support the training of the unemployed and to enhance human resource planning using a sectorial approach where feasible. The agreement also stresses the need for developing strategically determined training planning based on current and emerging skill shortages. It also addresses the need to strengthen the existing system to ensure that training is accessible, relevant and portable.

Some of the specific areas which are promoted by the agreement include adult literacy and basic education. They include co-operative education, apprenticeship training, adjustment services and programs and also access by institutions to training funds. In Manitoba, we particularly wanted to have reference to the colleges made.

Ms. Friesen: The question I asked was: How was this particular agreement different from the others? What I meant was the other provinces. Everything that the minister has said seems to me to have been contained for example in one of the very early ones, which was the New Brunswick one.

So I am looking for the elements that the minister has said have led to the delay and that was the made-in-Manitoba approach. So could the minister explain to us why it took two years to make an agreement, an additional two years. I should say, for an agreement which sounds remarkably similar to one which was made in '89.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, well, again, I can say to the member that there certainly was negotiation on behalf of Manitoba when I referred to a boilerplate agreement. There was an agreement which did not include all of these areas. It included in a broad way the intention, but it did not include the specifics.

Perhaps in the agreement that she seems to be more familiar with, the New Brunswick agreement, that also was shaped for the needs of the people of New Brunswick. We negotiated an agreement that was shaped for the people of Manitoba.

Manitoba's agreement is, again, similar to other provinces in some ways because there is a basis to the agreement. However, we do have four major differences, including some of the areas focused upon as I mentioned in the last five areas that I mentioned.

The duration of our agreement is for two fiscal years. We did take our time in the process of negotiating an agreement. Part of that, I would

remind the member too, included a time when there were constitutional discussions which were taking place in the fall and also in the summer of 1992. At that time, there was some question about where training would fall in terms of the constitutional agreements, whether there would be any devolution of training.

Across Canada, different provinces have different views on whether or not they wish to have the training portion constitutionally devolved. So Manitoba was very active, as the member knows. Our Premier (Mr. Filmon) was extremely active in the negotiations, and we were wanting to see exactly what the outcome would be in that area, and so that was one part that was an area of timing and the timing was also affected not only because we wanted to set up a made-in-Manitoba agreement but we also needed to know what the outcome of the constitutional discussions would be.

Secondly, it includes a provision for Canada and Manitoba to work together to establish co-operative arrangements for the federal purchases of training at the colleges, and in addition the joint federal-provincial management committee, under The Labour Force Development Agreement, has established a task team to look at how the colleges could be ensured fair access to federal training dollars such as the Unemployment Insurance Developmental Uses Funds. Unlike many other provinces, Manitoba was able to secure a provision to establish co-operative arrangements for the purchases of training at the colleges by the federal government. These new arrangements will provide the colleges with a level of revenue security in the wake of the reductions of government-to-government purchases of training.

As I have mentioned before in the discussions, Red River Community College, for example, has met with the Winnipeg area Canada Employment Centres to ensure that there is going to be a match between the training demand and also the supply which the colleges will be able to provide in the area of training. So this kind of co-operative working relationship has been fostered under the Labour Force Development Agreement, and it was important to us to look at the colleges and to have them specifically noted, based on Manitoba's population and also our training in Manitoba.

In addition to that, our agreement specifically states that Manitoba would not assume any costs of training traditionally supported by the federal

government in the case that the federal support to these programs was reduced. We have been speaking over the course of the Estimates process about the federal government who may begin a project and then all of a sudden there will be reductions in that program, or the federal government may determine that they do not wish to support that program anymore, and the provincial government has in the past stepped in and offered support.

Now the provincial government wants to make it very clear that where the federal government does undertake to support programs that they will continue to support the programs, where they wish not to support the programs that then they will answer to the people of Manitoba, that the Province of Manitoba will not continue to step in and take up the programs that had been traditionally supported by the Government of Canada, and so we included that as noted within the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement.

Fourthly, the agreement states that for six months after the agreement is signed, Canada would not establish or facilitate the establishment of the Labour Force Development boards in Manitoba. Canada had been acting unilaterally coming into Manitoba to set up the boards. They had held meetings with individual groups and had been working to establish the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development boards or private sector boards through which they wish to flow the training funds.

Manitoba believes that people of Manitoba know better what the composition of those boards should be and therefore we wanted the opportunity to do some work within Manitoba and ask the federal government to not act unilaterally and in fact not to facilitate or to establish or try to establish these boards without Manitoba having the opportunity to do some work here as well.

* (2050)

So that was another very important clause within the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement, because it showed an agreement by the Government of Canada to allow Manitoba to set up the boards in the interests of Manitobans.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, yes, the last two items I thought were very interesting when I read them. A document that talks very glowingly about co-operation, then ends up with two items which

say, no, do not do it and if you do do it, then it is going to be on your heads. That is with the reduction of training. So there was an overall element of co-operation about the document, but two items particularly which certainly spoke to the provincial suspicion about federal actions and federal programs.

There are a number of questions which arise out of the minister's answer and I wanted to clarify something at the beginning. The minister said that there were five areas that she had just spoken of that were different and I was not sure which five areas she meant. Did she mean the apprenticeships, the access by institutions, the adult literacy, and there were two others before that, or was she talking about the sectors there?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the areas specifically that are different are the four which I mentioned. However, they are taken from the specific areas of co-operation that I gave her—co-operation, collaboration and complementarity. Of the five specific areas which I mentioned from the agreement, the adult literacy and basic education, the co-operative education, which again is referenced in the second point that I raised to the member, it includes provision for Canada and Manitoba to work together to establish co-operative arrangements for federal purchases of training at colleges. The adjustments services and program, I referenced in point 3, where Manitoba would not assume any cost of training traditionally supported by the federal government.

The member seems to feel that these do not speak to co-operation. Co-operation collaboration, the complementarity comes in the planning of labour market plan and for the labour force, but if the member has some objection to our, on behalf of Manitobans, standing up to say that Manitobans expect the federal government to live up to their commitments, Manitobans expect the federal government to fulfill the commitments that they have made and Manitoba will not always be put in the position of coming forward to have to supplement those, then perhaps she should say.

The area of Labour Force Development board, if the member has some problem in Manitoba negotiating, the Government of Canada will not act unilaterally in the province of Manitoba, then she should say also.

Ms. Friesen: When the minister speaks about co-operation and the task team on college access, could she give us a bit more information on that? How is this different than other federal-provincial agreements?

Mrs. Vodrey: In the area of the colleges, the joint federal-provincial management committee, under the Labour Force Development Agreement, has established a task team to look at how the colleges will be ensured fair access to federal training dollars such as the Unemployment Insurance Developmental Uses Fund. Unlike many other provinces, Manitoba was able to secure a provision to establish co-operative arrangements for the purchase of training at the colleges by the federal government.

These new arrangements will provide the colleges with a level of revenue security in the wake of reductions of government-to-government purchases of training. I gave the member, by way of example, Red River Community College has met with the Winnipeg area Canada Employment Centres to ensure that there is a match between the training demand and the supply. This is the kind of co-operative working relationship which is being fostered under the Labour Force Development Agreement. Again, now that the colleges have moved to governance, the colleges are able to do that direct discussion with the Canada Employment Centres. In addition, both levels of government are involved in a joint analysis of federal training purchases in relation to labour market demand as well as joint labour market demand for forecasting. It is this type of partnership again under the Labour Force Development Agreement which I believe will ensure that the labour force development is more closely tied with labour market demand and economic development.

Ms. Friesen: In the period that it has taken for this agreement to be signed, and in spite of the fact that the minister talks about co-operation and the goal of achieving revenue security for the colleges, in fact what we have seen is close to, even in this past year, a 30 percent reduction in federal purchases with, I would assume, no co-operation and no recognition of the needs of the colleges for revenue security.

Can the minister explain why this has happened, and is it her view that a speedier signing of this agreement would in fact have given the colleges

that security for this past year as well as, we hope, for future years?

Mrs. Vodrey: Canada has been reducing the level of government-to-government purchases for 10 years. For example, the level of direct purchases in Manitoba was at \$22 million in '85-86, and over the next few years this level dropped regularly. By '87-88, when the last federal-provincial agreement expired, direct purchases were roughly \$13.5 million.

I believe that reduction took place when the former government was in power. They were frozen around this level while negotiations for a new agreement were negotiated, and for 1993-94, the level of direct purchases was reduced an additional 25 percent to \$9.9 million.

The reduction of this direct government-to-government purchase of training is not a new phenomenon, nor is it restricted to this province. This reflects the federal training strategy, which seeks to replace the government-to-government arrangements with the federal government and the most appropriate deliverers of training. They would like to replace the previous government-to-government arrangements with agreements between the federal government and the most appropriate deliverers of training, and that may be the colleges.

Ms. Friesen: This recent drop of 24 percent that the minister made reference to, surely the instability that that has caused for students, for programs, for community college planning, surely that could have been avoided if the minister had been able to sign the agreement, as it appeared we were ready to sign in '91.

* (2100)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, again, as I said to the member, this is not restricted to the Province of Manitoba. This is not restricted to the signing of the Labour Force Development Agreement. This is the movement of the Government of Canada in how they wish to flow their training dollars, and it is not a matter of how quickly that Labour Force Development Agreement was signed.

We did move the colleges to governance with the understanding that the federal government was planning this reduction. This allowed for the colleges to do the kinds of negotiating which the federal government had in mind, and that is direct negotiation, government with the training

deliverers, as opposed to government-to-government negotiations and flowing through the government of Manitoba, which the federal government had given a clear indication was not their plan anymore.

Because the guaranteed levels of revenue at the colleges has declined during the past decade, and I would point that out to the member, the colleges have had time to change their way of doing business in order to attract other indirect forms of federal revenue. Again, moving to college board governance, this model has enabled the colleges to be more responsive and also more adaptable to the local Canada Employment Centre's training demands.

Ms. Friesen: An agreement which puts some constraints on the federal government in the sense of requiring co-operation and requiring joint planning, both of those I think are good things which are contained in this agreement. Surely, if they are good for this coming year, they would have been good for the last year when we have seen a rather large drop in the amount of federal programming, federal dollars going to community colleges. My concern is again the instability for the colleges and for the reduction in programs which has occurred this past year at a time when both the minister's own reports and I think the waiting lists at community colleges show that there is an increasing demand for community college programs.

So those are my concerns. I am not sure whether the minister shares them. I certainly agree with her that the federal government has continued this kind of a policy for many years, and it has done it in a number of provinces, but other provinces, it seemed to me, moved more quickly than Manitoba did, considerably more quickly in some cases, to at least put some constraints on the federal government and to require some kind of joint planning and to require some kind of rational planning of resources so that there was not an overlap, so that there was a recognition of which sector, which government, was going to deal with which particular element of labour market training. Those all seem to me relatively sensible approaches. My concern is, had we done it sooner, we might not have had the difficulties that community colleges and students are facing as a result of this past year.

I can move on to other questions. We seem to be at a deadlock on that one. I have expressed my concerns about it. The minister has given her answers.

I want to ask about the progress of this agreement, now that it has been signed, where we are since March in a six-month period when this section of the department will be setting in motion the planning for the creation—and here this is a question—of a provincial labour force development board and local boards. Has that actually been agreed upon yet? What is sort of the plan for this six months?

Mrs. Vodrey: Since the signing of the Labour Force Development Agreement, the province and the federal government have been working together in a joint management committee. There were a number of issues which need to be worked out, and they have been working very well. I will be looking to make public some information on that fairly shortly.

Ms. Friesen: I asked whether there had been agreement yet whether to set up both provincial boards and local boards. Has that actually been decided yet, or is that even on the agenda?

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I took my place at the table, there were two empty chairs. They were empty for 12 minutes after I took my place. Let it be known the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) has now asked me to leave this chair because he wants to sit here instead of over there.

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

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: As I explained to the member, we will be looking to release some information regarding our consultation process which will lead to the formation of our provincial board. Excuse me. I have not made that announcement yet—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. That is about enough. If we could have just a little bit of order here so that the minister could be heard, I would appreciate it.

Mrs. Vodrey: As I said to the member, we have had a joint management committee working. As a

result of the work of that joint management committee between the federal government and the provincial government, we have worked out some details of a plan for consultation which was promised and which had been discussed. With that then we looked to that leading to the development of our provincial board.

Ms. Friesen: There was some concern, I think, during the negotiations as to whether, what are called in the context of this agreement, the equity groups would be represented at the consultation phase and at the representative stage of the boards. Are we at the stage yet where the minister is able to reassure those groups that they are involved?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I said, I will be making an announcement regarding the consultation process. I have not made that announcement yet.

Ms. Friesen: In the process that is being established, will local boards be established necessarily, or is that one of the questions for the consultation?

Mrs. Vodrey: I know what the member is referring to which was the original vision, or sense, put forward by the federal government of how the boards might work or what the structure might look like, not necessarily how they would work. I can tell her that there are no local boards functioning across Canada at the moment. So what we will be doing is working towards a model that works best in Manitoba. When I announce the consultation process, there will be more details which the member will then see will be examined by Manitobans.

Ms. Friesen: The minister speaks about the public being able to look at the proposals. Could she tell us what kind of public participation there will be in the development of the provincial boards or in this phase of consultation?

* (2110)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, again it would not be appropriate to predict or to give that information until the process of consultation at least has been announced and we have that information.

Ms. Friesen: Does the minister anticipate that in the provincial board that there will be a role of participation for the provincial government?

Mrs. Vodrey: If the member is asking about how Manitoba will flow their training funds, that

information will again be discussed as the process is announced, slowly.

Ms. Frlesen: No, my question was not directed at this stage at the flow of the money, it was at the representation on the board, and does the province anticipate having a seat on the board?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, I have said several times that I have not yet announced what the process of consultation will be leading to a structure which would follow. When I make that announcement, then the information will be available.

Ms. Frlesen: Could the minister indicate—I guess we have about two or three months left—when she anticipates making this announcement?

Mrs. Vodrey: As soon as possible.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, since 1992, if not earlier, but certainly in the last year of the Estimates, one of the anticipated results of this section of the department was that there would be a Labour Force Development Strategy. So far, I have not seen one. We are, I guess, 18 months behind last year's Estimates. Could the minister tell us whether that is something she expects to see this year as she has listed it on the Expected Results, or is this something which is not going to take the form of a final report? Is it going to be something which is in process?

Mrs. Vodrey: We did look to have some information available. However, I would like to remind the member that some work was delayed of necessity by the outcome of the national constitutional referendum on the Charlottetown Accord. In that there was consideration of the devolution of some of the skills training and some of the powers and the division of powers between the Government of Canada and the provincial governments.

So we had to look at that process, which I will remind the member began in the summer of '92 and was completed with the referendum in October of '92, and at that point there was still some question around the issue of devolution. However, I tell the member now that we are working very carefully, and I would also say as well we also looked in terms of that strategy to the finalization of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement because that does account for some of the focuses and the complementarity and the

sharing of information between the Government of Canada and the government of Manitoba.

In addition, we also have now taken a third step, and that is the reorganization of the provincial skills training programs, and in the past, as the member will know, some of the skills training programs were housed in the Department of Family Services, yet apprenticeship housed in the Department of Labour. Those programs have now moved into the Advanced Education and Skills Training division of the Department of Education and Training. We are looking at the reorganization. We are looking at the most efficient organization. With all of that now housed within one area, we will also be able to use that consolidation now as we develop that particular strategy and the details of that strategy.

I can tell the member that the main theme of the strategy will be policy integration, and that we will be looking for our labour market development to be complementary and supportive of government's economic strategy and also the regional thrust of the provincial economic development policies. We would also look for the inclusion and relation to the strategy on sustainable development which has been brought forward by this government.

So there were three reasons which accounted for a delay in what we had been looking to achieve. We are now working on that and, as I said, we look for the main theme of the strategy to be policy integration including three of those areas that we have discussed.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it seems to me that at least two of those areas were within the province's jurisdiction, that is, the reorganization of the department and the delays in the signing of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement. Certainly, the Constitution and the referendum that went along with that were beyond the control of this government, but it seems to me that the arguments that the minister is advancing for essentially an 18-month delay in what would presumably be a basic tool of any government seems to me a circular argument: yes, we are late because we delayed in other areas. It seems to me an unusual form—well, not an unusual form, but certainly a circular form of explanation.

I would like to ask the minister about the nature of the strategy that she is developing, and I thank her for telling us that the basic theme of it is going to be policy integration, because it does bring to my mind

some of the areas of other strategic thrusts of this government that have been talked about for many years but have never appeared. One of those is an aboriginal strategy, an aboriginal education and training strategy which one would have anticipated seeing as part of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy or indeed of any aboriginal strategy on the part of this government.

It seems to me any government of Manitoba which has to look at labour force development has to look at the composition of the labour force and the composition of the labour force over the next 10 to 20 years. The minister is well aware of the common element of that, which is so often and strikingly mentioned, is of course the high proportion of aboriginal people who will be coming into the labour force.

* (2120)

I want to ask about that element of the minister's policy in this section. Has there been a consideration of an aboriginal education strategy, an aboriginal Labour Force Development Strategy or an aboriginal basic education strategy that would become part of this policy integration theme of a provincial labour market policy?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, I just have to make a comment on the member's statement about the issue of devolution appearing to be very insignificant to her in the signing of the Labour Force Development Agreement. I can tell the member that was not insignificant. In fact, it was significant. The member perhaps would have signed an agreement and then had to renegotiate when any constitutional arrangements regarding the division of powers changed. That was a consideration in the process as we watched and as Manitoba took part in the constitutional discussions. The member sat on the task force, I believe, so I am sure she would be aware, or should be aware, of the importance of any changes around the division of powers and how that might affect any other agreements.

In terms of the Urban Native Strategy, I know she would like to speak to my colleague the Minister for Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) on that when she has the opportunity to discuss his Estimates with him. He is the one who will be able to provide her with more information. The Department of Education and Training, however, is

always considering Manitobans and their educational concerns.

The department, as I was saying, is continuing to develop and to implement programs that will help promote and increase the level of educational attainment and labour market success among Manitoba's aboriginals.

I would like to point to one new area, the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Initiative conducted by the Apprenticeship Branch in co-operation with a committee representing most aboriginal communities in Manitoba to develop a viable apprenticeship trades training program for northern and remote communities. That is one of the new areas because I know that the member is always interested in the initiatives and the actual new work which is being done by the Department of Education and Training. I think that is an important area.

However, I would also remind her that we have discussed at great length other programs which relate to aboriginal education. We have discussed this afternoon and for several days last week the issue of the ACCESS programs, and we have also not discussed in detail yet, though I know we will get to it within the next while, the literacy programs. I am sure she has heard of the community-based literacy programs, and this literacy program that is community-based and learner centered allows aboriginal leaders to have a major role in the program delivery.

We spoke at the very early part of the Estimates process about the Human Resources Opportunity Centres. We have also spoken about the Single Parent Job Access Program, and I know as we reach the employment enhancement programs we will speak more about that, also the community-based employability programs, projects, and the Gateway projects. So there are a number of programs in place; however, there are those which are being developed.

I just have a couple of other examples of new programs: One in co-operation with Opasquiak First Nation; a child care curriculum is being developed and delivered integrating traditional aboriginal content. That is at Keewatin Community College. Also at Keewatin Community College, an aboriginal centre has been established to provide a focal point for cultural activities and curriculum

integration, culturally sensitive student and staff support and institutional transformation.

In addition to that, at Keewatin Community College, in collaboration with the Keewatin Tribal Council, a culturally inclusive daycare centre has been opened on the Thompson campus to serve post-secondary students.

At Assiniboine Community College, in 1992-93, programs have been or are being delivered in co-operation with 13 aboriginal communities and organizations in employment preparation, licensed practical nursing, developmental studies, literacy life skills, customer relations, microcomputer applications, building construction, drywall applications, bricklaying, school bus driver, and native small business.

Then at Red River Community College, Red River is currently recruiting for the position of dean of Aboriginal Education and Institutional Diversity, and I understand they now have recruited that individual. The purpose is to promote the establishment of an organizational focus through which to address the needs of aboriginal Manitobans.

Ms. Friesen: I thank the minister for that list. It does not, of course, address the ones that have been cut, the Adult Basic Education programs, the New Career programs, the Student Social Allowance programs, the various sections of the ACCESS programs, but it does indicate some new activity in some areas.

When I was speaking of a strategy, I think that what we generally understand by a strategy is a sense of a goal, a clearly articulated goal of where the province should be going in aboriginal labour force development. We look for some indication of the pace and rate of change and some sense of the time over which certain expected results will be achieved.

So I wonder what part that is going to play in the minister's plans for developing, first of all, a provincial Labour Force Development Strategy and then, second of all, for a significant part of that which I think will be the aboriginal strategy. It would seem to me that we would need to know some basic statistical information which has not always been available through this department, particularly under the Native Education Branch when we asked about how many native students there were.

But it would seem to me you would need to know what skills exist in the aboriginal community, what skills are going to be in demand five to 10 years from now, or whatever the length of the Labour Force Development Strategy will be, and how essentially we get from here to there, what the age structure is of the community, what the level of unemployment has been, what the long-term unemployment has been, and how we are going to reach whatever goal it is that the province is choosing to set in this area.

So it is that level of planning that I am looking for. I realize that those are quite extensive demands in terms of any staff or any program manager. Labour force development plans are ones that I think have to be continually updated and certainly have to be relevant in terms of the five- to 10-year planning cycle that one could look at in this area.

So it is not that we are looking for a perfected plan that is put in place, but I am looking for some sense from the minister that there is a recognition that these kinds of plans have to be developed, because the evidence that we have so far is that there are new programs in some community colleges, there is a reduction in some areas, and so it is very difficult to see where the plan is going and where the province is going.

So I wonder if the minister would take this opportunity to perhaps give us some sense of the direction of where she plans to take this area over the future.

* (2130)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, in the Partners in Skills Development, the report of the Skills Training Advisory Committee, there is a section which speaks about employment equity for natives. This speaks about the requirement that native people receive equitable treatment in the labour market, they must begin with the development of skills through education and training. It reflects on the 1986 census report, which indicated that in that particular report, 60 percent of native people in Manitoba were under the age of 25. It speaks of the size of the total youth population declining, but native youth becoming an important source of future labour supply.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

Then it speaks about projections that native workers will comprise an increasingly large

proportion of the labour pool in the decade ahead. It does refer to—the member asks about statistics. It certainly refers to recent estimates by Statistics Canada that indicate 16 percent of on-reserve native youth will complete high school and speaks also about some literacy issues relating to native people.

So I wanted to point that out. The member might be familiar with this report, which was released by my colleague now the Minister of Rural Development and the former Minister of Education in August 1990.

I tell her that so that she is aware that this government has had the issue for skills training for native people certainly on its agenda as an active item. If she raises it tonight, speaking about it, wanting to speak about statistics, then in fact that has certainly been a consideration for this government.

Then, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would like to point to the High Demand Occupations in Manitoba, September 1992, also produced jointly by Manitoba Education and Training, and Employment and Immigration Canada. In that there is a section, a report on high-demand occupations in Manitoba aboriginal communities. It lists: the following are skills and occupations required particularly in the aboriginal communities and reserves.

That list then is the forecast, and the member has spoken about the need for forecasts. I wanted to point out to her that that work as of September '92 has also been released.

Then the member speaks about the community colleges, and we have talked about the community colleges having moved to governance and, as they move into governance, some of the changes that they have been bringing about.

I have read to her the initiatives that have taken place at each of the three community colleges as they put a greater effect to the plan to work on behalf of native people.

So I think that to this point we certainly have the broad goal, we certainly have looked at some objectives and ways to meet that broad goal, and we also have some plans in action at the moment on behalf of native people in our community colleges and also a forecast regarding occupations.

Ms. Friesen: The assumption the minister made in that response is that native people will remain in native communities. She gave me the list of occupations in '92 for aboriginal communities. At least, that is what I understood her to say. My question was really based upon another assumption that Manitoba is going to need that aboriginal workforce, that Manitoba in general is going to need it. I am basing this on sources such as, for example, the Winnipeg 2000 report which made that very claim that Manitoba overall, not just Winnipeg, is going to need that young population. That is where the big change is coming in Manitoba in the composition of our labour force.

So I ask the minister again, the very number that she provided of 16 percent of students on reserves completing high school, is that 16 percent going to be enough to fill the high skill jobs, the high demand jobs, the high tech jobs that the government's economic programs are supposedly gearing us for?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair. I would just say to the member that when I spoke about high-demand occupations in Manitoba, I said particularly in aboriginal communities and reserves. Aboriginal communities are also in the city of Winnipeg; they are also in other centres. It is not necessarily restricted to—I am not sure what the member had in mind when she commented on that list of what was needed within aboriginal communities.

In terms of the statistical information, she did ask for the statistics. I did refer her to the recent estimates by StatsCan and realized this report was in 1990. Recent estimates by Statistics Canada in 1990 indicate that only 16 percent of on-reserve native youth complete secondary school.

In Manitoba, we have already passed the line so we have had a chance to look at our Native Education branch. The member said, well, why do we not know exactly how many students are native students or of native background? As I have said to her at that time, many of the students do not wish to declare that. So there has been a sense that we should ask for certain statistics which people are not necessarily willing to provide or may not wish to provide.

However, what we have done is for the establishment of our Native Education branch. Certainly we have been looking at providing the

supports, and I will remind her that that branch provides support to both native education and also to schools which want to know more about native education and culture. So we did speak about the type of curriculum that has been developed, the supports. We spoke about the co-operation of the Native Education branch with the federal government. Those questions were asked by her colleague the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). So we have discussed, I think quite at length, some of the supports which we are offering.

In addition, for those young people of aboriginal background, I have spoken at length about our Student Support Branch, and the target to at-risk young people, and that those programs are developed at the community level by local schools. They can apply for funding to the Student Support Branch, and I think that when we went through that area, I gave several examples of the kinds of programs which are in place, which have been funded through Student Support Branch. The important part is that we have been making an effort through several different parts of our department to address the issues of native education, and not simply cluster it under one heading.

Ms. Friesen: The minister made reference to a list which indicates occupations in demand in aboriginal communities and on reserves. Could she give us a sense of some of the items in that list?

Mrs. Vodrey: Some of the items are teachers, alcohol and drug abuse counsellors, certified tradespersons, plumber, electrician, carpenter, heavy-duty equipment mechanic and, in the area of other trades, small engine repair.

Ms. Friesen: The minister was trying to tell me earlier that this essentially was the Manitoba economy. This is not the Manitoba economy that I understand the framework document of the government to look at.

Again, my question was: With 16 percent graduation from high school, how are we going to find the people to fill those high-tech, high-skilled jobs that the government is aiming its economic plan at?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, the sources of highly skilled labour now and in the future will need to come from our aboriginal people, but they will also need to come from women, from the immigrant population

and other sources that are traditionally drawn upon in terms of developing our skilled labour force. I have spoken about a number of programs.

* (2140)

I believe that we have spoken about young women in school and our efforts to interest young women in the maths and the sciences. I believe we also had some discussion about the ESL classes, English as a second language, to support young people as they come into school as well, so that they will be able to become engaged in the process of learning and be able to make the very most of their education here in Manitoba.

Ms. Friesen: I do come back to the basic issue that with one in five, or one in four, entering the labour force by the end of this century, being aboriginal and a graduation rate from high school of 16 percent, that, to me, does not bode well for the future of Manitoba.

Again, I want to ask the minister—this has been a long, long problem; it is not something that is solved overnight. But I think it does need to have a plan; it does need to have a strategy. That is why I am looking for the Labour Force Development Strategy from this government, which has been promised for a year and a half now, at least. I would hope that it would have some particular consideration of the very long-term unemployment in aboriginal communities, and the very major changes that need to be made, not only to ensure that the graduation rates from high schools are expanded, but that the employment rates in the community and the long-term unemployment those people have suffered from at least begins to change. That is what I am looking for, is a strategy to address that.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I did say to the member earlier that we have a number of initiatives in place. We have the broad goal in place. We have objectives, and we have some initiatives.

Our labour market strategy will be looking at building on these initiatives. We will be emphasizing improved access to the system, and we will be looking at a full participation, within the labour market of Manitobans.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, one of the elements of a strategy, as I suggested at the beginning, was that it did give some indication of the goal and of the pace and rate of change, and

some indication of the expected results over a period of years.

Could the minister indicate to us what any of those elements might be in a labour force development strategy for Manitoba?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I was saying earlier, we know that from the 1986 census, aboriginal young people from 15 through 24 were about 8 percent of the labour force. The prediction we have is that by the year 2001, they will form approximately 12 percent of the labour force. We recognize that increase in percentage and proportion is significant, but we do believe that it is well within Manitoba's ability to be adaptable to that.

Within the STAC Report—I will refer the member back to that—from 1990, released by my colleague when he was Minister of Education, in the Native Education and Training Strategy one point that was made is that in order to face these challenges the private sector must work with native communities and also government in developing native education training and the employment strategy. But we also, again, have to work with the private sector, and that will be an important partnership and important for us to continue with those contacts and working relationships.

Ms. Friesen: The STAC Report is an interesting one because it did set out an agenda for the government in labour force development planning. The minister keeps going back to it and saying, yes, we are concerned because it was in the STAC Report, but my concerns are that so many elements of the STAC Report have not been followed, and that here we are two to three years later and the agenda that was laid out there, albeit in the context of a private-enterprise private-sector kind of solution, but even within that context some of the basic planning elements do not seem to even have begun yet.

One of the items which was particularly underlined by the Mauro report was the reorganization of government departments. Well, two years later that has happened. It also laid out, I think, for the government's agenda the development of a labour market policy or strategy, and that is what we are coming to in this section of the department and something which we have not seen yet.

So I wanted her now to look—

Mrs. Vodrey: I just have to comment on the member raising the STAC Report. She said I have referred to it; yes, I have referred to it. It has provided some guidance for Manitoba, and there has been a number of accomplishments as recommended by the STAC Report. One of the recommendations was a movement to College Governance, and College Governance has now been accomplished as of April 1. They have asked us to look at articulation between vocational programs in the colleges, and we are certainly looking at that. In fact, with our ed funding formula we have now allowed students to take a single vocational credit to encourage them to have a vocational education, and then to look at how they can apply that as they would move into the colleges.

Then I would also point out Workforce 2000, which was a major partnership initiative. That partnership initiative has to date trained, I believe it is over 5,400 Manitobans in terms of that partnership. [interjection] I am asked to repeat the number. Workforce 2000 has, in partnership with the private sector, trained over 54,000 Manitobans since it began.

* (2150)

Ms. Friesen: One of the recommendations of the Mauro report or STAC Report was that the government prepare a labour force development strategy. It would seem to me that College Governance and, particularly, the emphasis in College Governance on market-driven training, Workforce 2000 market-driven training, would have benefited by a labour market development strategy of this government, a broader context in which both of those changes were going to operate.

If I can turn to the broader section of a Labour Force Development strategy, perhaps to begin, by asking the minister about—what a Labour Force Development strategy does in my mind, though maybe I have a different approach to it than the minister, is that it essentially looks at the kind of population base that Manitoba has, the kinds of skills that exist in the population at the moment, and tries to match those with some projections, as best as can be done, of the needs of Manitoba in the future in a five- or a 10-year kind of phase.

Every province has to rely to some extent upon Statistics Canada material. Some provinces supplement that by their own investigations. My

assumption is that Manitoba does very little of that kind of supplemental collection of data. I think we know that Statistics Canada, in the last few years, has been under considerable financial restraints. One of the ways in which they have dealt with this is to take smaller samples for their numbers.

I wonder if the minister or her staff through her have any concerns about the kind of information that we are now getting from Statistics Canada using smaller samples. I mean, Manitoba is a small sample in any case. When you start to reduce the number of samples that you get, has this had any implications for the kind of data that we have been getting in Manitoba and which the government uses to plan at least one side of its Labour Force Development strategy?

Mrs. Vodrey: We do require statistics from a number of sources, as we do use the Statistics Canada Census data, and also the labour force survey. We use the Employment and Immigration, Canada Employment Centre Job Bank data. We also use the unemployment insurance claims by occupation. We also use the Stats Canada survey of employment, payrolls and hours. We use the college enrollment reports, statistics from the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, and also the national training survey.

So we try to acquire statistics from a number of sources, but I can say that the member raises the issue of the smaller sample that Statistics Canada uses. We recognize that too and have sent a letter to the Chief Statistician of Canada to say that that is not a helpful thing for us in Manitoba because it certainly does cause the rates to vary month by month. Since many places use Statistics Canada information, we use it too because it is a reference point widely known across Canada, but we have expressed our concern about the reduced sample size.

Ms. Friesen: Did the minister get a response on that? Are there proposed changes? I assume that our concerns are not unusual.

Mrs. Vodrey: The letter, I am informed, was sent approximately two weeks ago. We do not have an answer yet. The Deputy Minister of Education will be attending a meeting at the end of June in Toronto. He is the chair of the program liaison committee of the Canadian Education Statistics Council, and at that meeting, which is to take place

in June, he will be raising it directly as an agenda item.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to look at the other side of the equation, that is, the prediction of jobs required. The government's economic framework suggests high-skill, high-wage jobs, although I am not sure that the evidence is there to associate the two, but certainly high-skill jobs.

I wanted to ask the minister about the prediction of future jobs and how the government goes about that. There is less Statistics Canada material for that, for Manitoba or for any province, so I am looking for a method of procedure. What is the method that this government uses to predict job needs?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member asks how we do some of the planning, and I would say that, first of all, forecasts are a very critical planning tool in preparing for new and existing programs. Forecasts are developed by Manitoba Education and Training in co-operation with the federal economists at Employment and Immigration Canada. Forecasting methodology is continually being improved as new sources of information are discovered, and forecasts are revised annually to reflect changing conditions. Labour market forecasts are integrated into the parameters of a large number of government programs.

Ms. Friesen: My question was method. How is it done? You told me whom it is done in co-operation with. You have told me that it is updated and that it changes continually. Yes, I accept all that, but what is the method?

* (2200)

Mrs. Vodrey: The head of our Labour Market Policy Unit does work on the labour market forecasting methodology and certainly does some speaking about it as well in Manitoba. What he has focused on is, first of all, major factors affecting labour market demand, such as competition. He looks at international competitive pressures and domestic market penetration. He looks at economic conditions, issues such as recession versus economic growth, macro factors such as interest rates, investment and inflation. He looks at industry-specific factors such as housing market and the retail market. He looks at market size, issues such as domestic population, external markets penetrated.

Thirdly, he looks at issues of technological change, impacts on existing production and delivery processes, new product development, productivity changes. Then he also looks at any political decisions which might have an impact, such as free trade agreements and changes to the UI program. Then in the area of industry employment forecasting, he looks at real output forecasts from leading economic organizations, then undertakes forecasts of participation rates, unemployment rates, which lead to total employment levels when applied to population projections.

Then he uses other employment forecasts as a check. Then also, will undertake an industrial employment forecast to match total employment forecasts. Sources of industrial information include the CEC labour market information analysts, newspaper clippings, network of provincial contacts, and in terms of data sources used, as I have said earlier, the census, survey of employment, payrolls and hours, labour force survey and Statistics Canada indicators.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The hour being after 10 p.m., what is the will of the committee? Continue?

An Honourable Member: Continue.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Okay. We are going to continue, but we are going to take a 10-minute break for the staff to be able to stretch their legs, please.

The House recessed at 10:04 p.m.

After Recess

The House resumed at 10:17 p.m.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, before the break we were looking at the method used by the department to estimate employment projections. I just wanted to follow that up.

There is a long list of elements that go into the creation of employment projections. I wanted to ask the minister how often is that done? Is this a one-year event that is then sort of updated each year, or is it a two-to-three-year or a 10-year projection?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in the past, these have been done by Education and Training, by our labour market area. They have been done

once a year, and they have looked at a 10-year period.

Now, with the management committee that we have operating, we are now looking at forecasting with the federal government, because we are looking to put into practice the concepts of complementarity and the lack of duplication—but, instead, now a co-ordinated approach with the federal government.

Ms. Friesen: So it is being done in conjunction with the federal government. Will that change the once a year in a 10-year projection analysis?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, it will not.

Ms. Friesen: So how it is different from what has been done in the past, because in the past a considerable amount of federal information was used?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, now we are actually working directly with federal researchers. In the past, yes, we did use information which came from the federal government. Now the relationship is a much more co-operative one, in that we are working with the federal researchers. Also, the federal government and the provincial government are now using the same information.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am still not clear on how different it is. Was the federal government unco-operative before? I doubt that is the case.

What elements of different information were being used before, because the 10-year projection that we are working with now was based upon an earlier practice. I am concerned about what the difficulties were with the earlier practice, if any.

* (2220)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the process is much the same, but the outcome meets the principle of complementarity. It is now much more an integrated manner. We believe that it is more efficient and effective, because the linkage is now complete by working directly with the federal researchers.

In the past, there were two parallel systems, and now, as I said, we are looking to really put into practice that principle of complementarity. More than any other time, both levels of government will be targeting their labour force development efforts

in a co-ordinated fashion to enhance Manitoba's economic competitive position.

Ms. Frlesen: The federal researchers that the minister's staff will be working with, are they in Ottawa or are they in Winnipeg? I am looking for the direct relationship here.

Mrs. Vodrey: Those researchers are in Winnipeg.

Ms. Frlesen: In the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement, Manitoba, I understand, undertakes to focus primarily upon unemployed Manitobans. Is that correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the agreement does have somewhat of an emphasis on the Unemployment Developmental Uses programs. However, I can say that it really does seek to consider and look at the full skills training spectrum.

In actually applying that, we look at the common forecast, the common labour market forecast which is now developed between the Government of Canada and the government of Manitoba. With that common forecast, both governments will then look at the forecast. They will determine their programs and their initiatives. Though each government may determine even that they would like to have a similar program, they may look at trying to train different kinds of people within that same kind of program.

So it is to look at all the needs, not just the unemployment and the developmental uses needs, though certainly a large amount of training funds flows from the unemployment developmental uses program.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, could the minister give us perhaps a description or a profile of the skills basis and, hence, the skills needs of Manitoba's unemployed?

Mrs. Vodrey: In the Manitoba Labour Market Information Bulletin, the May '93 one, and these bulletins come out monthly, I refer the member to looking at the bulletin. Page 14, for instance, will give labour market characteristics by educational attainment and by sex so that you would be able to look at number of years of schooling, men and women, and then look at the employment rate, the unemployment rate and the participation rate. That is compared year over year.

I have tabled the April one, and then on page 15, the Manitoba Labour Market Characteristics:

Educational Attainment by Age, and that breaks down by age and by years of schooling, and then the employment, the unemployment and the participating rate.

With that, what we have tried to do is look at where there is employment/unemployment, what the characteristics are, recognizing that it is very hard to draw together or to roll into one specific characterization what that unemployed person or persons might look like.

Ms. Frlesen: Yes, the information that is in the Labour Market Information Bulletins is useful because it is on a similar basis to other provinces, and there can be comparisons.

What I am particularly concerned about and the basis my questions are coming from is that over the last two or three years it seems to me that the big areas of unemployment have, in fact, come in highly skilled labour. I am thinking of Air Canada, of VIA Rail, of Great West Life. These are not unskilled people. These are not people without high school or university educations, and that is where the big increases come, it seems to me, in the last two or three years. Some of which may still be on UIC numbers and not yet on the unemployment numbers.

* (2230)

But it would seem to me that an analysis of the skills, not just the education level but the skills and the experience of Manitoba's unemployed, would be a critical factor in trying to determine what kind of skills training to implement in the province. It would be part of any kind of useful labour force employment strategy.

So, yes, we do have the comparable basic educational information, but we do have some changes in the Manitoba employment which are quite striking, I think, in the number of skilled workers at a variety of levels both in white collar and blue collar areas that we are experiencing.

So I am asking from the minister some indication of something that goes beyond the basic Statistics Canada information and looks at Manitoba in terms of the skills that we have, the unproductive skills that are now there in our unemployed population, and how the minister's programs such as Workforce 2000, such as the community college programs, are actually addressing that kind of unemployment.

Mrs. Vodrey: In terms of looking at the employment supply and demand, we do look at what the supply is available, and in looking at the supply, in matching the supply to the demand, I went over a number of factors which affect the labour market supply, issues such as demographic changes—I am sorry, maybe I did not refer to this page specifically before. Some of the issues to be considered are slower population growth, the aging of the population, the increasing proportion of native people and the immigration levels.

Secondly, we look at education attainment, higher levels of educational attainment, persistency of high school dropout rates. Also, we look at illiteracy and lack of numeracy.

Then in terms of the labour force participation we look at increasing numbers of working women, the trend towards earlier retirement, and more families with two-income earners.

Fourthly we look at the mix of skills, the lack of scientific or technical skills, the outdated skills of older workers, and we also look at interprovincial standards of accreditation.

When we have had a look at the supply, those factors affecting the supply, we look to the labour market for the demand to do the match. With that particular match, we will then come out with an area in which there is a greater demand than there is the supply of workers with those characteristics.

With that information, having meshed the supply and the demand, we are, therefore, then able to look at the forecast in terms of high-demand occupations and high-demand skills. Those are listed in the High Demand Occupations in Manitoba, 1992.

It is from that we get the high-demand occupations. So that is the process. And then in the Manitoba Labour Market Information Bulletin, the May '93 bulletin, there is a section beginning on page 18—I am sure the member has seen this one—which looks at Manitoba unemployment insurance claimants by major occupation. I think that was what the member was getting at in terms of what are the numbers in certain areas of people year over year, month over month, and that is the comparison on that particular page.

It goes through management administrative, religion, medicine and health, clerical, farming, forestry and logging. There is a wide range of numbers of occupations. Then there is Manitoba

claimant rates by occupation and Manitoba employed by occupation, as well. So there is a fairly intensive breakdown in terms of that skills level that the member had been speaking about.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, could the minister indicate to us what conclusions she is actually drawing from those unemployment insurance claimants and the changes yearly to those? Again, I am particularly concerned by the fact that many of the recent large-scale unemployment issues are in fact dealing with people who do have skills and are highly trained, those, for example, in health care industries or Great-West Life again, or in teaching, for example, and in some of the management and administrative areas.

So what conclusions is the minister drawing from the patterns that she sees emerging in Manitoba? How does this relate to the programs which are being put into effect?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in terms of the training area, we do look at what the labour market trends will be. We try to make sure that information is available. Again, in the cases of the colleges now having moved to governance, we will be looking at the availability of that information to the colleges as they are also making their decisions and as they are negotiating with the Government of Canada.

Then I would also point out the Workforce 2000 program, because within that, though those workers are currently working, one of the important points is that those workers will receive some continued training, which will allow either the place where they work to remain competitive or for themselves as workers to remain competitive and retain the position as their industry starts to make some changes. That, with Workforce 2000, is the partnership where the cost of that training is shared between government and private industry.

Then I would say as a third point, where there is an excess of supply in certain skills, I, T and T, for instance, may indicate to prospective industries that may wish to relocate in Manitoba that there is an oversupply of various workers that would be available to them. One of the important points that we have said why Manitoba is such a wonderful place for us to live and a very strong selling point is that we do have a highly trained workforce, and so

we are also looking to provide that information to other departments of government.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, insofar as those highly skilled unemployed workers are concerned, their only hope is that some passing company is going to take an interest in the fact that they are unemployed. Does this government have any plans for their retraining? As the minister mentioned, Workforce 2000 does not directly address this, so what are the labour force management strategies for those unemployed workers with high level skills?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the member has been speaking about some Manitobans who may already have skills in a wide range of occupations, but, within the High Demand Occupations booklet that I have been referring to, there also lists a section of high-demand skills. These are skills that workers might need in addition to the occupational skills that they currently have. The demand for these skills is often met by upgrading skills of existing employees, but individuals also who would like to be hired may be required to have these additional skills in addition to the basic occupational area.

Some of those skills are small business management, bookkeeping and accounting, microcomputer skills, marketing skills, quality assurance, inventory management, presentation skills, blueprint reading, supervisory skills. There are a number that are listed in this book, which Manitobans might like to look at to see if there is some additional source which would allow them to be the most effective in terms of their new employability.

* (2240)

Also, the federal government has an Industrial Adjustment Service, and I know that our Department of Labour has the Labour Adjustment Unit, and I know the member might like to speak with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) about that in the discussion of the Estimates of the Department of Labour.

With the federal government, in December 1992, Employment and Immigration minister, Bernard Valcourt, announced that \$250 million would be invested over the next five years to support sectoral partnerships and to develop comprehensive human resource development strategies.

The objectives of these are to lever greater private sector funding and to promote economic opportunities through a better skilled workforce, to prevent redundancy through skills upgrading, and to develop new, self-sustaining human resource development partnerships, and to provide quantitative and qualitative information base to develop and implement key occupational skills and training standards.

There are five key components in this particular initiative: sector studies and sector data, and this is to cost approximately \$35 million, which will help business and labour identify and plan for current and emerging skill requirements; and then council support, which is cost-shared funding for employers and workers to establish joint working arrangements; and then the occupational skills standards at \$90 million, funding for the development of standards in the most critical of occupations; and then skills upgrading, the cost-shared, skills-upgrading training for employed workforce.

I know that, when I was at the labour market ministers' meeting in January with the federal minister, Bernard Valcourt, one of the areas that we spoke about was the cost sharing in skills training. I know we will get to a discussion of Workforce 2000, but at that time I was able to speak about Manitoba's project, Workforce 2000, where we already have in place that cost-sharing arrangement for the skills upgrading of employees so that we will continue to have a highly trained and employed workforce.

So there are a number of components that are being looked at by the federal government in their sectoral initiative.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, I think that federal program which the minister speaks of is based upon the assumption that skills need to be upgraded for the competitive health of a particular sector or for particular workers or groups of workers to retain their jobs.

The very point I was making is that the people who have lost their jobs in the large-scale unemployment in Manitoba very recently over the last two years have not lost their jobs because they do not have skills. These are the people in the hospitals, the social workers, the teachers, the Great-West Life workers, the people from Air

Canada. They did not lose their jobs because they had no skills.

That is a very particular problem for a Minister of Education and for a Minister of Labour to deal with. That was the basis of the questions which I have been asking.

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, there was no suggestion that individuals might have no skills, but what I did say was that some individuals who have skills may then wish to add to those skills in order to make their skills the most applicable in several areas and may also be able to find that they can apply those skills in areas which they had not thought of before.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have a number of questions that I was going to ask the minister. Like the NDP critic, I, too, share some of the concerns with respect to the Labour Force Development Agreement and the length of time it took this government to enter into the agreement.

In fact, if we take a look at some of the things that have been going on over the last number of years, in particular we will recall a report as a result of the Free Trade Agreement where it talked about adjusting to win. Even to a certain degree, the constitutional debate, I know in terms of which side that I was on.

I find the whole discussion has been happening this evening, and a bit late in the afternoon, about the needs. This is what I see, the need of the federal government to actually play a role in labour adjustment and the constitutional agreement that would have seen the federal government being downplayed in the role it could have in the labour force, in adjusting the labour force for tomorrow's needs.

I did want to say I have found the weight has been absent, unnecessary and unwarranted, and no matter what the minister does say on this particular issue, I do not believe she can justify it to those individuals that are unemployed, looking for work. Many say that if you are out of work, this is not a recession, this has in fact been a depression.

* (2250)

For individuals, such as myself, who has been the Labour critic—but the Department of Education has had a major role to play in this particular agreement—that it is somewhat disappointing. You do not want to build false expectations by bringing in agreements and so forth, but what it

does do is it does provide hope and so forth for a number of different individuals that at least the government is moving in a direction that will see other individuals retrained and trained and so forth and getting back into the workforce.

Having said that, I want to move right into some specific questions of the minister and in asking the minister, does her department have industries by listings in terms of which industries this government believes does have good potential growth into the future, and what it is doing to come up with the courses and the training, retraining to ensure that we have adequate labour supplies for those industries?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, well, the member seems to feel that the—I would have to check the words he used regarding answers that I had given to him, so I will check what he said in Hansard. Perhaps he needs to open his mind to the wider issues which we have been discussing this evening.

I can tell the member that the Manitoba government is committed to providing a skilled labour force in support of economic development. The government has a number of policies and programs which predict and train for skill shortages and assist laid off workers to obtain that retraining.

Common labour market interests and program principles of the two levels of government are embodied in the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement. Manitoba's Labour Force Development Strategy, which is currently being prepared by the Labour Market Policy Planning and Analysis Branch of Manitoba Education, will reflect the many common goals and objectives while recognizing the need to avoid duplication between programs. That is certainly one thing which Manitobans and Canadian people are asking for.

The Manitoba government has in fact been tracking the performance of industries to predict skill shortages and high demand for occupations for several years. The minister may wish to provide a copy. I may provide a copy, and I have been referring to a copy of the High Demand Occupations in Manitoba 1992. I do not know if the member has that at the moment. It does list several occupations which were deemed to be in shortage last year. This publication is produced every year, and it is used extensively by planners of

training in both the public and the private sector. I am not sure if the member was here when we talked about training in the private sector as well.

In addition to identifying shortage occupations, the report details several skills which are in demand, and a wide range of occupations from small business management to blueprint reading to problem-solving skills.

I mentioned those when I went through the list not five minutes ago—some of those skills. I am sure the critic for Labour, as he has said, has had an opportunity to look at this book and has accessed it at another time.

The report also provides a list of occupations and skills that are in demand in aboriginal communities, and I have gone through that list this evening for the member. Again, this reflects the emerging need for aboriginal people to be skilled in areas which have direct and, also, indirect impacts on the economic and social developments of their community.

As I think I have said, this report is prepared each year by Manitoba Education and Training officials in co-operation with the economic services branch of the regional offices of Employment and Immigration Canada.

These officials have established a network of public and private sector contacts to obtain information on the current and the expected demand for labour. The task of predicting business closures and layoffs is assisted by Employment Standards regulations which require that advanced notice be given of any layoff involving 50 employees or more in any four-week period.

* (2300)

The Labour Adjustment Unit of Manitoba Labour assists in the mitigation of downside adjustment or where there is some concern of layoffs. Again, the member may want to speak to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) when we get to the Estimates of the Department of Labour, which, I understand, follow Department of Education and Training. Whether or not there will be an opportunity for the member in terms of the hours left, I am not sure. But, if he thinks that this is an important area, he might want to ask that minister. I can tell him that the unit promotes the use of the labour management committee model in initiatives to prevent layoffs or to facilitate redeployment or retraining of affected workers.

The Labour Adjustment consultants referred to the High Demand Occupations in Manitoba in the report in counselling for job search and also retraining. The labour market adjustment unit, in co-operation with other departments and Canada Employment and Immigration, is expanding the scope of its work to the community level to bring resources and information to people affected by smaller layoffs. Projects have been already undertaken in several communities including Lynn Lake, and the member may have been here this afternoon, earlier, when we were speaking about Lynn Lake and Brandon and in Sprague. In addition, community-based projects are being undertaken in Flin Flon, in Snow Lake, and the unit is currently exploring the possibility of undertaking similar projects on an industry- or sector-wide basis.

I have spoken about the community colleges, and the Manitoba government does remain committed to meeting the education and training needs with the community colleges also in mind. The community colleges in Manitoba remain the largest program for education and training and skills training. This new system of College Governance will make the colleges more responsive to the skills training needs of their respective communities, and that was the importance of moving the colleges to governance so that within their individual regional areas there would be a two-way communication regarding what the communities' needs were and that there would be a discussion at the college level, and what the colleges were offering would also have a mechanism back to the community through the board members.

We have also spoken about the Workforce 2000 program tonight, and this program assists private sector employers to provide training for their own workers. By providing this assistance, the program ensures that training is driven by industrial labour force demand and that the industry is equally committed to increasing the skills level of their workers. The Skills Training Advisory Committee recommendations have resulted in, as I have said, a development of government policy in this area.

I gave earlier this evening a list of four initiatives, I believe there were four that I named, which have been accomplished as a result of the STAC Report and providing that overall focus, and then government did act on that. Colleges moving to

governance was one. Workforce 2000 was another.

Then the STAC Report did speak, I understand, about the reorganization of government functions and wanted to include labour market preparation programs in one department, and that is another initiative which has been accomplished this past few months by government, where we have moved programs which were previously offered by the Department of Labour and the Employability Enhancement Programs previously offered by the Department of Family Services into one area of Advanced Education and Skills Training, so that the spectrum of training is available, so that when Manitobans are looking for the kind of program from the community-based literacy programs through to the community colleges programs or the Workforce 2000 type of programs where people are working, then we will be able to look at the kind of program which might be the most beneficial to those individuals.

I also mentioned earlier that the STAC Report did speak about the articulation, the importance of vocational education, and the initiative that we undertook with our new funding formula to allow single-unit funding of vocational courses, so that a student did not have to be in a whole vocational program, but rather it allows and encourages all students to at least take a single vocational credit within the Senior 1 through 4 years.

I just was wanting to refer to the STAC Report for the co-ordination recommendation which was on 29 of that report and that has already been accomplished.

The member had asked me also for a list of areas and industries which are key to the future and the areas which have been identified are aerospace and agrifoods and tourism, hospitality, sustainable development, environment, health care products, printing and publishing and transportation. The member had asked for a list of sectoral areas, and that I believe is the list that he might find useful and the list that we have been using within this part of the department.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I did not find that the question was all that tough and needed such verbal diarrhea in order to get everything on the record.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I would ask the honourable member to retract that statement, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will retract that remark.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for that. The honourable member for Inkster to continue his question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in listening to the response from the minister, I do not know why it is that she chose to answer it in such a fashion. Sometimes when asked to make a judgment call in terms of when you should ask questions and when you should not ask questions, unfortunately, I do not think I should be asking questions because the minister feels that she does not necessarily have to be as direct with the answers, and that is somewhat unfortunate.

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, on a point of order, the member has asked some questions. I did take a great deal of time to provide him with the full information that he required, which led through the whole process of development and areas, which I believe he was asking about. Now, if it is more information that he requires, perhaps he will tailor his questions the next time.

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

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, for a number of the questions, we will just have to save them till concurrence. Then we will see if in fact the minister does have the same sort of time and so forth to have those types of answers. I want to try and be as specific as possible, so that the minister can, hopefully, respond to a specific question.

If you drive down a street, you will find there are a number of positions open in the garment industry where they are looking for skilled workers. I can recall a few years ago when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) stood up in Question Period and said there were jobs available in the garment industry and cited a good number of jobs—I cannot recall right

offhand, I believe it was somewhere around 500. You quite often see skilled workers required for the garment industry.

What is the government doing in that particular industry?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in looking at the Manitoba garment industry, we have a sector, Manitoba Apparel Human Resource Committee Inc.. The work began in August 1992 and finished in April 1993. The purpose was to train 140 participants as sewing machine operators to address the continual high demand in the industry.

The Vestibule Training Program is being delivered in an industry training facility. To date, 32 participants have been accepted into the program with 22 having completed the course. The school is presently full with a waiting list of 13 participants.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister indicate in terms of the—and again, let us deal with the specific industry, and, hopefully, we will be able to derive what it is the government is actually doing in terms of labour adjustment.

If you take a look at the garment industry and you say, this is an industry in which the potential for growth is very positive, what is this minister putting into place to ensure that the labour supply is going to be there to meet the future demands, because, as I say, and I do not know the exact figure, this government was aware of the shortage of skilled labour in that particular industry years ago. Now, she had mentioned that August of '92 was when they had found out about it. What is in place to ensure that the labour demands of this particular industry are going to be met?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, in the area of the garment industry, it is an area of high demand. There is also a very high turnover, I understand from the labour market staff who are here. I have just read one program which we have put forward to assist the apparel industry.

We are working to assist them to make sure that they are trained and are able to use the best equipment in the most efficient way. But with that high turnover, then, my colleague, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) will also play an important part in any of the adjustment processes that would come as a result of some of that turnover.

* (2310)

Mr. Lamoureux: But, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, dealing with that particular industry, if we take a look at the potential of jobs that are being lost because we are not able to provide a labour force to be able to meet the demands of that particular industry for the simple reason that you have—again, I can go right back to a number of years ago when the Premier stood up in the Chamber and indicated there were hundreds of jobs available in that particular industry.

You know, we have had—was it Wescott that had closed down? No doubt it was because of other factors, but if in fact you have a labour supply, as the minister earlier this evening was talking about providing labour supply for industries of trained workers, if this is an industry that always seems to be consistently looking for employees, is the government doing what it can to ensure that the labour demands for this industry are being met?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if we go on to an industry like aerospace and ask the minister in terms of aerospace industries and other industries that many people believe have great potential for growth, and instead of going industry by industry, my original question that I had asked the minister was one of, does the government have a number—like here are the types of industries where we need to organize or to have a labour strategy in place, for example, if our garment industry employs 5,000, and you are anticipating that the garment industry could double by 2010, that you have to have some sort of an action plan in place.

Does the minister actually have a list of specific industries where they have good potential for growth in that the post-secondary training institutions are, in fact, training to feed that growth?

Mrs. Vodrey: I did give the member a list, and he asked for succinct and easy-to-follow answers. I did provide him with that list, but let me provide it again. The provincial priority sectors—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will save the minister from reading the list again, and I will be sure to read Hansard.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order. The honourable minister, to continue.

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: I spoke about the aerospace industry as being a provincial priority sector for economic development, and in 1992-93, the Manitoba Aerospace Human Resource Coordinating Committee was established to address skill shortage and long-term human resource planning. Then we spoke about the health care products industry and the environment sustainable development industry, all that, and the tourism industry and the agrifoods industry. I also mentioned the printing industry. I believe that was the list that I had provided the member with, and those are the provincial priority sectors for economic development.

Mr. Lamoureux: I was just wanting to comment again on the Workforce 2000 program that the government has. The minister had made reference to it. I believe 54,000 individuals have gone through that particular program. Is there a general breakdown—and she does not have to read it, but maybe provide the critics of a general breakdown of where those training dollars are going?

Mrs. Vodrey: We do have an appropriation which deals with Workforce 2000 specifically, which is 16.4(h). That might be the area where the member would like to have some very significant detail on the Workforce area. However, we do keep information on a regular basis.

We keep it according to a number of categories in the Workforce area: agriculture, construction, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, transportation and communications, finance, insurance, realty, community business and personal and primary and others. Then within those, within the manufacturing area, you would find the aerospace, which I spoke about as a priority, the agrifoods area and also the printing area. So we are able to keep track, again, by those umbrella titles, of where the training contracts occur and the numbers of sectorial partnerships, the contracts with large firms, the numbers of employees trained by area, the provincial contribution in terms of dollars, and the total value of the training.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister indicate which department takes the lead

role in terms of the monitoring of these particular programs, the training that is being provided?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Department of Education and Training takes the lead in terms of the Workforce 2000 program and in monitoring the contracts. The Department of Finance, however, looks at specifically the payroll deduction area, which is available for the larger firms.

* (2320)

If the member was asking specifically about a monitoring process, a monitoring process has been established whereby training consultants are expected to follow up with employers by phone or in person, and depending upon the nature of the project, to confirm whether the employer or employee goals or expectations have been met. A form is completed and placed in the project file.

Mr. Lamoureux: Has the department had any indication from either the employees—well, I guess it would be primarily from employees—with respect to the training program and the success ratio of a particular program?

What comes to mind is Tuxedo Taxi, and I am not too sure if in fact it received money from Workforce 2000, but there was some concern with respect to the quality of training that was being provided and how it was being enforced.

I am wondering if the department does anything to monitor these or track what is going on.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to put on the record and to clarify for the member that at no time did Workforce 2000 advance any provincial funds to Tuxedo Taxi. If the member has a sense or has ever said that happened, that did not happen.

Upon regular monitoring, the regular monitoring practices of Workforce 2000 determined that Tuxedo Taxi was not delivering the training as contracted. The program cancelled the training contract with the firm. When we were looking at private vocational schools, under that particular line, it was evident that Tuxedo Taxi did not qualify as a private vocational school, and that was discovered also by our regular monitoring.

Mr. Lamoureux: Tuxedo Taxi did not receive any money from the departments?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, not a penny.

Mr. Lamoureux: From the government?

Mrs. Vodrey: Speaking for the Department of Education, Tuxedo Taxi did not receive any funds from Workforce 2000.

Mr. Lamoureux: Getting back to the original question, does the department track any of the training courses that are, in fact, being provided for employees in those training courses for whatever reasons have not panned out?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I said earlier in response to the question, and I am happy to say again, a monitoring process has been established whereby training consultants are expected to follow up with employers by phone or in person, and, depending upon the nature of the project, to confirm whether employer/employee goals and expectations have been met. A form is completed, and it is placed in the project file.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 4.(e) Labour Market Policy, Planning and Analysis (1) Salaries \$503,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$42,800—pass.

4.(f) Literacy and Continuing Education (1) Salaries \$320,900.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one of the provisions of this department is the development of an Adult Basic Education policy and strategy for the province. I wonder if the minister could table that policy.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I believe that very early in the Estimates, we talked about this, and I told the member back under the policy section which we covered very early in this Estimates process—the member asked if this policy was ready yet. I told her it was in the process of being developed. The member asked who was presently working on it, and I believe I tabled the names of those individuals who are currently a part of the program.

Ms. Frlesen: Can the minister tell us when it will be completed?

Mrs. Vodrey: We are looking for an interim report to be available to the minister in the fall.

Ms. Frlesen: In the absence of that policy and strategy, the minister is continually making decisions, and this year, as we have already spoken, the minister has eliminated Adult Basic Education at places like St. Norbert and in some of

the jail programs and I believe in some programs for the disabled as well.

I am wondering what the plan of the minister is, if she is continuing to make these decisions in the absence of an articulated policy, one that will not be ready even until the fall.

Where do these kinds of decisions fit? Are they ones that are already made in the context of some overall strategy the minister has developed, or are they simply ad hoc decisions based upon budget lines and the changes the government wants in certain areas of the budget, particularly education?

* (2330)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Literacy and Continuing Education area does operate with a mission statement. The mission statement, the role of the Literacy and Continuing Education branch, is to facilitate the development and the delivery of provincially and federally funded programs which meet the literacy and basic education needs of employed and unemployed adults.

The learner-centred programs take place at the community level through school divisions and in the workplace. The branch also funds occupational preparation programs for adults through school divisions and provides funding and support for senior citizens and disabled adult programs.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, well, then, in the context of that mission statement, were there particular reasons why, for example, the St. Norbert centre Adult Basic Education or the ones at Headingley jail were not fulfilling the requirements of a particular program?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in looking at the Adult Basic Education, the member speaks specifically of St. Norbert and Headingley. In those areas, some of the reduction was a reduction with college programming. However, there are still literacy programs which are operating at the St. Norbert centre. One is sponsored through Employment and Immigration Canada, and the Headingley program is sponsored through the Literacy Office.

Additional resources have been provided to the Literacy Office. There has been \$63,000, in addition, provided. These funds may be directed to assisting community organizations to address the needs of clients who may not be taking the ABE programs provided by the colleges.

Red River Community College will continue to offer the campus ABE seven to 10 programming. It was the off-campus programming which the member has referenced, St. Norbert and Headingley, which were affected for this year. However, I have said that we have attempted to support those two institutions with the literacy programming.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, surely, there is a difference between literacy programming and Adult Basic Education programming.

My question remains the same. Why did the minister cut it at Headingley, and why did she cut it at St. Norbert?

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, but surely there is a difference between literacy programming and Adult Basic Education programming, and my question remains the same: Why did the minister cut it at Headingley, and why did she cut it at St. Norbert?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the off-campus programming, I believe the colleges may be able to look at renegotiating with the federal government under the indirect purchase, and that off-campus programming was for the 7 to 10 Adult Basic Education.

We have talked for quite some time in these Estimates about the change in the way the federal government is purchasing training. This may be now negotiated through the indirect purchase, but, as I just said, the 7 to 10 ABE is still offered at Red River Community College in the college. It is away from the colleges that may be renegotiated.

In terms of the literacy programming, the 3 to 5 ABE programming is, in fact, literacy training, and those students who would have taken that particular program will now be referred to our literacy programs. So that was the reason, in my first answer, for referencing the additional funds which have gone to the literacy programming.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, the minister is going round and round on this one. It is the minister who cut the programs at St. Norbert and at Headingley. I have asked for a simple explanation of why. The minister has explained it by talking about, first of all, other programs which are not necessarily parallel to the ones which she has cut. She has explained it, or tried to give an explanation, based on what these people may do in the future,

but that does not explain why she cut these programs. That was my question.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the answer remains the same, and the answer is: the opportunity to renegotiate with the federal government for the indirect purchase of the training in the area of Adult Basic Education, which may be offered off-campus from the colleges. We did know that this opportunity of the college's ability to now work directly with the federal government and the federal government's change in how they would be funding would allow for this opportunity.

Secondly, as I have already discussed, the programming for 3 through 5 is, in fact, literacy programming, and so we have provided additional funds through our literacy programming to assist and to support.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there really is no point in continuing this kind of discussion. I mean, the minister's reference to a cut in Adult Basic Education, where a majority of the students were certainly post the literacy stage, to refer to this as an opportunity is the most unpleasant kind of Orwellian language, and I really deplore it. I asked a very simple question of why the minister cut. Now, it may be that the minister has a policy where she is, for example, it appears to be, transferring Adult Basic Education to high schools. Is that the strategy, because that is what it appears to be, that she is transferring it to the school divisions? If so, there may be a reasonable explanation for that.

That is what I have been looking for: first of all, the strategy; second of all, in the absence of the minister's inability to produce a strategy, to ask where her decisions are leading. To be told in effect that she has not made these decisions and that these are some kind of opportunity for people is really—well, it really makes a mockery of Estimates, and I find it very deplorable on the minister's part.

* (2340)

Point of Order

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. Repeatedly tonight I have listened to the questions and answers given—the questions by the opposition and the answers given by the minister. I have heard the Minister of Education and Training explaining very clearly on several occasions an answer to a question that was asked

repeatedly over and over again, and there are only so many times that you can answer the same question in different ways, so I suggest that we get back to the proper questioning.

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

* * *

Ms. Frlesen: Now, I wanted to give the minister an opportunity to respond to one of my suggestions, which was the apparent direction that the strategy of Adult Basic Education appears to be taking, which is to transfer the responsibility to the school divisions. I wonder if I am making a correct assumption there, or would the minister like to add something or describe more fully the strategy of her Adult Basic Education policy.

Mrs. Vodrey: I feel the need, first of all, to respond for the third time for the member in terms of some of the changes in terms of the courses that the colleges offer. The colleges did have the programs reduced based on the direct purchase reduction from Canada, and the member has had a very difficult time accepting that particular decision has affected a great number of programs and has affected some of the decisions. So, with that information that there has been this reduction of direct purchase from Canada, the colleges can look to reinstate these programs through other funding arrangements. The member seems to have some difficulty with that. It seems that the idea of work being done at the community level is of importance in some areas and rejected in others. It is the colleges who will be able to negotiate to determine the needs and to look at what they would need to continue to offer the programming.

I think that has now been covered three times and is an answer to the question. The member might not like the answer, but that is the answer to the question.

In terms of the second part of the question where the member has asked in terms of a potential movement towards school divisions, I have answered the question that we are in fact developing that policy. I have given the member information about who is working on that policy that was tabled in the Estimates process.

I have also explained that I look for an interim report in the fall, an interim statement from that committee, so I have also provided her with a time frame. I have let her know that there is action in the

area, and when that information is available, I will be happy to talk about it.

Ms. Frlesen: Well, I have asked the minister for the strategy. I have suggested to the minister the direction that her actions seem to be taking that strategy in the absence of her presentation of one. I am not, to my knowledge, getting any answer on that.

Is it the policy of government to transfer to the school divisions responsibility for Adult Basic Education?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I have said to the member, I have not received the recommendations of that particular committee yet. There are three divisions that are working on this policy.

One of the areas where I started in the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training was to speak about decisions being made with more of a corporate view rather than being made in isolation. With the three divisions of Education and Training being involved with the Adult Basic Education policy, I look to provide the member with that information when possible, and I have told her that I do look for an interim report in the fall.

Ms. Frlesen: Will the minister be making that interim report available?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, the report is for the use of the minister and the department. I will look at the report and determine at that time if it contains information that would be useful at that time to release.

Ms. Frlesen: So after all this, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister's inability to present a policy, her inability to respond to questions of where the direction of that policy is going, referring us constantly to an interim report, she now says she may not make it available.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the time frame is not one that is necessarily designed for the Estimates process of the Department of Education and Training. I have explained the time frame and when I expect to have that report.

When the member speaks in her accusatory words of inability, I would just say to her that everything is not to be ready for the Estimates of the Department of Education. It is in process. I have described the process it is going through.

It will be available to the minister to review when it is presented. I did talk about this as being internal for the department to be able to study and to make some decisions totally.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when can Manitobans expect to see from this government, which has been in power since 1988, a policy on Adult Basic Education?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have already described the process that is in place and when I expect to begin to receive information. [interjection] The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) does not seem to have heard the answer. I have given the answer, that I am expecting information in the fall of this year.

Certainly, it is under the leadership of this government and this minister that the Adult Basic Education policy is being developed. I said that the work of that committee was in progress. The member has asked for a specific announcement. I did not ever say that their work was leading to a specific announcement. We are looking at the development of a policy.

Ms. Frlesen: The minister is looking for the development of a policy that she is not even committed to announce. What kind of a policy is that?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member asked for the report to be announced, and I said that I would be looking at the report. She has jumped to some conclusion, maybe due to the lateness of the hour, that the policy would not be announced. That has never been stated by me at all.

Ms. Frlesen: Well, I am having difficulty understanding this, this is quite true. The minister does not now have a policy on Adult Basic Education. She is having policy reports done which she is not committed to making public.

When is she committed to announcing a policy, if at all? Does she have any commitment to announcing a policy?

* (2350)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, governments do work on policies, and the announcement of the policy is often made through the actions of government, through the actions that are taken by government, undertaken through the funding of programs.

So as I have said to the member, I am looking for the information to be supplied. Then I will determine, government will determine the best way in which to make the policy available. It may be in the form of a policy statement. It may be, in fact, in the form of an action plan, or action.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I look forward to any policy statement, any action statement in this area, since the minister has rejected the interpretations of her actions that we have suggested and she rejects any possibility, it seems to me, of announcing a policy for Manitobans to examine.

Mrs. Vodrey: I did not reject that. What I said again, and let me say it again, is that I did not commit to making the report public. However, I will make sure that the policy developed will be certainly known to Manitobans.

Ms. Frlesen: When will the minister make that policy known, and in what form will she make it known?

Mrs. Vodrey: I will receive the information of the committee, and then government will make a decision.

Ms. Frlesen: What are the opportunities for adults outside of the perimeter to pursue Adult Basic Education under school divisions since, in my view, that is where the minister's policy is heading?

Mrs. Vodrey: The opportunities for Adult Basic Education are, first of all, within any home school division, the day programs, adults may attend the high school programming within their home schools, within their own division, and that is at no cost.

There is also some evening programming which is available through school divisions, and it is available through school divisions both in the city of Winnipeg and outside of the city of Winnipeg. Last year the school divisions which offered it outside of the city of Winnipeg were Lord Selkirk and Agassiz School Divisions, Hanover School Division, Red River School Division, Rhineland School Division, Interlake School Division, Midland School Division, Pembina Valley School Division, Mountain School Division, Turtle Mountain School Division, Western School Division, Frontier School Division, Lynn Lake and Sprague.

As I was saying, too, within the day programs we know that there are approximately 1,900 adults over 21 years of age in the public schools.

Ms. Friesen: Just to confirm that, the list of school divisions the minister read out was for evening programming, and the second number she gave me was there were 1,900 people over 21. Could she give me a rough distribution of those within the city and those outside the city?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, that information we would have available when we get to the school funding appropriation, 16.5.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 4.(f)(1) Salaries \$320,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$94,400—pass; (3) Grants \$812,100—pass.

(g) Employability Enhancement Programs (1) Salaries \$3,936,500.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Will committee rise, Mr. Deputy Chairperson?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The hour being 12 midnight, what is the will of the committee?

An Honourable Member: Committee rise.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Committee rise.

* (2000)

HEALTH

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 Health. We are on item 1.(e) Human Resources.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber?

Item 1.(e) Human Resources (1) Salaries \$958,400. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Madam Chairperson, I hope the committee will excuse, I have strawberry sauce all over me. I just came from the Peter Gzowski gourmet dinner on behalf of literacy, to raise money on behalf of literacy across this country—[interjection] I feel like I literally just came from the kitchen, but be that as it may.

This afternoon the minister was speaking of the number of permanent and temporary employees that would be recruited throughout the year as indicated under Expected Results in Human Resources. I am wondering if the minister could tell us, how does the branch determine or anticipate what the approximate numbers will be?

* * *

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Deputy Chairperson of Committees): [Moved by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen)], seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that the committee condemn the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) for her failure to plan adequately for students in need before cutting the Manitoba bursary program.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. A count-out vote has been requested. Call in the members.

* * *

(Concurrent sections in Chamber for formal vote)

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. Is the committee ready for the question? The question before the committee: It has been moved by the honourable member for Wolseley, seconded by the honourable member for Thompson, that this committee condemn the Minister of Education for her failure to plan adequately for students in need before cutting the Manitoba bursary program.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas 19, Nays 23.

Madam Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

Order, please. Will the second section of the Committee of Supply please resume.

* (2030)

HEALTH (continued)

Madam Chairperson: This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Health. We are on page 77, item 1.(e) Human Resources. Will the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Item 1.(e) Human Resources (1) Salaries, shall the item pass?

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the question before we were interrupted by vote was, I was wondering how this particular section anticipates the approximate number of recruitments they will have over a year.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): As one will appreciate, this is an estimate that is developed each year. It can vary, and the

projection this year is based on a figure which is closer to the actual activity in this division from last year, because there was lower recruitment activity because there was less attrition.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us how many waivers were there for positions over the last fiscal year, waivers?

Mr. Orchard: Quarante-sept.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister give us a breakdown of the number of positions that were waivers compared to the number of positions which were filled by competition, and can he break that down from the director level up in terms of how many waivers from a director level up?

Mr. Orchard: It was cinquante-sept, not quarante-sept.

Ms. Gray: I am having difficulty hearing the minister because of all the background noise. I wonder if he could repeat the answer en anglais.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, 57.

Ms. Gray: Can he tell us, of those 57 positions, how many of them were at a director level and above?

Mr. Orchard: Yes.

Ms. Gray: I am not quite sure how the answer yes fits a question that asks how many.

Mr. Orchard: I am sorry for the confusion. I meant yes that we would provide that information.

Ms. Gray: Could the minister provide that information for us now since he seems to have all the statistics in front of him?

Mr. Orchard: No.

Ms. Gray: I am wondering why the minister cannot provide that information, particularly since I would imagine that the department is sensitized to this particular issue—all departments, not just the Department of Health—because of the Hay audit that was done a couple of years ago, where a number of waivers were identified as a potential difficulty within the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Orchard: Well, Madam Chairperson, we have the question, and we are going to provide that information, but we do not have the breakdown specific in that regard. All I have is the 57 and the broad categories and the broad reasons why the waivers were granted.

Ms. Gray: Could the minister provide those general categories, reasons for waivers?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I can, Madam Chairperson, and I presume my honourable friend would like them tonight.

Nineteen of the 57 were selected through workforce adjustment, and I think my honourable friend can understand why there would be a waiver there. A further 11 were recent or past recruitment efforts, indicated a competition would be unproductive; in other words, an attempt was made to fill the position unsuccessfully in the past, and 19 of the waivers were approved because the individual selected was the most suitable candidate. Four were part of an approved career development plan for an employee, and four were for other reasons. I do not have a breakdown on the "other reasons."

Ms. Gray: Of the four where there was a career development plan, can the minister indicate, of those four, how of many of those were affirmative action individuals?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that all of them were.

Ms. Gray: Does the minister have a breakdown of statistics that he can table, as we have had in other years, that basically gives an update of the progress of this department in regard to their affirmative action targets and objectives?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, Madam Chairperson.

Ms. Gray: Is the minister prepared to table that this evening?

Mr. Orchard: In terms of regular appointments, 69.4 percent were female; 2.3 were visible minorities; 11.3 percent were native. In terms of term appointments, 81.7 were female; 4.1 were visible minorities; 6.1 percent were native; 2 percent were disabled.

In an amalgamation of the total appointments of 290: 79 percent were female; 3.8 percent were visible minorities; 6 percent native; and 1 percent disabled.

Ms. Gray: Does the minister have statistics as to how many members of the affirmative action groups were selected for, what I would call or what the department would call, senior management positions.

* (2040)

Mr. Orchard: Within the ministry as a whole, women represent 77 percent of the department's workforce, and women in senior management the

representation in this ministry is 37.5 percent which I am informed is above the government average.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, for clarification, what classifications does this ministry consider to be senior management?

Mr. Orchard: A senior officer and above.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us, is that including—I am assuming that is not including institutions such as hospitals—correct?

Mr. Orchard: No and yes.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the minister mentioned earlier today that with the workweek reduction that the days off would be considered leave of absence without pay. Can the minister indicate to us, that opinion, is that through the Civil Service Commission? Is that a legal opinion or where does that come from?

Mr. Orchard: From Bill 22.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, can the minister tell us, has there been an opinion from the Civil Service Commission in regard to that those particular days would be leave of absence without pay?

Mr. Orchard: No, I cannot, Madam Chair.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, if a staffperson who is off that particular day, given that staff are aware what days they will be off and basically are not working for the government on those days and their pay is reduced, one might assume that they would be able to go out and find other employment if in fact they chose to or were so fortunate. Should that be the case and if staff then are asked to work standby on those days but in fact are unable to because they have sought other employment, what is the position of the department?

Mr. Orchard: That will not happen, Madam Chair.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, can the minister tell us, he is basically indicating to the House that if someone chooses not to work on standby or be called in for emergencies if it is their day off, he is saying that will not happen. Am I correct?

Mr. Orchard: Well, I think so. The scenario that my honourable friend pointed in a question two questions ago would not happen.

Ms. Gray: I will rephrase the question. The question then, if someone is not working on a Friday and it is an unpaid day, my question would

be, can or might that staffperson be asked to be available for standby coverage?

Mr. Orchard: Yes.

Ms. Gray: What if that staffperson refuses?

Mr. Orchard: I guess they have that option to refuse, and another employee would be asked or attempted to be put on standby.

Ms. Gray: Yes, I am aware that staffperson has the opportunity or the right to refuse. Then my further question is, would that staffperson potentially be disciplined for refusing to work or provide standby coverage on that unpaid day?

Mr. Orchard: I am informed in the negative.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister clarify, now if staff are asked to work on standby, is that voluntary or is staff required as part of their job to provide standby coverage?

Ms. Orchard: Again, you know, some will be.

Ms. Gray: Perhaps the minister could repeat or clarify his answer, because I am not quite sure what the answer was in regard to if staff now are required to provide standby coverage, is that a part of their employment? I am not referring to the unpaid day; I am referring to now when staff are asked to provide standby coverage, is that a requirement of their job?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, in some cases it is.

Ms. Gray: So technically with this system of these unpaid days and the need, I would assume in some particular programs to provide standby coverage, I suppose it might be possible that all of the staff who would normally provide service the four days out of the five may choose to not be available to provide standby coverage on Friday. Correct?

Mr. Orchard: Hypothetically.

Ms. Gray: Does the minister have the information about which services are considered to be essential in terms of which staff in the department, excluding institutional staff, will be required to work all of the five days and will not have any unpaid days, or are there any staff in the department where there will not be any unpaid days?

Mr. Orchard: It is my understanding that all ministry personnel will be taking the 10 unpaid days.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us, has his department done an analysis? Is he prepared to share the information as to what the additional

costs will be for providing contingency service on those days when staff will be basically not at work and other plans will have to be in place? Does the minister have information as to what those costs will be?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, that would be very sensitive to whether the individual is called back when they are on standby.

Ms. Gray: Is the minister then indicating there are not any extra contingency plans that are put in place for those days other than what are now in place? To me, there would have to be some extra contingency plans, i.e., after-hours services would have to be available as they would be on a Saturday and a Sunday. Is that not true, and if so, what are those extra costs?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend is, I believe, on the right track in terms of the analysis, but the way that we have been able to configure the 10 days unpaid leave is to configure the staffing pattern so that it is reflective of the ministerial target of minus-two in our salary reduction or salary account—you know what I mean.

Ms. Gray: Have there been any changes in the overtime policy in the Department of Health or any control mechanisms put on, given that, since there may be five days worth of work and staff are only working four, perhaps that extra work not done on the Fridays might have to be done other days of the week and that might incur overtime?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, we are discouraging overtime. We have within the ministry some overtime hours and that will be very carefully monitored so that it is not exceeded because of the 10-day unpaid leave initiative for this budgetary year. That is going to be very closely monitored so that we do not have a replacement of cost in part or in full.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us, what are the total amounts of—well, two ways to look at it—either total amount of hours or total amount of dollars that are paid out in overtime, since I can see that particular figure is indicated as we go through these Estimates? Does the minister have a total figure for the department in terms of overtime, either hours or costs?

Mr. Orchard: We will make best efforts to put that together for next time we sit.

Ms. Gray: When we receive that information, I am assuming then that the minister will attempt to assure us that, when we meet again, possibly, in the next Estimates for the next year, those overtime costs will not have increased significantly for reasons such as workweek reduction.

Mr. Orchard: That would be a good issue to discuss one year out, because I would guess not—I mean, we are having a little levity in some of this discussion here, but every department is under that same configuration, that it would be very inappropriate if we simply had 10 unpaid working days, and had it replaced in part or in whole with overtime. We are under stringent instructions to assure that does not happen.

Ms. Gray: Will the minister admit, however, or does the minister feel that there will be other additional costs incurred within his department specifically due to the workweek reduction? Now I understand obviously there will be a reduction in the salary line for his department, but will there be other costs that will be incurred in other lines because of impact of the workweek reduction?

Mr. Orchard: We do not anticipate that. We are budgeting operations within the ministry this year within 98 percent of last year's salary expenditure in globe.

Ms. Gray: So the minister feels that there will be no other contingency plans or services that would have to be put in place on those Fridays or Mondays or whatever day that staff are taking off, that are currently now put in place on the Saturday and Sunday. Or does the minister assume that all those go under a salary line?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, I am not sure I follow my honourable friend's questions, but as I said, we are building within the proposal of service provision to meet the minus-two target in our salary line flexibility so that we have the ability to maintain essential service delivery where it is direct care and maintain the 10 days off across the department.

We have confidence that can be done within the budget and with contingency plans such as standby that will enable us to meet our service delivery targets and our financial targets.

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Just to conclude that line of questioning, does the minister anticipate any increase in expenditures for contracted-out services in the order of VONs or other, for example,

home care services, as a result of the 2 percent downturn in terms of expenditures this year?

Mr. Orchard: No, Madam Chair.

Mr. Chomlak: Just for the record, so the minister is not anticipating a commensurate increase or an increase at all in terms of contracted-out services in order to offset the decrease in salaried services or services offered.

Mr. Orchard: We do not anticipate that scenario.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us what the standby pay rate is per day?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, \$7.50, \$16.50, \$23.00, \$150 and \$100. The last is my deputy and my assistant deputies. No, I am sorry, that is not right. The last two are for physicians who might be required to be on standby call on a 24-hour basis, \$150 or \$100 for a 16-hour basis.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, why the huge discrepancy between physicians on call, including MLHs, as opposed to staff?

Mr. Orchard: I think those are incorporated into the master agreement with MGEA as rates reflective of—the middle rate is lab technologist, and that is negotiated into the agreements.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chair, I am assuming, with the physician rates, would those be negotiated into individual contracts with the physicians?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, in the MMA contract.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, perhaps we should find out who the negotiators are for the MLHs and pass them on to some of the other people who do negotiation. They are probably consistent with other provinces, those rates, but have those rates for MLHs or physicians increased over the last few years? When is the last time that the \$7.50 standby rate was increased or decreased?

Mr. Orchard: I am advised, for the last several years, those rates have been consistent and have not changed.

Mr. Chomlak: Pass.

Mr. Orchard: I want to interrupt this progress, here. I have got the bulletin for the Provincial Nursing Advisor. I also have—I have got to make sure I do not give too much away here.

Madam Chairperson: 1.(e) Human Resources (1) Salaries \$958,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$203,200—pass.

(f) Health Information Systems (1) Salaries.

* (2100)

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I just wonder if the minister can give us an update of the facility management agreement between Manitoba Health and ISM.

Mr. Orchard: We are not certain whether it expires December 31 this year or next year. So we will confirm and provide that information.

Madam Chairperson: (f) Health Information Systems (1) Salaries.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, just a comment for the record. I think, as we go through these Estimates, there are many questions in many of the sections, but because of the interrelatedness of the various sections of this department, some of the questions in each of the areas can always be asked in another area. So, basically I see our role, as we go through the Estimates, as sort of amalgamating some of the questions.

If we pass some sections without questions, I would hate for the Minister of Health, at some later date, to suggest that we never had a question on that particular area, but in fact I think we are seeing this evening, and probably through the rest of the week, combining some questions of the general policy areas.

Mr. Orchard: Just a comment as well, Madam Chairperson, I have only done that once. My honourable friend will remember as we sat in the Chamber here and we passed \$1.2 billion of spending in 15 minutes, and I had to do most of the talking. We would not do that again. That was four years ago when we were a minority government. I would not do that. I would never mention that kind of quick passage.

Madam Chairperson: 1.(f) Health Information Systems (1) Salaries \$3,661,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$3,465,400—pass.

2. Healthy Public Policy Programs (a) Administration.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister can give me an update on the status of the AIDS Advisory Committee. I believe this would be the appropriate area under which to deal with this.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, the last time that question was posed I think was possibly Tuesday of last week. I think the advisory

committee had just met. The two issues that they are currently debating, discussing, analyzing are AIDS in our correctional institutions and AIDS in the aboriginal community.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I apologize. I did not catch those last two points, if the minister could repeat them.

Mr. Orchard: Last week, when my honourable friend posed this question, it was I think posed the day after the AIDS Advisory Committee had met. I am advised that the current topics of discussion are AIDS in our correctional institutions, the inmate population, and secondly, in the aboriginal community, as the two major topics of discussion and investigation.

Mr. Chomlak: Have there been any initiatives or proposed initiatives launched in either of those areas, because I think rightly so, obviously, the advisory committee has identified it, and it is public knowledge that these are two rather serious areas of concern.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, as an example on the aboriginal community and their ongoing educational approach, we provided a significant amount of help to the AIDS and the Aboriginal Community Conference that was in The Pas last year.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, is the government considering any initiatives within the prison population with respect to AIDS?

Mr. Orchard: As my honourable friend might appreciate, there is a fair amount of discussion around that issue. The committee has not provided any recommended course of action to government. Should they, we would naturally give that suggestion serious consideration, but they have not come forward with any recommendation to date.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, does the minister have any data specifically outlining incidents of AIDS either in the prison population and/or the aboriginal population, or both, I should say?

Mr. Orchard: We apparently have some information. I do not know how specific it is to Manitoba, but we will provide the information that we have next time we meet.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that, because when I was touring in the North, I did hear

some hearsay and word-of-mouth statistics that were quite extraordinary. I would appreciate obtaining those particular statistics.

I recognize this is probably—we have had Partners for Health; we have had initiatives by the government in terms of wellness. I wonder if the minister could outline for me this present fiscal year that you are dealing with, what the major initiatives he sees from this particular government, from this branch of his department, what are the top two or three priorities that he specifically sees his department working on?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, let me understand. Are you referring specifically to the AIDS initiative or in general?

An Honourable Member: In general.

Mr. Orchard: Okay. We are embarking upon a fairly—I do not know how to describe it, but basically a healthy child public policy initiative under which we hope to be able to establish some challenges that face service provisions, what some of the issues around healthy child public policy would be and to attempt to bring those into a policy focus so that we can undertake some initiatives maybe with a little more targeted—if that is the appropriate word—use of health promotion, education and wellness promotion budgets.

The intent here, and I almost hesitate to indicate because of the risk of creating larger expectations than we are able to deliver in the short term, this initiative hopefully will receive input and endorsement from departments other than the Ministry of Health so that it will cross departmental lines wherein there is responsibility for policy program focused at children. We think there is a real opportunity.

There is getting to be a larger understanding of—how would I put it?—nondepartmental, narrowed policy areas that we are encouraging staff from several areas of government to collaborate around the development of a number of initiatives. This will be hopefully one of our first initiatives where we bring together some thinking and some approach which is across departmental lines as well as within the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I would like to get a little bit more specific with the minister in this regard. I would assume that one of the areas we are talking about is, for example, provision of child and adolescent mental health services. I would

assume that is one of them, but more importantly, I would assume that—to say Healthy Child Development, can the minister specify for me, and for us in the committee, some of the specifics that he is referring to?

* (2110)

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, look, I am going to give my honourable friend some—

An Honourable Member: Specifics?

Mr. Orchard: No, I do not have the specifics because we do not have the paper. I will be very pleased to share the specifics when we have the initiative worded and available for public discussion, but in general terms, there is a growing school of investigative thought around early coping skills and that area of early child development.

Researchers believe there is a pretty strong link with the development of early coping skills and one's ability to manage life's stress, job stress, family stress, educational stress, any number of areas. There are some pretty good indicators that well-developed early coping skills really improve one's health status enormously without a necessity to access the formal health care system. Some pretty significant research is pointing that if government were to focus some initiatives and some efforts, it would be at early coping skills.

Now, I am not able to adequately phrase what early coping skills are. I do not know whether there is a text book definition per se, because I think, depending on what professional discipline you might engage in discussion on early coping skills, you might come with a differing interpretation. But the topic has been introduced to myself and to the ministry and to a number of individuals in the health community by Dr. Fraser Mustard.

We had recently the opportunity to have Dr. Mustard and one of his associates in the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, who was a Ph.D in child psychology I believe, into the province to give us an overview of some of the emerging thinking around early coping skills. It is a very diverse area. Yet, it is one that has opportunity for some focus.

It is preschool primarily and it embodies a component of the importance of early-life nutrition, the quality of parenting skills that the child in early development years is exposed to or has as a support system, starting to get a greater understanding of the importance of decision

making early on and what sort of learning skills, acquired skills, there are very early in a child's life that help the child later in life to enable the individual to engage in decision making without maybe some hesitations and fears.

One of the areas that emerges from some preliminary research is pretty interesting in that, if you have some of these development learning skills, decision making, parenting—and parenting, as I understand it, is not necessarily maternal-paternal parenting, but can be grandparent or a significant peer in the community—children who have that sort of a supportive environment in their very early years tend to complete higher achievement levels in the education system, for instance. With women, they have a lower teenage pregnancy rate. As some of the indications, there is less involvement in criminal activities; there appears to be a greater achievement level in terms of employment. It all builds around the self-esteem, self-worth equation that is built into early child development coping skills.

So it is a new area to me. It may not be new to my honourable friend opposite and others, but we think there is a fairly significant opportunity to focus some attention in this area. I personally believe that within government we adequately resource many areas of government if we were adequately managing that resource and able to point to an effective use of the resources from an outcome standpoint. If there is a failure across governments, not just this one in Manitoba, present or past, but right across Canada, we have tended to do things because we have always done them and we have not necessarily put stringent focus on the value, the outcome, the efficacy of what we have been doing. Of course, that was the debate that we engaged in to some degree at the introduction of Estimates.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I am actually quite intrigued by this, and I could probably spend quite a bit of time probing on this, but there are so many areas to cover. We have isolated that it is early, and I am quite pleased about that, preschool. I am quite happy to hear that. Did the minister say that this is also cross-departmental, this initiative?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, the initiative is within this current division of the Ministry of Health, the Healthy Public Policy, but we are seeking input and we have a structure of involvement of several other departments.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I suspect the minister will be making some announcement on this particular initiative. So I will not go too far. Of course, I do not anticipate the minister will go too far either, but having said that, can the minister advise—is this going to be a program announcement of a specific program, for example, in the schools or delivery in the homes? What is the medium or the forum of delivery, the vehicle of delivery, the process by which it will be delivered?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend might recall I indicated preschool is the age group that would be focused in on this initiative. Yes, I tell my honourable friend that we hope, as quickly as the—we envision another discussion paper, much as we have done in the past in a number of areas within the ministry where we think there is an opportunity for some pretty significant opportunity for new approach.

So we are anticipating a discussion paper. Amongst other things, my Assistant Deputy Minister of Healthy Public Policy, Ms. Hicks, I have her and her staff very much pushed to develop this policy, because I think it is an important—I consider it to be a fairly significant breakthrough in terms of government approach to services.

Now let me give my honourable friend an example, and this is something that has frustrated me and we do not have the ability, seemingly, within the ministry to create the understanding and to expedite the policy change, but from time to time, I am asked about waiting lists, for instance, in speech language pathology.

We have a school system wherein we have speech language pathologists hired in providing services to—well, I guess kindergarten is the start, kindergarten and Grade 1. Now all the emphasis, all the focus in terms of early intervention, I think rings as true here as it can ring anywhere. I mean, it just makes absolute sense that if we are spending resource, we ought to spend it earlier rather than later, but that becomes a health issue, and of course, we have a program at Health Sciences Centre, St. Boniface, I think a couple of other service delivery locales within the ministry at preschool.

* (2120)

Quite frankly, and I am not saying anything out of context with the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), my colleague, but they have a pretty

substantial resource there. I make a simple analogy. If we could just do the magic switch and focus that school resource at preschool, we would probably—and I just use these figures as example. They do not have integrity in terms of being researched, but what might take two years from kindergarten and Grade 1 to provide some remedy, it may well be accomplished in as short as three to six month work with a preschooler.

I just think, again, this is sort of the conceptual areas where we are seeking out Healthy Child initiatives across departments and trying to use the forum of the discussion paper to create the importance of making this change even though it is a difficult—I tell my honourable friend quite frankly, it is very difficult to make change when it is another ministry's department and bailiwick. You have got the transition period of time. You cannot instantly take everything out of the school and put it in preschool, because what do you do with the children?

So you have bridging, and there is a whole complexity of reasons why the common sense of this approach was not initiated seven years ago when there was a different government or in the last five years when we have been in government, but we think we are creating the framework under which these kinds of cross-departmental decisions can be more easily understood and maybe more easily facilitated.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, actually the minister's comments, for the most part, reflect our thinking entirely with respect—in fact, I can recall during the Education Estimates complimenting the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health. Actually, there is a program called Links that deals with pre-school children that I was quite familiar with, that was quite dramatic in terms of the effect and the end results on pre-school children. Of course, one of the solutions from an educational standpoint would be to better utilize pre-school resources in the education system by funding some kind of pre-school and not forcing school divisions to pick up the cost, et cetera, but that is a whole other political argument that I do not want to get into.

The minister mentioned Healthy Child Development as one of the priority issues in this area. Can the minister mention the other two or three priority areas in the Healthy Public Policy and Wellness area?

Mr. Orchard: The Healthy Public Policy Division since its reorganization and restructure some year and a half ago have been working on women's health issues in an almost similar approach as the child health area. We do not have a goal though in women's health of a discussion paper. This is very much working with women's health issues with a number of the stakeholders in that area of service provision both as funded agencies to the department and also as umbrella groups representing women's issues in the province.

We are also working in this division in terms of the mammography screening program. It will be through this area of the ministry that we will complete plans for whatever initiative and breast screening that we undertake. Midwifery is also in this area. I am, quite frankly, anxious to have legislation to guide midwifery in Manitoba for next session. We could not make it this session. It simply was not ready to go. We are working in this area, as well, in terms of provincial committee on cancer control. Those are some of the major overview areas that we are working on.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, has the ministry considered any initiatives with respect to alcohol labelling and the effects that alcohol may have on pregnant women and their fetuses?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, about 10 days ago, we participated—the ministry through AFM—in a fetal alcohol syndrome conference that ran over two days on a Friday, Saturday, and had a fairly broad invitation from other ministries of government, external agencies to government, some funded by the provincial government, some receiving their funding sources elsewhere who are working with the fetal alcohol syndrome problem in terms of their delivery framework. There was a pretty significant involvement by the aboriginal community. The association of Manitoba Chiefs took a significant role in the two-day symposium and conference, and the whole initiative was discussing two areas, I think I could probably, at the risk of simplifying the conference, summarize into two areas.

First of all, an attempt to get a greater understanding of the problem, No. 1; and No. 2, to attempt to create the environment for prevention, because, I think my honourable friend would clearly acknowledge, fetal alcohol syndrome is an entirely preventable affliction of unborns.

The aboriginal community—it was quite a moving opening because an elder in the native community, who is in the employ of AFM, opened the conference with a pretty direct analysis and assessment of his perspective on the problem, given his early life in northwest Ontario and his subsequent work with the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, can the minister outline for me the obstacles to the provision of warning labels on alcoholic beverages and/or in alcohol establishments to advise people who are pregnant about the dangers that could occur to unborn children?

Mr. Orchard: There are two approaches to the issue. We have provided, and I think the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission has mandated the placement of signs in all of the liquor stores and outlets. I think that also applies to our vendors in our hotels as well, so that there is the sign warning there.

The second initiative in terms of labelling of individual liquor bottles is being undertaken, I believe on a pilot project by two provinces in collaboration with the federal government, to see whether that has any measurable impact on the incidence of alcohol consumption by women when they are carrying a child.

Mr. Chomlak: I am happy to hear about both of those initiatives. I wonder, has the ministry thought about talking with the Liquor Control Commission about perhaps labelling the bags or something like that in terms of warning labels?

* (2130)

Mr. Orchard: I think it is just the signs, but the bags are a reasonable suggestion that I will forward on from my honourable friend to the minister responsible to see whether they have given that consideration. That would be, I think on the surface, a pretty easy-to-achieve initiative and within our control.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, the minister made reference to the mammography screening program. I am wondering if the minister can outline for me what the status of that is at present.

Mr. Orchard: The committee is targeting around the 1st of August for a report. My honourable friend will remember the report that I tabled approximately 15 months ago, I guess, where in the committee at that stage could not provide recommendations to

proceed at that time. We always emphasized "at that time" with the mammography screening program.

Subsequent to that, the committee has spent the ensuing months further analyzing studies from other parts of the world as they have been available, including the national study, the Canadian study. They expect to complete their second investigation and provide a report to government circa August 1.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, the minister will undoubtedly recall that the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) has raised several times with the minister the question of the waiting lists for elective mammography tests at Brandon General Hospital in comparison to the waiting list in Winnipeg.

Now, I know that, if the member for Brandon East were here, the minister could tell him about the past history with respect to bed closures in Brandon and the like. But I am wondering if the minister could outline for me the reason why there appears to be a considerable waiting list for women in Brandon who require the elective test.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, the waiting time can be up to eight months for an asymptomatic screen, but the waiting time for any indicated problem is significantly lower. I believe it is less than one week.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister really define what he means by "asymptomatic" That is still a reference from a doctor, but it is a question: What does the minister define as—how is "asymptomatic" defined in this case?

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, no physically identified signs that there is a problem and no medical history which would indicate higher risk. "Asymptomatic" here is not a different phraseology than what it means in other areas.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am of the impression that the waiting list in Winnipeg or for similar service is much shorter. Is the minister anticipating any initiatives to try to shorten the waiting period for this type of procedure in Brandon, or is the minister satisfied that the present situation is adequate?

Mr. Orchard: Well, of course, in part, we hope we will be guided by policy implementation following our August 1 report, because there is clearly an opportunity to focus the existing resource. I may stand corrected, but I believe the mammography units in Winnipeg have been in operation for at least five years. I do not think we have approved any mammography unit. That was the circumstance in 1988 in the city of Winnipeg and, I think it is fair to say to my honourable friend, stimulated the passage of legislation by my predecessor, as Minister of Health, in terms of diagnostic equipment installation, because I think at least two or three of these in Winnipeg are in private offices—two in the hospitals and the balance are in private offices. One can argue that is appropriate if one could assure oneself that the imaging, that the service was being appropriately accessed.

There has always been some question in every study as to whether the candidacy for mammography has been appropriately undertaken. Of course, that is what our committee was, back a year and a half ago, very concerned in terms of developing a program initiative that would serve women's health needs.

I tell my honourable friend very directly, one of the problems with mammography is United States television and the advertising that women get exposed to in terms of the necessity for mammography according to the United States' advertising on the U.S. television at age 35 or younger. There have been a number of direct observers that that sort of recommended investigative procedure for women in the United States is driven more by the necessity to raise income for the provider rather than to improve the health status of the recipient.

I think that is clearly what most of the investigative studies have shown without, I do not think, any variance from this finding, that under the age of 50, screening programs and mammography have not proven to be an effective investment in preventative health care services, that there is a much wiser use of that resource. Of course, that is disputed by the American Society of Radiologists who, I presume, would want to do more mammography, not less, because of the nature of the system that they are engaged in.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, clearly, no one can be very proud about some of the

situations, and this crosses all political and governmental lines about some of the situations concerning aboriginal people and their health conditions and standards. I am wondering, in terms of aboriginal women in particular, if there are any initiatives in this area in the preventative and Health and Wellness area that have been launched this year by the ministry.

Mr. Orchard: The ministry is assuring in our program development and program investigation areas that women from the aboriginal community are involved in terms of providing advice and identifying issues within the working groups. That is not a specific new initiative, but I think it is a specific benefit in that you are creating a greater environment of awareness of the issues, and some potential solutions often flow within existing programs from that simple involvement.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, there, at one time, was a health-care orientation training program at The Pas. Is that still in effect, and are there any other initiatives of a similar kind?

Mr. Orchard: I cannot provide my honourable friend with that answer, and I will have to take it as notice.

* (2140)

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that comment. I appreciate that he will provide that information.

I actually could conceive of spending the rest of Estimates time frankly in this area, but there are many areas, initiatives to be dealt with, and I am sure the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), as well, has several questions in this area under 2.(a).

I just have a question, if the minister could refer to his book on page 37. I may as well ask this question. It has come up in my mind several times. I might as well get an answer at this point.

Under the Salaries line, there is a Severance Pay/Vacation Pay. In this case, it is \$13,100 for this fiscal year. I have been meaning to ask, since the staff years remain the same, why would we have a severance expenditure, unless one assumes it is all vacation pay, and then why would the notation severance be there anyway? It is an accounting curiosity I have had.

Mr. Orchard: I am informed that this is used for individuals who retire, and within the contract, there are so many provisions depending on length of

service and severance that this fund is used to access.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chair, following up on that question of the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), this appears on every line, does that mean that there is—I still do not understand why there is an expenditure of so much amount under every line unless there are people retiring throughout the department. Is that the case in this particular section, the 13.1? What specifically does it refer to?

Mr. Orchard: It is also vacation pay as well. If there was accumulated vacation pay, that would have to be paid out, but it is also utilized for severance, if there is anyone who would qualify because of leaving the employment or, I do not know, I guess even if they were subject to one of the layoffs that from time to time we have. This has not been the case in this area, but a year and a half or two years ago when we consolidated the commission and the department, there were some 55 positions eliminated and a number of layoffs, and the fund certainly would have been utilized at that point in time. The normal utilization is in terms of retirement and meeting the Civil Service-MGEA agreement on severance.

Ms. Gray: The minister has referred to, in his comments this evening, a Healthy Child focus. He referred to, and I quote: A structure of involvement of several other departments.

I wonder if he could just elaborate for the committee this evening basically what that structure is of involvement of the other departments.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, earlier this afternoon I mentioned the Healthy Public Policy area that my deputy minister has chaired with other human services ministries. This initiative, in terms of Healthy Child policy, was further advanced recently with a round table, wherein we had a number of individuals by invitation at the round table to help the ministry create an agenda for development of a Healthy Child policy initiative. From the round table a working group has been structured and is the working group that is, under some considerable urging, to develop the discussion paper as soon as possible this calendar year—not fiscal year, but this calendar year.

Ms. Gray: The minister, then, is indicating that this round table that was recently held was specifically

on Healthy Child focus or what was—[interjection] Yes, it was. That one of the outcomes of that round table was that a working group was established. If that is the case, can the minister tell us who is on this working group?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, that is basically the process. We are now awaiting the agreement of one individual that we hope will chair the working group for us.

Ms. Gray: Without then naming names of individuals, can the minister tell us what representation will be on this working group?

Mr. Orchard: Education as a ministry, Family Services as a ministry, Native Affairs and Justice and Environment, and then we are expecting to have some professional association involvement at the working group level as well.

Ms. Gray: It is this working group then that will be asked to come up with the consultation paper. Is it the Healthy Public Policy staff people then who will be assisting this working group in developing that by the end of the calendar year?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, that is correct.

Ms. Gray: Has the minister or his department outlined any type of terms of reference for this working group? I am assuming there would have been if in fact this working group was a result of a two-day round table. Were there terms of reference which were outlined or some type of framework as to—I mean, when one talks about a Healthy Child focus, I suppose that particular subject is very broad. Is there some type of a narrower focus, or what exactly are going to be the terms of reference of this particular working group? What is it they are going to be looking at within this consultation paper and within this process?

Mr. Orchard: Let me share with my honourable friend the process leading up to the round table. As I mentioned earlier, when I was discussing this topic with the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), my interest has been considerably piqued over the last two years that I have had opportunities to be present when Dr. Fraser Mustard has made presentations. When I have had the opportunity, over a more relaxed and informal discussion environment, to get a sense of what some of the—I do not know what the correct phraseology is. To me it is such an exciting area where we can make,

I think, a commitment of existing resource and pretty major strides if we focus our efforts.

* (2150)

I guess I cannot describe it in any other way. I may describe it this because I am naive in that I am not professionally exposed, as you can expect, to maybe some of the thinking in this area. Some of the presentations and the information that Dr. Mustard provides is quite visionary in terms of identifying opportunities. The opportunity or the results of furthering those opportunities can be so absolutely dramatic in terms of resolving some of the social problems that we, from time to time, are challenged to deal with this as society.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Basis that we had Dr. Mustard come in to make a presentation to start the round table, followed by a summation from my deputy as to how we would envision this to work within the Manitoba government context and the Ministry of Health as the lead department. The idea of the round table was to stimulate thinking by those individuals that were present to really test an idea, to see whether there was worth in pursuing it.

I will be very frank with my honourable friend. I mean, we have got lots of agendas on the go. We do not need any more agendas to consume staff time. The consensus of the round table is—and I talked to some of the participants after the fact, they said it was one of the more exciting days they had put in and they think one of the potentially more beneficial areas of focus.

So we have committed time and personnel to expedite and facilitate the working group's movement of this process along. They are focusing in from their perspectives, which as my honourable friend can see is not solely health, but other ministerial and some other professional associations, focusing in on a discussion paper which gives us hopefully some doables, some deliverables, within the Manitoba context and deliverables that are not unreachable because of resource or program organization or policy development.

From the round table, the working group is crafting, in collaboration with this division of the ministry, to come up with a discussion paper for later on this calendar year.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, well, I am delighted the minister finds something in his

department that he finds very exciting. I am pleased to hear that, but perhaps he could assist members on the other side of this House in becoming excited as well, if he would just tell us what the terms of reference are of this particular working group because I still have not quite gleaned that from his comments to date.

Mr. Orchard: If my honourable friend is asking me, do we have a nice tightly knit little terms of reference that we can present to her, no. I mean, we invited a group of people with experience and with program area knowledge, with service delivery responsibilities to the round table to say, here is a new wave of thinking; here is an emerging thinking that is now becoming more widely discussed in terms of understanding early development of children, and it is in the area of coping skills.

It is not an area of perfect science, but there is every indication that there are substantial opportunities here in the province of Manitoba, serving one million people. Do you, as people involved with children, think there is an opportunity that government ought to move in terms of creating a policy discussion paper outlining what some of the doables are within the system and to create a framework of action that can be recommended to government?

When you are working with a concept that is not tried and true, you cannot put down terms of reference to narrow the group. So subsequently, I cannot give my honourable friend terms of reference and a narrowed focus because we simply do not have any. I will indicate to my honourable friend, this may not be a good enough answer, but if my honourable friend is disappointed with the product, I know she will let me know. I do not think she will be. From my understanding of the reaction of some of the individuals that attended the round table, they are very excited about this as a really innovative new way of thinking and approaching child development program and policy across government, and initiatives. They see it as an opportunity in a very rapidly changing government service provision environment as a real opportunity, I think it is fair to say, to make much better use of very scarce resources in today's environment and to have an opportunity for significantly improved results and an efficacy of program delivery.

There is a fair bit of excitement, not just mine but shared, I think it is fair to say, by the participants at

the round table. That excitement I am—I will be very blunt with my honourable friend, deliberately harnessing because I want to see a discussion paper out sooner rather than later so that we can focus Manitobans' attention on a very real issue and opportunity.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, let me rephrase the question then about terms of reference another way. With all due respect to what the minister has just told me, let me ask the question.

The minister has indicated that they are approaching someone to chair this working group. What exactly is the minister's department or staff or whomever is approaching this person, what exactly are you asking this person to be chair of, because I would assume you would have to give them more information than what you have told us? Are there some written results from this round table? There must be some terms of reference. I do not know. There must be some information that this potential chairperson has access to or is being given so they would have some idea of what they might be getting themselves into.

Mr. Orchard: Should the individual that we wish to have chair this working group decide to take on the task, it will be with the reallocation of a busy time schedule. The individual was at the round table and has been part of discussions over the last number of months with Dr. Mustard and others. Should the individual agree to the chairmanship, I think my honourable friend will understand why we do not have to have a narrowed term of reference to guide his activities and deliberations.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, will the working group then be establishing their own terms of reference? Can the minister tell us, in terms of children and mental health, is that going to be part of this? Can the minister give us a bit more information on the scope? I am really asking a question on the scope of this particular Healthy Child focus. If I am frustrating the minister, it is only because I am trying to get a sense of what the parameters are of this and how broad it is.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, the Mental Health Division is part of the process.

Madam Chairperson, I am not trying to avoid my honourable friend's question. I do not have a hidden agenda that I am trying to keep closeted away from my honourable friend, but this is a new approach to trying to develop thinking, free

thinking, new thinking around issues. There is not a standard blueprint. You cannot go to your shelf and say, here is policy development course of action No. 31. Use it here.

We are using the creative minds of people who have been involved. We are bringing in resource like Dr. Fraser Mustard to try and develop within the Manitoba context a workable policy which gives us a better opportunity to deal with some very real issues in terms of early child development, an opportunity to do something that, in my estimation, my humble opinion, is absolutely unique in Canada.

* (2200)

Now, it is not a McCall's pattern that we can pull off the shelf and cut it out and sew it together. I cannot give my honourable friend any more because we are working towards the development of the discussion paper. By even sharing something that is down the road, I have already now got into a whole bunch of questions and probably there will be a press release out that the minister cannot answer the question. Well, I cannot answer the question because we have not got there yet. I would have been better not to even mention it tonight, but I happen to be excited about it. I think it is a good area to be into, but I cannot give my honourable friend a blueprint because we do not have a McCall's pattern for this one.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, does the minister have information, either a video tape or information from the round table, just for the information of members of this House so that we have some sense of what some of the exciting ideas were that went on during these two days?

Mr. Orchard: It was one day, and no.

Ms. Gray: In regard to Healthy Child focus, is this specifically going to be pre-school or will this group be looking at services to children school age as well?

Mr. Orchard: Yes.

Ms. Gray: If this committee is going to be looking at sort of a broad range of areas or services—and I do not even want to use the word "services" specifically, because it sounds like this group will be looking at broader issues other than just service—can the minister tell us some of the decisions that have already been made within the department in regard to services to children such as services in the area of dental health? Is there

perhaps a reason why some of those decisions were made before this exciting working group has had an opportunity to present their consultation paper?

Mr. Orchard: No.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the minister is indicating that, no, there is not a reason why in fact some of the decisions have been made in regard to this year's budget in the Department of Health. So is he suggesting that there was no rationale to the budget decisions in regard to services to children?

Mr. Orchard: No, Madam Chairperson.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the minister then is saying that is not the case. Perhaps he could clarify then why specific budget decisions were made in this department in regard to services to children, if in fact he was aware of this new creative free-flowing consultation process that is going to occur over the next calendar year?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, as I have indicated to my honourable friend and others who have asked, the process on children's dental health, it was a budget decision, as my honourable friend indicated.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, this particular working group, will they be asked to make recommendations to the ministry in regard to service provision, say, over the next one to five years? Will that be part of what they are asked to do?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, the best advice I can give my honourable friend is to await the reading of the document. It will become, I think, abundantly clear as to the direction that would emanate from that.

Ms. Gray: I am not sure if this is the area to ask this particular question. Well, before I ask this specific question on prenatal classes, can the minister tell us, I know that preventative programming, the area of prevention was one of the principles that was enunciated in his health reform document. I am wondering if the minister could indicate for us what initiatives have been undertaken in the area of looking at primary prevention as part of the health reform?

I can appreciate that much of the health reform has been in the areas of looking at changing how hospitals deliver service, looking at community-based services, et cetera, and I recall that initially in

the health reform process there really was not sort of a group of people who were mandated to look at the whole area of primary prevention.

Perhaps the minister could update this House as to how that particular principle of preventative services is going to be implemented within the health reform.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, an important component of the ministry has been, since approximately 1930, focused on community health and prevention. I think it is fair to say that in the history of the ministry it was focused on the public health nursing area and has moved as the ministry grew and was able to provide a wider range of services into other areas as well.

All of those areas are important and integral to health care reform, and we are not—how would I put this—understandably, we are not into health care reform to change for the sake of change. There have been many effective programs that work within the ministry, and health care reform will continue them, will reinforce them. Over the process of change we will, in all likelihood, see new initiatives that focus on the early prevention or early intervention or educational model.

That is one of the hoped-for frameworks that will emerge, for instance, from the discussion paper we just spent the last half-hour discussing and talking about. So that, in terms of programming, the existing program has been, I think, reasonably effective and better focusing during the course of health care reform was certainly appropriate and will carry on. As we see the opportunity to move into new areas, we shall and are, as I have indicated in terms of the discussion we just went through over the last half hour.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, can the minister tell us which section or which staff people or who within the Department of Health has the primary responsibility for ensuring that there is a strategy that is developed and implemented in regards to prevention programming?

Mr. Orchard: The responsibility in the overall context rests with the assistant deputy minister.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us how that particular objective of preventative services over the long term—when I say long term, three, five or 10 years—is being reached within the department? What strategy is being employed to ensure that occurs?

I ask that question because I know that the minister in the past has stood up in this House and certainly expressed concern about governments across Canada of all political stripes in the past who have oftentimes talked about prevention programming and paid lip service to it. For instance, I know when the Province of Ontario, when we look at how they are supposedly or were moving towards more preventative programming, yet when one looked at the amount of dollars spent in their budget for prevention programming, it really had not changed from 4 percent from one year to the next, even though they talked a lot about how important it was. So I would ask this minister, again, because I know he has expressed in the past a real need to look at prevention services, how does he see that particular objective of ensuring that there are preventative services over the long term within the Department of Health? How does he see that goal being reached?

* (2210)

Mr. Orchard: I think it is fair to say that each of the major program areas that we have under specific focus this year in this area have as their underpinning principle a development of a prevention education wellness model, if you will, in terms of the beginning point for any kind of a discussion and initiative.

As well, in the program areas that are under review that we have discussed earlier on, we are attempting as much as possible in each of those program areas to deal with the spectrum of service that can be focused on the initiative. Let me try to give a better example of that. For instance, let us deal with an orthopedic area of surgery, and the focus is on the waiting list for, and let us use the example, hip surgery, I think there has been a general tendency in the past to concentrate our efforts in investigating the provision of the specific surgical service, i.e., hip prosthesis.

The emphasis, now that we have reorganized under Healthy Public Policy, is, yes, that is an important component and consideration on how to manage that surgical program, but, in addition to that, we bring into the focus and the discussion the range of issues including prevention of the falls that cause the broken hips. That can be with some—simplistic is the wrong terminology, but from some common sense approach in terms of personal care home resident management in terms of removing unsafe circumstances that are

inadvertently there, managing on the prevention side to avoid the injury.

The Healthy Public Policy area has injected into all of our discussion the continuum of service opportunity in a given program, so that we are not narrowly focused on "the fix the problem after it happens," as we have been, I think it is fair to say, in ministries of health across Canada for the last 25 years; but, rather bringing into focus, the range of options for investment of scarce resource, if that is the right terminology and phraseology to use, including education and prevention as one of the first and underpinning principles in program development.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, this particular section, Healthy Public Policy then, have they taken a number of specific areas—and the minister talked about orthopedics; if we use an example of ensuring that babies born in Manitoba are healthy, and I am assuming that "healthy" would have to be defined under certain criteria—is this particular area then looking at certain objectives? I use the example of birth of healthy babies so that we improve the health of babies born. Are they taking each of those objectives and then deciding, how does the ministry accomplish that, whether that be through service delivery of staff in the ministry or whether it is through other areas, such as working with other professional organizations, hospitals, et cetera? Is that what is happening?

My further question would be, given that there is such a huge area in terms of the health of Manitobans, has this particular section or branch prioritized some of the areas that they are going to be looking at, or was that already answered before when the minister talked about Women's Health and Healthy Child?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, Madam Chairperson, the areas of focused efforts, targeted efforts, if you will, within this ministry were outlined before. We are injecting at almost every discussion level the continuum of service delivery opportunities or service provision opportunities with emphasis always on education prevention. I mean, we are putting, I think, action to words. We have integrated the education prevention consideration into, if not all, nearly all of our broader program investigation areas. There has been a linkage in our surgical programs to the prevention, where appropriate, as I have mentioned in terms of the orthopedic program.

My honourable friend has before her, or the critic does, for instance, the provincial cancer control committee, and in terms of the terms of reference, because this is one of the areas that this section of the department has responsibility, it is the division responsible for liaising with government and the provincial cancer control committee. One of the terms of reference is to identify a model for cancer control within the framework of prevention, promotion, treatment and palliation so that we are not focused simply on the curative aspect of cancer as a disease entity.

I think that is indicative of the direction that we are trying to put into focus in all areas of the ministry and investigation of opportunity across the system. This division has an opportunity to provide that role to institutional investigations as well as new program initiatives such as the Healthy Child Development policy area.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chair, I am using the minister's example of cancer and cancer prevention. Can the minister share with us perhaps any written information because, of course, to answer this might be lengthy. But if we use that example that he has used of cancer prevention, can he share with us any information or policy information on what the department has come up with in regard to the hows, how do we prevent cancer, then who actually should be doing the education of that?

Obviously, that education is not limited to the department. In fact, it is probably more outside agencies and organizations. Any kind of evaluation that the department might be spearheading over a long term to determine if, in fact, certain programs or services were maintained or put in place if we actually were making a dent as far as lessening the amount of cancer. Does the minister have any of that kind of information that he might be able to, without releasing confidential information from the department, share? I use the example of cancer prevention that the minister has raised because, of course, it is a very important one.

Mr. Orchard: We do have some focus on the area of prevention. What I will undertake to do is between now and the next time we meet for Estimates which I think is Wednesday probably—I think we are debating bills tomorrow I think, and then we will be in Estimates on Wednesday—I will have staff put together some of the information that we have at our disposal. If there are duplicate

documents in terms of—and I will narrow it down to a couple of areas to give my honourable friend a flavour of where we are coming from.

We are doing some, I think, quite interesting work in terms of heart health as well. In terms of lifestyle-modified reduction of disease incidence, I think clearly the heart health area is a very opportune one. We have been participating over the last two years or two and a half years with the federal government and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba.

I have had an opportunity to be at a number of their events to focus on, you know, the current results that they share with the community. We will provide that information. The most recent one was that very delightful picture of me cheffing. Well, I thought it was delightful.

* (2220)

An Honourable Member: You were preventing heart disease.

Mr. Orchard: That was preventing heart disease, and it was very—well, I will tell you what it was. It was the Heart Smart cafeteria launch, because in the province of Manitoba the Heart and Stroke Foundation, about three or four years ago, developed a Heart Smart cafeteria program. They piloted it in Manitoba to a number of institutional settings, schools and workplace, into private workplace.

It was exceptional in its success. That initiative, with its generation in Manitoba, with the volunteers and professional staff over at the Heart and Stroke Foundation put it together. It was so successful that it was adopted by the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation. The launch officially of it as a national initiative took place at the South Winnipeg Technical Centre where the instruction course on what—the chefs, you know the—

An Honourable Member: South Technical?

Mr. Orchard: South Winnipeg Technical, I have got the name right. But anyway their chefs' course, I think it is, is now focussing on Heart Smart cooking for cafeteria. It was a most successful national launch.

The important component that I think we all should take a great deal of pride in is that it was a Manitoba-generated idea that is now adopted nationally.

I think we probably have one of the most progressive Heart Health campaigns in collaboration with, as I say, Heart and Stroke Foundation at the university as a collaborator, the ministry and the federal government. It is a several million dollar initiative which has already surveyed Manitobans and identified high-risk target groups.

The next stage, I believe, if my memory serves me correct, was to develop some focused provision of information to high-risk groups, and to see whether there was an opportunity to mitigate disease incidence by focusing prevention/educational resources.

To try and answer my honourable friend's question in terms of the outcome analysis, that has always been one of the difficulties, that has always been one of the challenges to be able to evaluate the success or whether the given programs have met envisioned achievables after a period of time.

Again, I think we have got probably one of the better opportunities in Manitoba through the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation where they have been undertaking some of that work. Of course, as I mentioned earlier on, on a number of occasions during the Estimates that it is the reports from our Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, any number of investigative areas that are really sought after by my provincial confreres, because they provide us all with very good insights, scientific insight onto where the opportunities for change are, and for refocusing and redefining some of our health care system approaches.

It might be appropriate to take five minutes. We can leave the clock running, I think, with the agreement of everybody.

Ms. Gray: I would just like to thank the minister for being willing to provide that information. I am hoping that the information is readily available and is not going to take staff hours to have to compile.

Mr. Orchard: Your wish is my command. We will put together a very informative package for my honourable friend.

The committee recessed at 10:25 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 10:30 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: 2.(a)(1) Salaries \$967,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$178,300—pass;

(b) Health and Wellness (1) Salaries—

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, again, a number of the issues in general we have talked about in the previous appropriation. Under 2.(b) specifically I note that this branch looks after proposals submitted for review by the Clean Environment Commission and by Manitoba Environment. Can the minister give us a list of proposals that have been submitted to the department from either of those agencies?

Mr. Orchard: I am not sure. Perhaps I could seek clarification of what my honourable friend is wanting us to provide.

Mr. Chomiak: On the bottom of page 38 in the Supplementary Estimates book, under Expected Results, it states, and I quote: "Assessment of environmental health concerns identified in proposals submitted for review by the Clean Environment Commission and by Manitoba Environment."

I am wondering if we could have a listing of which issues have been given to the department for review.

Mr. Orchard: Yes, Madam Chair, we do not have those here tonight, but we can provide the list of issues on which Clean Environment Commission or Environment have asked our assistance and provide it to my honourable friend probably on Wednesday.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for those. Can the minister also—will he be able to provide us, although it is not extensive, only \$85,000, a list of the grants to external agencies that is provided by this branch?

Mr. Orchard: The Public Health Association, \$2,200; Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, the collaborative project on cancer research, \$145,000; the Sanitorium Board of Manitoba \$131,700; Village Clinic, to support the AIDS Information Line, \$54,700; and the U of M, through the Faculty of Pharmacy, the Medication Information Line for the Elderly, support of \$30,100.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I have two questions on the Life Saving Drug Program. Firstly, why is it that this branch of the department

administers it; and secondly, what major changes have occurred in the program in the last year?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, the Life Saving Drug Program had been funded from this area of the ministry as a part of—this used to be the Community Health area. Now, under Healthy Public Policy, that program remained with this program; it remained with this area.

I think my honourable friend has identified its being sort of an oddity in this area, and we are in the process of shifting the Life Saving Drug component of this division of the ministry over to the Pharmacare program. I would hope that we will be able to have that incorporated as a fait accompli in next year's Estimates presentation.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, the second part of the question is: Have there been any significant changes in the Life Saving Drug Program this past year?

Mr. Orchard: Significant in, I believe it consumed a fair bit more resource than last year. In terms of the criteria to access the program, no, that is under review. As we are making the change, we are reviewing that. There may be some change in terms of the criteria. We have not made that determination yet.

One thing I think maybe my honourable friend—this is an income-sensitive program, and from time to time, individuals, when reviewed, their circumstances have changed in that if they perchance no longer meet the qualification criteria and have been removed from this program and referred to the regular Pharmacare program, for instance.

That is not as a result of change in the criteria by which the program is accessed by Manitobans, but rather a review of individual circumstances which have changed. In most cases, the family income available has gone up to put them beyond the eligibility criteria. That review has led to them being taken off the program and put on the Pharmacare program which, of course, moves to only a percentage of program cost recovery rather than complete program cost recovery as is available to those who qualify.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister can update us as to the current status of initiatives in two program areas. The first is radon gas and its possible effect on

human health, and secondly the possibility of lead contamination in water supplies.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, to deal with the radon gas issue first, the Minister of Environment's (Mr. Cummings) department is the lead department in terms of the radon gas issue. We are providing collaborative support and physician input through this division in terms of guiding the Department of Environment in their activities. I would not want to risk giving the inappropriate or incorrect information in terms of giving my honourable friend an idea of where the status is on the radon initiative with Environment. There is also, I believe, an involvement in terms of the Department of Labour on building codes that is attached to the radon issue. So there is actually more than just one department involved there.

In terms of the lead in the drinking water issue, two of my staff in this division, two physicians, have been working with the City of Winnipeg in providing medical advice in terms of risk assessment, et cetera, lead in the drinking water, and we believe that it would be through Cadham Lab that the testing would be done in terms to determine the lead levels. The initiative there is one of support to the City of Winnipeg rather than a direct involvement as the lead initiator in that investigation.

* (2240)

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, has the ministry undertaken any initiatives with respect to alerting the public and/or documenting evidence of the potential of possible side effects of vaccinations?

Mr. Orchard: We maintain the lead role in updating information to physicians who do child immunization and naturally, and that is as an external provider of service that we provide that information. Internally, our public health nursing and our providers are provided with current information in the updates.

It is this division's responsibility to provide, in the event that a new vaccine is out, to provide all providers, physician, external to the department and our own staff, with complete information on vaccines and what potential adverse reactions can happen so that the providers can undertake that provision of information to the mothers so that they watch—or the parents—so that they can watch for any potential adverse reaction and in that fashion

develop a fairly sophisticated system of identifying and preventing any potential serious side effects of adverse reaction from immunization.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I assume some form of a registry is maintained and kept by the department for reference by caregivers and/or the public?

Mr. Orchard: There is maintenance of adverse reaction in the immunization records that each provider maintains for a child and a reporting system to centralize that information.

Mr. Chomlak: If a parent or a guardian wished access to that registry to obtain that information, would they have access to that registry for their own child?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I am pretty sure that information is available to the parent on behalf of their own child.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate whether there have been any major outbreaks of communicable diseases or the like that are being tracked by the ministry at this point in time, or is there anything out there just from a public health policy standpoint?

Mr. Orchard: No, to date we have been quite fortunate in terms of communicable disease outbreak. We have the flu advisories that we periodically put out as public service information. We have twice in the last, I guess, six months had isolated cases of meningitis which we take very quick response in terms of peer group or associate contact tracing and provision of antibiotic for any individuals associated with the individual who has meningitis. We very diligently try to establish clearly whether there is a relationship between, if there is one or two or three cases, to see whether there is any relationship so we can establish whether there is a pattern of disease incidence that is communicable rather than isolated.

As I say, in the last I think approximately six months, we have had two separate time frames in which there has been more than one or two cases of meningitis. Fortunately, in each case there was no contact between the individuals. They were isolated cases. It is an area, as I understand it, I guess as we speak tonight all of us have the bacteria within our respiratory systems that could—no, it is not all of us, but a high percentage of us carry those quite regularly, and a

circumstance develops where they turn virulent in some individuals.

I think it kind of baffles our epidemiologists as to why these isolated occurrences do happen, but we take them very, very seriously and, first of all, establish contact with all those in association so they can take antibiotics as a precautionary measure and, secondly, try to establish clearly whether there is or is not linkages between the separate cases, because in that case it would trigger a likely recommendation to immunize.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I am pleased to hear from the minister that the lifesaving drug program is finally being looked at and perhaps the criteria will be changed and it will become a more efficient program.

In regards to immunization, I am wondering if the minister can tell us if there will be any education this year, as there has been in past years, about—and I do not know the correct term for the disease—but what is known as hamburger disease. Is there any type of education programs that occur, given the barbecue season, should we ever get summer?

Mr. Orchard: It is our intention to make that again a significant public awareness thrust.

I want to share with my honourable friend the absolute panic that I suffered this weekend. You have to appreciate that at a convention there are many activities that consume one's time and you forget about sustenance and diet.

In this particular case on Saturday last, I had been without sustenance since approximately nine o'clock on the plane to Ottawa, and I undertook a very kind invitation to attend a barbecue. Being quite hungry, I grabbed a hamburger and went through and was in the process of discussing with some of my colleagues—and of course it was a friendly, very beautiful environment, lovely people, wonderful company, friendly atmosphere, I mean, upbeat spirit, all the things that you would expect at a Conservative leadership convention.

I noticed halfway through my hamburger that it was only cooked on one side, and I have to tell my honourable friend that I instantly panicked about hamburger disease, because my vote was, I thought, pretty important on Sunday, and I did not want to be in the hospital, because they do not have a moving ballot box at these. I thought I would just share that with you.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister specifically tell us, though, what type of educational programs or how is the public made aware about the concerns related to this hamburger disease in the province of Manitoba?

* (2250)

Mr. Orchard: We work with the electronic media in terms of providing information for public service announcements, so that becomes part of, and they have done that for us, I guess, for the last couple, three years, as part of the public service announcement.

We keep them very much informed, if ever there is an incident of the hamburger disease striking a Manitoban, so that they very much make that part of news and with the accompanying warning as professionally provided by the ministry. We have a fact sheet that we make available to health care professionals, public health nurses, physicians, again, basically renewing the awareness of the potential. As my honourable friend correctly observes, we are approaching hamburger season again, barbecue season again, and you do not want to eat pink hamburger.

Ms. Gray: I notice in this section the activities that deal with immunization services to Manitobans, and I am wondering if the minister's department has looked at the provision of immunization services or done any analysis of the fact that staff within the ministry provide immunization as do, of course, private physicians in clinics. I am wondering if there has been any analysis done?

Is it in the best interests of efficiency in a system and efficacy of a service to continue to have a number of service providers actually provide immunization services?

Mr. Orchard: We maintain both public health nurse service provision and physician. I think my honourable friend's observation is whether a replacement of—and I am going to presume, suggest a course of action that we attempt to have a public health nurse provide that service because they are part of the staffing costs already, and it could be more effective in terms of delivery cost of the program. [interjection]

Yes, well that is the point. My honourable friend makes the point that it may well be every bit as effective and have as high a quality of service and be less expensive, and I think that is right. One of the difficulties is, we are not necessarily able to

cover the whole province with a public-health-nurse delivered program, so we have maintained the opportunity of having both service provision.

However, my honourable friend has piqued my curiosity, and it will be one of the areas that we take a look at again.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, yes, I am intrigued by the minister's—I believe that certainly, from a lay standpoint, there is merit in perhaps reviewing the cost efficiency and the effectiveness of delivering it. Actually, it certainly, on the surface, seems to make a lot of sense. It seems to be an area that perhaps should be looked at from cost-effectiveness. So I, too, would encourage the minister to consider that option.

Mr. Orchard: There may well be an opportunity, and it is my understanding that we are looking at that currently and seeing whether there is an opportunity for an equally effective service which may have the opportunity to contain costs.

Ms. Gray: The minister mentioned looking at efficiency of services, and that prompted me with the question. I am not sure if this is the correct section, but probably the staff would know the answer to that or I am sure the minister does as well.

Can the minister tell us, where is the committee at that has met for two, three, four, five years, or whatever, the city of Winnipeg and the Department of Health in looking at provision of health services within the city of Winnipeg, i.e., the fact that we have two services or two jurisdictions providing service.

I know there has been a committee that has been meeting for Heaven knows how long, but has there been any progress made in that area?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend has correctly identified, it is probably one of the most worn-out studied areas between the city of Winnipeg public health and the province, and I guess I put it to you this way. In terms of looking for more initiatives to tackle, I have to admit, because it does not represent a gap in service, it is not one of the priority advancing issues within the ministry.

Clearly, there may well be opportunity as we achieve more of the current agenda to try and expedite it. There are some difficulties though because there are differing employment opportunities and benefits. We are not parallel between the city and the province. That has from

time to time caused some difficulties in terms of service consolidation, but clearly it does represent a potential opportunity for discussion.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I can appreciate the minister's comments about there is such a variety of issues and a lot of them have high priority within a huge ministry such as Health that it is probably impossible in any given year to deal with all of the issues. I do not have a problem with that.

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Perhaps the minister can tell me then, is this committee still meeting, and if in fact there is not perhaps either political will or the energies available for whatever reason to actually make some recommendations, does it make sense, or is this committee still meeting, and if they are, perhaps they should not?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am advised that there seems to be an ongoing pattern of studying the issue. Staff are not currently meeting on it, but I am advised that there may well be some discussion in two areas: inspection and possible integration of the combined program delivery in conjunction with health reform.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Helwer): We are on 2.(b) Health and Wellness (1) Salaries \$1,639,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$7,298,100—pass; (3) External Agencies \$363,700—pass. Subtotal (b) \$9,300,900.

2.(c) Women's Health (1) Salaries \$386,300.

* (2300)

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, under the Expected Results in this section, I notice under activities, that it specifically refers to the Facts of Life toll-free telephone information/referral line, and refers to the number of calls. Fine, but then it goes on to talk about the educational presentations by staff of Manitoba Health in regard to promotional activities.

Can the minister tell us what would be the number of presentations by staff in the area of promotional activities, and what would be the number of people reached by that activity?

Mr. Orchard: You know, we are going to have difficulty putting together numbers for my honourable friend on that, because quite often it is our public health nurses that are involved in doing this, and I do not think we have got a central

opportunity to have that come together as to how many presentations they make and who is at the presentation. I do not think we have got a central compilation of that activity level that we can provide.

Ms. Gray: I asked the question because I actually thought that information was available. Perhaps I am wrong. In the detailed statistical sheets that public health staff provide, does it not break up their activities in terms of however promotional activities are defined in terms of education? That is why I asked the question. I thought maybe it was available.

Mr. Orchard: I think the best we can do is provide a level of activity of our three major funded agencies in this area. Planned Parenthood is expected to have 250 educational sessions this fiscal year, and they are projecting to reach approximately 6,500 who would attend. If you asked me what the definition of a consult is, I cannot get that, but they are projecting to do about 70 consults this year, 55 promotional activities, and of course, as indicated in the material you have in front of you, they are expecting a Facts of Life Line call activity to approach 8,500.

I may just as well give you the grant to Planned Parenthood; \$331,000 is the Planned Parenthood level of funding. That is up very significantly. That includes an increase in budget for AIDS education that we transferred over.

Serena Manitoba, a \$10,400 grant, and we eliminated the Committee on Planned Pregnancy funding this year. My honourable friend would be aware of that. It is part of the budgetary decisions.

Now, I will deal with Serena Manitoba. They are providing educational sessions, they believe, to approximately 800 participants, in part supported by our \$10,400 grant. That is down by \$200 over last year. All of our agencies took, in general, a minus-two in terms of their year-over-year funding. Serena Manitoba is planning on doing about 85 professional consultations.

I also have in here, although Youville Clinic is not provided for budgetarily in here, but Youville Clinic is projecting to undertake about 3,400 individuals of prenatal education, 1,000 parent education. Natural family planning and fertility awareness, they are expecting to reach 150 individuals with that service provision, which is part of the Youville Clinic's service provision, not specifically funded

here but in part whose activity level is appropriate to be discussed here.

Within this division of the ministry, we are expected to reach some 16,000 Manitobans by departmental staff for educational presentation and consultation on reproductive health issues.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the reason I asked that question of the minister, I was just wanting to get a sense if the department was moving away from actual delivery of promotional health services and moving towards allowing external agencies to provide more of that service. I guess I would ask the minister that and also ask the minister, has the department changed its criteria in terms of provision of prenatal classes, i.e., are we still doing the same thing we have done for the last five years, or are we refocusing our client group and perhaps allowing again nonprofit or external agencies to deliver some of those services?

* (2310)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, we are maintaining a direct service provision in the ministry, but are working toward, I think it is fair to say, more outside agency funding and service provision.

I want to give to my honourable friend a copy of the Centre for Health Policy Evaluation's, I think it is probably their most recent report. It is on low-birthweight babies. They did a study over the past number of years, and I think in general terms we did remarkably well in the province of Manitoba. As I understand the issue, there is a threshold, moving below which probably is not a reasonable goal in terms of public health policy. It would be maybe achievable but at a cost that would exceed—the opportunity and cost of putting that money in other areas would be far greater.

This was a study that dealt with the low-birthweight issue in terms of geographic as well as socioeconomic, and as one would expect there is some tendency to have a greater incidence of low-birthweight babies in young single mothers who are of a lower socioeconomic status primarily in the core area of Winnipeg.

Although not as much as one might expect. I mean, it was quite an interesting report, but it appears as if we might have an opportunity to do a more targeted initiative in terms of prenatal education, because one of the findings was that, for instance, women in rural Manitoba are probably at

the—I do not know if the phraseology is right, so if I offend some professionals that may happen to read this—they are in existing program support at what is considered to be the medical threshold of best achievement in terms of low birthweight.

The incidence of low-birthweight babies is as low as they think is achievable without the very incredible investment. It probably has a lot to do with diet—they do not really have an attachment.

That goes across all income spectrums which is quite interesting, but basically, the opportunity is there to potentially target our efforts on higher-risk groups that are identified socioeconomically and geographically. What we are actually trying to identify is whether there is an effective way of identifying those groups. I appreciate that is not necessarily easily done. After the fact it is, but you may find if you do not get to those individuals, young women during the early stages of the pregnancy—you know they are statistics after the fact because they have given birth—but it is the identification process in advance when you want to provide them with the nutritional education and some of the prenatal—and where we are attempting to see whether there is an effective way to target our resource, because I think my honourable friend would see a pretty good opportunity in terms of a focused investment in education, focused on nutrition and support of young mothers in a higher-risk group.

That is another area that we are trying to target into as we develop more sophistication around understanding how effective some of the programming is. That is why, you know, a low-birthweight baby study by the centre has given us a fair degree of comfort that in general our programs are working quite well, because we have certainly got reasonable medical results in terms of low birthweight. I will provide both my honourable friends with a copy of that report.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I thank the minister for being able to provide that report, and I am pleased to hear that the department is moving towards looking at external agencies in regard to provision of services for a number of reasons. I think oftentimes they can do it more efficiently than government can. I think with our staff within the department, who I believe are excellent staff, but I think there are so many priorities that the staff have that oftentimes they are not able to focus some of their energies on some of the prevention areas.

I am also pleased to hear that the department will be looking at the issue of low-birthweight babies and how does one deliver programs or services or ensure that, in fact, they are delivered. The minister is certainly correct when he talks about the need for the educational system and Child and Family Services to be involved, and probably the most difficult part of the entire process is to really get other agencies together and other departments to really look at how can you focus on providing this service, particularly since Child and Family, obviously, has their own priorities, as does Education. But I am pleased to see that that is being looked at.

Just another question in this particular area, I am wondering if the minister can tell us, has the Women's Health Directorate—if I can use that term "directorate", I am not sure if that is what it is referred to. Has the Women's Health Directorate provided any information, consultation paper, analysis, recommendations to the minister in regard to provision of services to women in the area of abortion?

Mr. Orchard: I think in terms of providing counselling around the issue—

Ms. Gray: Consultation.

Mr. Orchard: Pardon me?

Ms. Gray: Consultation to use the method.

Mr. Orchard: I am informed we provide a package of material on all of the options that might be considered, including therapeutic abortion, and that package is provided to physicians as well as some of our funded agencies who provide some of the services that I have outlined.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, given that one of the objectives of the Women's Health Directorate is to influence Healthy Public Policy which reflects women's health needs, can the minister tell us, does the Women's Health Directorate have a policy or a position on the provision of therapeutic abortion services in community clinics?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, that position is the one that was challenged in the legislation, as written did not allow the government, the ministry to provide the service in other than hospitals. We currently have that legislative amendment before the House for consideration in passing this session.

It was an issue that I have indicated is not narrowed to therapeutic abortions but to service provision within the system. Although the debate quickly focuses around the procedure of therapeutic abortion, it is a more general policy, therapeutic abortion being one component of it.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, perhaps the minister could just quickly provide a synopsis for us of that legislation in terms of what he sees that legislation accomplishing in regard to the provision of services in private clinics, whether they be abortion or, as the minister indicates, other services.

* (2320)

Mr. Orchard: It would allow the reinstatement of that regulatory-making authority. It would allow the ministry to determine in what location or facility we would provide and pay for insured services. That can include a range of issues that I have outlined in terms of my remarks opening the debate or presenting the debate on second reading on the legislation for amendment.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, given that the minister has opened debate on the legislation and given that chances are, since this government has the majority, that particular legislation may pass in this Chamber, does the minister have any information from the Women's Health Directorate in regard to the impact of the passage of that legislation regarding services affecting women, whatever that range of services may be?

If this legislation passes and then there is authority given to the minister to do certain things in regard to these clinics, has there been any recommendations as to the direction that the minister should take in regard to the provision of services in private clinics specifically related to women?

Mr. Orchard: If my honourable friend is asking specifically about Morgentaler's clinic, no. Other services, my honourable friend would have to be maybe more elucidating.

Ms. Gray: The minister then is indicating, if he uses the example of Morgentaler's clinic or any other private clinics, I suppose, that may want to locate in Manitoba, he is suggesting there has not been any recommendations from the Women's Health Directorate. Is that correct?

Mr. Orchard: No, there have been no recommendations made.

Ms. Gray: Will this particular directorate be making any recommendations to the minister in regard to provision of health services to women, such as abortion services?

Mr. Orchard: This section monitors the provision of services to women to assure that they are available and that there is no difficulty in accessing those services, and that the initiative, as existed under the regulation July of 1988, as found in the court decision, did not in any way deny service to therapeutic abortion for those women in Manitoba who so choose. There was deemed to be sufficient access in the system.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am not going to go over many of the questions that have already been quite adequately dealt with by the member for Crescentwood. I just want to ask the minister the status of the early postpartum discharge program and whether or not it has in fact been expanded or has receded in importance, and what the future is with respect to that program.

Mr. Orchard: The early postpartum proved successful, I think, as everyone has acknowledged, and I think it is fair to say, we will see a shorter stay of all mothers in hospital become more the norm across the system, initially, first, in the city of Winnipeg at all facilities that offer obstetrics in Winnipeg. We fully expect that to be part of the recommended direction in Dr. Manning's obstetrical review, and we have the ability, under the current staffing configuration, to support that shorter-length hospital stay in the city of Winnipeg. The anticipation is that we would investigate that process for rural Manitoba as well and support it likewise in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Chomlak: I can assume that staff will be shifted from other areas of activity within the community health sphere to participate in this program?

Mr. Orchard: That is correct.

Mr. Chomlak: That of course begs the question, from where will they be transferred from to assume these particular activities?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, there will not be a transfer per se. There will be a reprioritization of activity level. This is deemed to be an effective initiative that is worthy of a reprioritization of staff resource to assure its facilitation.

Mr. Chomlak: I wonder if the minister can enlighten me as to what the less significant or less prioritized activity that will be shifted away from, just to get a sense as to where the community health is moving with respect that we know they are moving towards more early postpartum discharge provision. What will they be leaving behind in light of the fact we know they will be on the reduced workweek, et cetera?

Mr. Orchard: There are two developments in the initiative. Firstly, within the hospitals they are doing the assessment with in-hospital staff, so that has removed some of the work commitment.

Apparently, with experience in the program, we are able to provide, with the existing staff, the opportunity to help more mothers and their newborns by targeting according to need—it is not an automatic as we did in the past—a service provision.

It is assessed according to need, and that has seen a reduction in standard visitation and a focused visitation, a targeted visitation now according to need. We are able to undertake that shorter length of stay initiative for more mothers and newborns with the existing staff by making targeted, more effective and focused use of that staff resource.

* (2330)

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, two questions in this regard. I would assume therefore, and this is the first question, that the nurses in the institution will be making the assessment; and secondly, what is the criteria of need? Presumably, the need is based on medical requirement or something along those lines. Could the minister define what determines need with respect to the provision of service?

Mr. Orchard: I am informed it is a combination of medical as well as social assessment of need.

Mr. Chomlak: Could the minister perhaps table the outline or the criteria for the program, if that is at all possible, when the next time we meet?

Mr. Orchard: Affirmative, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

Ms. Gray: Just to clarify that line of questioning from the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), is the minister then saying that the criteria, the medical/social criteria that is now in place to determine the visitation for the early discharge, that that is a recent change, that now there is a change

in terms of who would provide service to, and does the minister have any statistics on how many mothers were visited, let us say, the last fiscal year, and how many will be visited this year?

Mr. Orchard: We can provide my honourable friend with the statistics that she is asking for. As I attempted to explain earlier, the opportunity to provide a greater level of service based on assessed need is allowing us to, in essence, better focus or target the program and we were able to accomplish a service provision to a wider or to a greater number of mothers with the experience of existing staff.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, just one last question. The provision of those services by the existing number of staff in terms of the ability to provide a quality service is that something that is shared by not only senior staff of the department, but in fact the actual service deliverers of the region? Does everyone agree on the ability for staff to be able to deliver that same quality of service?

Mr. Orchard: I am informed that that is the case and that there is fairly aggressive monitoring to assure that that is the case.

Mr. Chomlak: Again, given developments in this area, this is an area that we could probably spend the balance of the entire 75 remaining hours in Estimates allocated to discussing, but I am going to resist that temptation because there are so many pressing other items we have to discuss.

I want to start by asking the minister what the grant is to Swampy Cree Tribal Council and the Churchill Health Centre this year, to both of those programs this year and last year?

Mr. Orchard: Last year's grant to Churchill Health Centre was \$63,500, and this year it will be reduced to \$31,600. To Swampy Cree Tribal Council it was \$70,700 last year, and it will be reduced to \$33,700 this year.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, is that decrease due to dental needs requirements, or is that due to budgetary restraints?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, this is part of the decision that we have discussed on a number of occasions in Question Period in terms of discontinuing the funding of the treatment portion of the Children's Dental Health Program.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the minister has indicated that there is not any specific evaluative or scientific evidence that would demonstrate why the department made the decision to cut this particular program other than budgetary decisions. The minister has had an opportunity to review the letter provided by a Mr. Cooney which gives an illustration of the negative effect that this program could have on the delivery of dental services to children. Has the minister had a chance in the department to make an evaluation of that?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, no, I have not reviewed that correspondence yet. I think we received it in the office last week, and I have not had a chance to review it yet having been away for three days or so.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, it is assumed that the public water fluoridation program will continue. The minister has stated that publicly, and we will assume it will continue its entirety. Will the provision of that particular program change now that the staff years have been reduced by 80 or 90 percent?

Mr. Orchard: It is expected that we will be able to maintain the program through a similar provision of service that we have undertaken in the past, including a contracting with the service provision with a number of the communities.

* (1340)

Mr. Chomlak: I am sorry. The minister said, through the provision—again, I apologize. I missed the minister's last sentence in his response.

Mr. Orchard: Well, we do not directly provide the service. We contract and provide supporting grants for service provision to communities, and that portion of it will be maintained.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the minister outline what the grants were with respect to the fluoridation program last fiscal year and what they are anticipated to be this fiscal year?

Mr. Orchard: Last year, I believe they were \$11,900, and this year, we anticipate \$11,700.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, how does the minister expect to continue the educational portion of the program that dealt with up to 63,000 children with the dramatically diminished staff component in the ministry?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, that will be part of the discussions that will ensue with the school divisions. Notification will go out officially on the treatment program curtailment in the near future, and then discussions ensue in terms of collaboration around the fluoridation in the school and the prevention program.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, that seems to me, therefore, that the department does not have a clear plan as to what is going to happen to that program. That seems to me to be an obvious conclusion from this. Does the minister have a specific plan that he intends to implement with respect to the provision of these services?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I think my honourable friend can appreciate that there, no doubt, will be varying opportunities, school division by school division, and that is what we intend to pursue.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the minister indicate what provision is going to be made for the assets of the program, specifically the equipment that is located throughout the province to deal on the program?

Mr. Orchard: Well, I think maybe my honourable friend did not receive the copy of the letter from the one superintendent that attended the Minnedosa meeting. Basically we are, at the present time, exercising a certain degree of flexibility around the equipment because, if there was a way to facilitate the continuation of the program within the schools in collaboration with the school division, the current service providers and dentists that would supervise or undertake the service provision—and, of course, with the precondition that it be a service that would be paid for by the parents whose children access it. That was basically, I guess, as succinctly as I can put it, the intent of the letter from the school superintendent asking us if we would be interested in pursuing such a program and asked the status of equipment disposal.

If a circumstance like that were to present and be a workable option, I have indicated that we will co-operate to whatever degree we can in facilitating that initiative and, secondly, that we would be most open to maintaining or vesting ownership of our existing school-based equipment to the school divisions for a very nominal cost, so that if they could work a parent-supported program on treatment that certainly we would not expect to

recoup our investment out of the equipment, we would simply invest it to such a program.

Mr. Chomlak: Did the minister have any discussions with the Manitoba Dental Association, the Manitoba association of dental nurses or any of the patients in the program prior to the decision to curtail the program?

Mr. Orchard: That is one of the, as my honourable friend may at some time begin to appreciate, constraining procedures within budgetary preparation wherein you do not have the luxury of going out and consulting with provider groups, et cetera, in terms of budgetary decisions that may be included in a budget. We have had discussions—

Ms. Gray: Why not?

Mr. Orchard: Why not? My honourable friend for Crescentwood asks why not? I would suspect that—

Ms. Gray: Be different.

Mr. Orchard: Yes, that would be different, and you know—let me give you an example. What would have been the response if we would have asked those groups, how would you react to curtailment of the treatment funding of the treatment program in the Children's Dental Health Program? The response would have been exactly as it is today.

Ms. Gray: That is the wrong question.

Mr. Orchard: Oh, there is a different question? My honourable friend, in interjecting from her seat, is saying that is the wrong question. Well, I do not believe there is any other question you could ask, because if my honourable friend is saying, well, you know, you should have invited options, my honourable friend is correct. Except my honourable friend then does not—well, then those options are the ones that we ask for from our senior management within the various departments. One presumes that those options had been investigated and presented, and on balance you choose from a range of them.

If my honourable friend says that process is flawed, that we do not necessarily get the best options, that may well be. I do not argue with that. But under the current budgetary-striking system you do not go out and ask a person, you know, how about I reduce your program area?

It was interesting. My honourable friend might not have been there. I think it was two sessions

ago; it might even have been last session, I forget which, we introduced Bill 69, which was legislative provision to take away the compulsory aspect of fees contribution to the Manitoba Medical Association. At a meeting prior to introduction of that legislation in the House, with the MMA, I indicated that this legislation was coming down.

Well, they did not receive the initiative favourably. The issue that was presented during committee stage was that it was done without consultation.

So I asked the then-president of the MMA, had we consulted about the substance of Bill 69, would you have agreed? Absolutely not, was the answer. Well, in consultation, what would it have achieved you? I know the answer to some of the consultations before I ask the question.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, earlier on during the questions and the debate, once the decision had been announced, the minister referred to the Saskatchewan program as having been curtailed in its entirety. That information, in fact, was wrong, and we subsequently found out that the Saskatchewan program, while cut back substantially, was maintained in northern Saskatchewan as well as in a targeted sense, in the southern part of the province.

The point I am making—now I suspect that by invoking the spectre of the fellow province of Saskatchewan, I know I open up all kinds of areas of political debate, but I am attempting to determine whether or not the department considered a mid-range option prior to the all-or-nothing policy that was introduced. Because it seems not so, given the early stages of the debate that occurred in the Legislature after the program was dropped. Was a mid-range option considered?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate why that option was rejected?

* (2350)

Mr. Orchard: Yes, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister outline for us the reasons behind the decision to reject the option to go to a mid-range kind of delivery program?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, how would we describe it? An income-sensitized focus-targeted program was proposed, and the projected cost was \$4.3 million.

Given that the financial circumstances were such that we were not looking for ways to spend more resource, dedicate more resource to this program, we were considering options of reduction of resource commitment. That province-wide targeted program was not accepted. We considered, and I will be very blunt with my honourable friend, a per-child charge that we would collect to recoup a significant portion of the treatment cost so that we could maintain the program as self-sustaining.

That becomes very complex in terms of the collection of the charge, the establishing of the size of the charge. In some ways, you would probably have a lesser uptake of the program, because one of the criticisms that has been fairly consistent of the program is that more and more children that were enrolled in the program had third-party insurance. Naturally, if they have third-party insurance and you instituted a fee, those who have third-party insurance would exit from the program and access coverage according to their employer or self-financed third-party insurance.

So there was a whole series of discussions around the issue. I have indicated in meetings with the MDA, the dental auxiliaries, the dental nurses, that we did not take any particular glee in making this decision. It was the toughest one. It was one of the last ones we made in terms of the final striking of the Health budget.

The difficulty was that, over a period of time, we did not have any options presented that were anything but either more expensive or elimination of the treatment program. There was no development of a reasonable in-between option for any number of reasons, and I cannot express why, that might have offered us a more flexible approach to it.

The observation was made by some of the individuals I have talked to that, had they been consulted in terms of how to make the program more efficient, they would have provided information. That is kind of interesting, but I think that speaks legions of how the program was maybe directed. If there were ways in which to save money in a program, why were those not advanced just in the plain interests of saving taxpayer money, let alone of making sure the program remains?

I have to tell my honourable friend that it frustrates me significantly to have these

suggestions come forward, after you have essentially put everybody's feet to the fire by removing the treatment portion of the program. Surely, surely, people understand that governments are running deficits, that governments do not have the luxury to maintain programs that were created in what we considered to be affluent times of the '70s and '80s, and in today's context, we have to make difficult choices.

I will be very blunt with my honourable friend. The problem, with the way we developed the budget, is sometimes the managers of programs present government with almost two extreme options, with the full confidence that government will never take the extreme option of eliminating the treatment part of the program because I want to tell my honourable friend, that for the six budgets that we developed it, that was always an option for budgetary reduction, of elimination of the treatment program. I cannot speak with accuracy, but I believe it was probably presented for six budgets prior to us coming into government.

The options that have been discussed lately of an in-between program, I do not know why they were not presented. I do not know why they were not pursued. I do not know why they were not sought after, but the two options we had were spending \$1.3 million more or eliminating the program. Given the financial circumstance of the day, we chose to eliminate the program because some of the in-between options that I asked for some advice on just proved to be too unworkable, as I described earlier on.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that response. I recognize the dilemma and the difficulties being faced during the budgetary process, particularly the options presented by program management. In fact, I think the minister's summation is fairly accurate from my limited experience with government. It is interesting that a targeted program would cost \$1.3 million more and that strikes me as an area that would require some further examination.

The interesting question that is brought to bear now is insofar as the government clearly recognizes the importance of the program, and the government clearly recognizes its significance, given that we have these trained professionals in the community, given the fact that we are dealing with an all-or-nothing alternative we are now outside of the budgetary context.

The decision has already been made. At the end of the month the program officially ends. It seems to me we then have an opportunity that being the case for before too late, I mean before too far down the road, before the egg is completely unscrambled or completely scrambled, however one puts it—whatever the correct phrase is, I think people know what I am referring to—[interjection] At two minutes to midnight. The fact is that the government now has an opportunity to take a valuable program that is recognized by all. It has an opportunity to look at putting the program back in place. It has the luxury of some time and less budgetary constraints on it in terms of conflicting demands.

The minister now has opportunity, he has more information, he has a lot more knowledge about the program, he has the capacity to reinstate the program before it is too late and too far down the road with at minimum some kind of a middle ground. I mean he does have that opportunity at this point rather than the all-or-nothing situation that we are faced with at present. It seems to me the minister has an opportunity. He has outlined the difficulties concerning the program, concerning the budgetary constraints on him. I recognize those. He outlines the options that he was faced with.

I think he has illuminated the decision this evening but now the minister is presented with an opportunity, an opportunity, I think, to look at a more modest program by way of example based on information that he now has and based on an opportunity considering that I have heard him and others state that they recognize it was a good and effective program.

* (0000)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, that is precisely why, in terms of the discussions I have had to date, I have said we will consider options that can maintain the integrity of the program, with parents making the contribution. We are not fixed in our decision that the program just simply has to go regardless of whether options for maintenance come up.

The one thing I have been clear on—and my honourable friend knows this from the meeting in Minnedosa. That was not a supportive meeting.

There were staff and family members and some teachers, et cetera, that were at that meeting. They were very definitive in their belief that government should recant on the decision. My honourable friend knows that on several occasions that evening I said, I have the ability to investigate options, but the one option I do not have is the ability to reverse a Treasury decision which removed some \$3 million of treatment funding. I do not have any of that budget to reinstate.

However, if there is an option that is developed in collaboration with the school division, with the current care providers, government will certainly be at the table assisting them in such areas as facilitating it through our experience internally, certainly through consideration of equipment provision that is currently in the school system. I have one overriding constraint, and that is the budgetary decision, which I do not have the flexibility to change.

Now, you know, it is a late hour, but the next time we resume debate of the Estimates, it might be an opportune time, because my budget is \$1.8-some billion. Maybe my honourable friend might want to take some political risk and suggest a program line, because I know he has gone through the budget with a fine-tooth comb and suggest that we could reallocate, in part or in whole, resources from another area of the ministry. That would be an interesting discussion that maybe my honourable friend might want to consider. I have been through that and come to the conclusion I did. Maybe my honourable friend, with a perspective that is different certainly than I have, might be able to provide some advice the next time we resume discussion and debate around the Estimates.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Helwer): The hour being 12 midnight, as previously agreed, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Edward Helwer): The hour being after 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 14, 1993

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