

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 20, 1989.

The House met at 8 p.m.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—HEALTH

Mr. Chairman (Harold Gillehammer): I call this meeting to order to discuss the Estimates of the Department of Health. We are on item 4.(f) Mental Health Clinical: (1) Salaries \$345,700—pass.

Item (2) Other Expenditures \$151,200—the Honourable Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, shall we wait for the NDP?

An Honourable Member: No.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I am not getting into this fight, Gulzar.

Mr. Cheema: I do not think it is right to pass. Can we just wait for a few minutes before they come and scream?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Chairman, the committee starts at eight o'clock. If they are not here, the action goes on. Pass.

Mr. Orchard: The Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) is just angry because we have already taken more hours than him in Estimates.

* (2005)

Mr. Chairman: On item (f)(2) Other Expenditures, are there any questions—pass.

Item 4.(g) Mental Health Services: Provides for mental health services through Regional Operations, Mental Health Centres, General Hospitals and Forensic Services, (1) Salaries \$382,800—the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema).

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us how many positions are vacant in this branch?

Mr. Orchard: None.

Mr. Cheema: Will it be okay to ask questions, for example, for Brandon and Selkirk Mental Health Centres in this branch so we can deal with it all as one?

Mr. Chairman: They are itemized under (j) and (k) I believe, further down the page there.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I suggested this last week and my honourable friend wanted to go line by line.

If my honourable friend wants to go all up today that is fine with me, I am such a co-operative fellow. I am willing to go with it any way you want to do it.

Mr. Chairman: Our procedure is that we go line by line. We are on (g)(1) Salaries—the Member for Thompson.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I do not see any difficulty with what is being suggested. I realize that is procedure in terms of passing items, but I think if one was to look at the way discussion has been, shall we say wide ranging on some items, we have probably been doing it to a certain extent already. If it will assist in expeditiously dealing with this very important department, I agree with it.

Mr. Orchard: This would not be tolerated by some of my tougher colleagues, but I am willing to go along with my two honourable friends over here. I am just fully co-operative with them. Any other Minister would stick line by line. I want both of you to recognize that when you start beating up on me in Question Period.

Mr. Chairman: Item (g)(1) Salaries—pass.

Item (g)(2) Other Expenditures \$226,100—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us, do we have the head of Forensic Services for the Department of Mental Health in the Clinical section?

Mr. Orchard: Yes.

Mr. Cheema: How long have we had this position filled?

Mr. Orchard: As long as I can remember, from both the critic and now Minister, it has been filled.

Mr. Cheema: Is this the position which the former administration promised one psychiatrist that they wanted to set up a separate unit for Forensic Services? Is that the position, or is it a separate position?

* (2010)

Mr. Orchard: I cannot answer for what the previous administration was proposing here. Forensic Services with a physician is part of Mental Health Services here. I cannot comment on what was previously suggested.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health tell us how many cases, or how many consultation services, are provided by the Forensic Services? Can he provide us with the data?

Mr. Orchard: I will give you the actual from last year, from the '88-89 fiscal year, and I will give you what we are projecting in terms of services this year.

In terms of adult forensic services outpatient assessment there were 113 actual last year, we are projecting 125 for this year. In inpatient admissions there is an actual last year of 109, and we are projecting for '89-90 at 120. At the Headingley Correctional Institute last year the actual was 1,112, and that is a significant increase over the year previous where there was 899. We are projecting some 1,200 this year. In terms of follow-up services there were 793 last year actually and we are projecting some 900 for this year.

Mr. Cheema: Earlier I asked a question that the former administration wanted to set up a forensic psychiatry unit that was supposed to be at the new building at the Health Sciences Centre, the new building that the Minister announced a few weeks ago. Will that building have a forensic unit separately?

Mr. Orchard: Well, Mr. Chairman, in terms of the discussions we have had starting last fall and ongoing discussions surrounding the proposed psychiatric facility at the Health Sciences Centre, forensic beds are part of the discussions, yes.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Kildonan. Shall the item pass—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, in this candy, I think there was something implanted there.

I think it is extremely important to have a forensic unit especially when we had difficulty attracting clinical staff and we had difficulty attracting the new head of the department from other places, as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) explained the other day. For a teaching program, it is extremely important to have Forensic Services provided at the Health Sciences Centre along with the other unit of psychiatry in this new building. It will go a long way to help there.

Can the Minister assure us whether that will be a part of the total mandate of the building for sure, or are they just going to consider it?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend is wanting a sneak preview of the Capital Estimates, but that is all right because I am so inclined to give little sneak previews from time to time. No, the issue of forensic beds is very much a part of the redevelopment project at the Health Sciences Centre, very much a part of it.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us the number of individuals providing services for the children and adolescent group, both for the clinical as well as the non-clinical site?

Mr. Orchard: Now, bear in mind this is adult forensic services that we are dealing with here. If I am not mistaken, child and adolescent deals with the adolescent forensic services.

With my honourable friend's question, the number of people delivering forensic services—I am having a little trouble wanting to know the nature of my honourable friend's question, because there are forensic

beds currently in the system at the Health Sciences Centre. My honourable friend does not want the staffing of those beds, do you?

Mr. Cheema: Yes, that is right.

Mr. Orchard: Oh, you do. Now you are going to challenge us with something that we are going to have to develop for you. We will be as close as we can, but we cannot provide that tonight.

* (2015)

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, if the Minister can even supply me with the information tomorrow, that is fine with me.

My next question is one of the functions of the Mental Health Services and the directorate is to provide the direction of the operation of Brandon Mental Health Centre and Selkirk Mental Health Centre. Can the Minister of Health tell us how many new patients are being admitted in these two centres? Can he confirm today that the Selkirk Hospital is not taking any new patients from the Winnipeg area?

Mr. Orchard: The first question was staffing numbers? -(interjection)- Patients? Oh, admissions. Okay, we will get you that information then. Admissions to Brandon for '88-89, so these are the actuals from last year, were 584, Selkirk 272, for a total of 856 admissions.

At the same time there were separations at Brandon of 704, Selkirk 266, for total separations of 970 and inpatients at year-end, so this is just a snapshot as of the end of the fiscal year. Brandon, the patient numbers were 375, Selkirk 298, for a total of 673 and the total under treatment, again I believe—no, these are cumulative figures pardon me. These are cumulative figures for the year, Brandon 980 and Selkirk 564 for a total of 1,544, a slight decrease in inpatient counts at year-end and an increase in the total number of patients under treatment throughout the year at both facilities.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us how many new patients were taken or admitted to Selkirk Hospital from the Winnipeg region?

Mr. Orchard: Fifteen.

Mr. Cheema: Are those patients long term?

Mr. Orchard: I am informed that most would be long term, yes.

Mr. Cheema: The concern was expressed to me, and I am sure to the NDP also, that the assessments are not being done in time. The question was raised by the NDP Leader (Mr. Doer) in the House. Can the Minister confirm for us if the number of the evaluation or the admission has dropped as compared to last year?

Mr. Orchard: First of all, assessments are being done. That was not an appropriate or a correct statement

that was made. The Act simply does not allow that, as my honourable friend well knows. In terms of—I do not have projections for this entire fiscal year, all I have is actuals. My indication is that admissions are up, but discharges are also up and they are projecting a year-end volume to be down slightly. In other words that the snapshot at the end of the fiscal year, for the patient numbers, at each facility is to be down slightly or to be down again.

* (2020)

Mr. Cheema: The point I want to make is that there would be less the number of staff we have at Selkirk and Brandon, and the admissions are almost the same as the Minister has said as compared to last year. How are they managing, and how can they provide adequate services for the same number of clients as last year, similar as this year, with the staff number, which is very below the normal range as compared to last year?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I will give my honourable friend—if I can get into the staffing numbers, 620 staff were at Brandon General Hospital at year-end, and it will be down by the end of this year-end by approximately six and a half staff years. Selkirk, there were 463 last year and they will be down by 14 and a half staff years because we have been doing the reorganization and the change.

Bear in mind there are greater numbers of admissions, but there are also greater numbers of discharges and the number of patients at year-end, as the snapshot of patient count, is down. One does not necessarily assume that patients are receiving less services because there are fewer staff. Some of the patients are there for a much shorter time than was the previous history of the institution.

I think it is fair to say that at both institutions there are shorter lengths of stay as is happening throughout the system, inclusive of our mental health institutions. The absolute numbers, as the snapshot shows you at the end of the year, are down. That is indicative of absolute numbers on average throughout the year, I would presume. You have, certainly, blips as one would expect because there are fluctuations throughout the year. Our staffing ratios compare very favourably with any other centres across Canada. There are only two facilities that appear to have a higher staff ratio that I have in terms of an immediate comparison across Canada.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, the part of my question was the ratio of the clinical staff at Selkirk. When we know that staff numbers are low, and there was a supposed allegation that the assessments are not being done and patients are not being admitted because of the lack of staff.

Can the Minister indicate whether that is a fair statement, or if he disagrees with the statement, can he give us—he has given us the information that there were 15 admissions this year to Selkirk Hospital. Can he tell us what was the number of admissions last year, the same period?

Mr. Orchard: We would have to go back and obtain that number for my honourable friend. What my honourable friend is getting to—and he has neglected to apologize for developing another criticism in advance, which I am really disturbed about because I thought we had a reasonable relationship building here. What my honourable friend is referring to is the psychiatric manpower or person-power situation in Selkirk.

As I have indicated to my honourable friend, we have had some changes in staff down. We have got fewer permanent or full time, pardon me, psychiatrists at Selkirk, and that situation is recognized by the ministry as being not acceptable. We are recruiting actively for them.

In the meantime we have engaged in a number of part-time and back-up circumstances to provide those clinical services so that, although the staffing positions are not permanently filled with people on staff, there are arrangements being made with psychiatrists within and to some degree I guess without the department to provide a service in psychiatric and clinical assessment at Selkirk.

* (2025)

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us the total number of acute patient psychiatric beds available in Winnipeg general hospitals?

Mr. Orchard: The number of acute beds in Winnipeg? I would be more comfortable answering that when we get to the commission staff, because each—there are five hospitals that have acute beds: Grace, Seven Oaks, Misericordia, Health Sciences and St. Boniface. There is a fairly significant bed count, around the 200-plus, but I would have to give you more definitive numbers when we get to the commission and I have appropriate staff here.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, we will wait for the commission, but still one of the functions of the Mental Health Services and this branch is to co-ordinate the services in the general hospitals, and I would like the Minister to answer the question if there has been a change in the bed situation as of May 9, '88.

Mr. Orchard: Two hundred and fifty-six is the bed number at six hospitals, and I believe that would include Brandon General, or is that six hospitals—just the Winnipeg six? Winnipeg six. Who did I miss then? Misericordia? Yes, 256 beds, Mr. Chairman, and that number I believe is constant. It has not changed.

The only thing that changed in the last 12 or 18 months were the McEwen Building renovations, and those removed the entire bed count for a period of time wherein we had a substantial amount of co-operation between the other hospital facilities to make sure we did not run into serious problems. We, with a great deal of co-operation, worked between the facilities and the professionals and the department, managed to get through that very significant closure for, well, I guess up to five months, the McEwen Building, while

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renovations were under way, but there was no change in the bed numbers in that period of time.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister confirm or deny if there were any discussions within his department and the department at St. Boniface Hospital to reconsider the beds at the McEwen Building in terms of there was some suggestion that beds should be probably cut? Was that a formal discussion last year?

Mr. Orchard: Yes. That was a proposal that St. Boniface had made.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us if the decision was made to keep the same number of beds and can he share with us information provided to him through the department head of the McEwen Building on what basis were they proposing to cut the beds at the McEwen Building?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I guess to put it in layman's terms the genesis of the suggestion was that we got by without the McEwen Building bed complement for a fairly substantial period of time, and therefore maybe because we put in some substantial support systems and co-operation, the concept was advanced to attempt to leave them closed or just a portion of them, and I cannot tell you what numbers, but it was a portion of them closed on a long-term basis. Two things did not fit with that.

First of all, the maturity of an alternate support system simply was not in our estimation necessarily ready or proven to be a more cost-effective way of delivering service. Second, the need was there. We had some very, very, how would I put it, delicate balancing going on during the whole period of time that the McEwen Building was closed. It required an incredible amount of co-operation. A lot of people involved directly in the system really walked the extra mile to make things go as well as they did during that McEwen Building closing.

* (2030)

So clearly we needed the bed complement and all but six were brought into almost immediate service. The balance are going to be in service shortly. It was a reflection of the acute care needs within the system. So that coupled with the fact that we had just spent the dollars renovating, it would have been a little counterproductive, or viewed as counterproductive, if we would renovate some beds and then close them.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health tell us, is that particular building or beds at St. Boniface under a teaching hospital review now to reconsider the change of the Government's position in the near future?

Mr. Orchard: The teaching hospital review is focusing first upon the identification as to what is definable, what is demonstrable in terms of the cost per patient day, the staffing hours per patient day as drawn out in Manitoba and Medicare which seem to indicate in rather lucid terms that from the period of time 1973 to 1985, I believe was the time frame involved, we went

from having average per-diem costs significantly below the national average to those significantly above for our two teaching hospitals.

The teaching hospitals alone in terms of the resource commitment, it is approximately \$400 million between the two hospitals. Because that is such a sizable commitment of resource, it is only natural that one would seek the answer to whether the differences are caused by differences in accounting, the numbers between Ontario for instance or the rest of Canada and Manitoba, or whether in fact we do have more costly teaching hospitals. You simply cannot afford if it, say, is an apples for apples comparison, if you will, and you are significantly above the national average, some questions have to be asked as to why, because you are simply talking too big a portion of the budget. You are talking 25 percent of the entire ministry's budget in two facilities, two important facilities, but nevertheless the task force is trying to bring further clarity to the Evans Report on Manitoba and Medicare and not specifically involved with the use of the McEwen Building.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, this is a very critical question I think. I would have given the Minister a sort of warning. Now if the situation comes to him and say a proposal comes to him as came last year to close some of the beds, will this administration close beds if it is advised by any professional party?

Mr. Orchard: We are dealing in hypothesis in that world of "if" that I cautioned my honourable friend about a couple of weeks ago. The circumstances under which we will condone the permanent closures of beds within the health care facility is if their medical need can no longer be demonstrated through a change in approach to medicine, i.e., surgical beds, respiratory beds, other beds no longer are needed as inpatient beds, because technology has allowed not-for-admission surgery to take on a major amount of the admission procedures, or a substantial number of admissions, formerly for-admission procedures. In terms of respiratory illness, miniaturization, reliability of home breathing assistance has basically made more people self-reliant and able to live outside of the formal institutional setting.

When that happens and the bed is not needed from a program standpoint, because the program is moved to out-patient, yes, we will consider the closure of those beds. It has to be because the program has basically changed so the demand for the bed is not there.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I was asking it specifically for the McEwen Building. Other questions we will be asking under Manitoba Health Services Commission, because there was a talk last year as the Minister has confirmed. A number of people felt that you have just 45 beds and they were able to manage but with a difficulty. Since we are spending 87 percent of the Mental Health Services budget within the hospital system as compared to 13 percent in the community, what I am asking the Minister is the long-term planning, because something has to be done to change, to have a balance in the system. As long as the decisions are made on a scientific basis or evaluation procedure there

should not be any problem in terms of how do you reallocate the resources. That is what I said, and if suggestions come on professional, people and based on the facts that these resources could be used in an alternate way, I think that is the way most Manitobans would like to see it.

There was recently research by the Prairie Research and I have a copy from one of my mailers from MMA, it tells that 46 percent of Manitobans are concerned about health spending. That is the No. 1 priority, how the money is spent for any health projects.

I think people are willing to accept the tough decision as long as it is explained to them in the most appropriate way. There was an event over the weekend—I can provide to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) the copy of what was sent to me by the MMA, the amount of fees I pay them, so once in awhile I get some services. They are supposed to send to me because I pay them \$770 a year—that is part of my professional fee and professional relationship. Certainly I will share the information with the Minister.

Mr. Orchard: Despite our little banter back and forth, my honourable friend is asking a very serious question. The proposal, yes, was advanced by St. Boniface on the McEwen Building. I guess it is fair to say that was an institutional proposal and we had to make decisions in terms of the system. Sometimes the two agendas do not necessarily come to the same conclusion.

There is no question that if we can effectively, and of course this is what proponents of a lesser dependent or a non-dependent in some cases, institutional mental health system would lead you to a very much decreased need for institutional care in mental health. I think it is fair to say that we are moving in that direction but you can only achieve that if you have appropriate supports in the community.

* (2040)

For instance, one of the projects in the reorganization, involved the move of 10 chronic long-term patients from Brandon to the Dauphin area with appropriate transfer of resources so that they could be adequately cared for in the community. Subsequently those 10 beds at Brandon were closed. That has happened in the last year and it is a move in the direction, but with the patients went some of the resource of the institution.

That is a long-term goal that I think is laudable and achievable and we will end up with a more diverse and more provincially-based mental health system as well. You are not going to be able to accomplish that as a result of one five month experience in a given summer with fewer acute care beds. Over the longer haul, yes, I think that is quite achievable, but we are only going to achieve it with a substantial amount of understanding of the system and co-operation from all of the various players including the community and the families in terms of a move in such a direction. That is very much why we are so pro-active in terms of work with the various groups and individuals involved with the mental health system in the province.

If you are going to reform the system, move it in the direction that probably everybody says we ought to.

You do not do it in a knee-jerk reactive way. You have to be deliberate, direct, but also from time to time more patient than some would want us to be in terms of achieving those longer-term goals. We are working on them, that is clearly part of the reform agenda, but not one that we were able to accede to in the proposal on the McEwen Building beds that were made to us last summer because we did not think the system versus the institution was ready for that significant a change.

Mr. Cheema: I certainly thank the Minister for that answer. I think most people, as I have said, would appreciate to make a decision in the more logical way and not just a quick fix where we would end up paying more tax dollars in the long run.

One of the initiatives announced last year was to set up a mobile crisis team demonstration project, and as over the week, last week I gave some written questions to the Minister. One of the questions was: what progress has been made in establishing this crisis team?

Mr. Orchard: The mobile crisis team is operational, with all staff hired. We had envisioned it with three staff years. It is operational, all staff have been hired, and it has been working, Mr. Chairman. It was fully operational September '89. It is very new, and we are hopeful that it works as well as we think it will because the whole idea of course is to try to present to the community a service of earlier intervention that may in some ways, if not curtail, certainly shorten acute care stays and provide a better level of service.

Now we—well, I will let my honourable friend ask some more questions.

Mr. Cheema: This project will definitely not only relieve the pressure on some of the emergency rooms, but I think it will also provide the services in some of the home environment too. In most of the care services you would need the families to get the relevant information. If you can reach them at their place and get the relevant information, then that will definitely help.

Can the Minister of Health tell us: how many new staff have been added to Winnipeg mental health services to implement this program?

Mr. Orchard: Three and in this case, all three positions have been recruited from the Registered Psychiatric Nurse discipline, yes.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health tell us: is this program available 24 hours a day?

Mr. Orchard: There is a 24-hour on call, but not in terms of having someone.

Mr. Cheema: What is the maximum time this mobile crisis team can actually go and make an assessment if they are called upon?

Mr. Orchard: Basically, and I say this always with danger that there will be a few hours delay or something like that to make me less than an honest individual,

but basically almost immediate service. Of course, the strength of the mobile crisis team is that they do have knowledge of and accessibility to the other mental health resources in terms of staffing and hospitals. They know the system, so that what they cannot handle, they know how to get the help to handle it. So from that standpoint the service is very, very rapid.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us, is this service available from 9 to 5, or 24 hours around the clock?

Mr. Orchard: The staff work regular hours in the regions, but the evening hours are when the rotation of individual staff on call takes place to provide the after-hour services.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health tell us, what is being done or what has already been done to let the public know that such a mobile crisis team does exist, and is this a telephone number which is available to the emergency rooms and various other social agencies? Is there a telephone number?

Mr. Orchard: We announced the project last December and the decision was made to implement the project incrementally. We had staff hired as of August 1, they went through an orientation period of time to acquaint the new staff with Regional Services and the regional staff and their caseloads.

* (2050)

For the first month the new team worked only with an existing caseload, to put it that way, and then as of November the team was introduced to the member organizations of the Community Coalition on Mental Health. This then starts to get you more broadly based in terms of your referral service or your availability of service throughout the mental health community. In addition to that, they were introduced to the staff of the Psychiatry Department at Misericordia Hospital.

The next step is to introduce the team and their capabilities, their service levels, to the Health Sciences Centre and then from thereafter to introduce the team to other hospitals, the police department, Klinik, and other institutions that are involved in crises intervention in terms of a mental health service.

Mr. Cheema: As these individuals will be dealing with the first-hand information of a client who is a victim of mental illness and they have to also be careful about The Mental Health Act, can the Minister tell us, have these individuals been given special training to let them know what the provisions are of The Mental Health Act and how to get hold of someone who will be able to guide them in difficult situations?

Mr. Orchard: I am not fully familiar with the RPN training courses and capabilities but that is part of their formal training, No. 1. They then receive further orientation as to what is happening in the system and in fact have the availability of the regional co-ordinator who can provide answers to any questions for which—it is first time involvement and they are really into a new area.

Mr. Cheema: I think it will be extremely important for them to be aware of the provisions of The Mental Health Act. I think just to avoid any potential problems because this is a new project and everything should be done to make sure that the system works.

My next question is, as it was provided in written form earlier, that we have three people on this crisis unit, what is being done to have involvement from the consumers of Mental Health services, like former patients, or former clients, or former counsellors, either on a voluntary basis or on a fee for service or whatever other ways they will be paid? I think if someone has gone through these services and for the person who knows what it means to have a mental problem, it will be helpful to the staff to adjust to those needs and also provide support to the family.

Mr. Orchard: Again my honourable friend surely must appreciate that we are really again breaking rather new ground here. We are on a pretty steep learning curve with the mobile crisis team, and certainly I value my honourable friend's suggestions and insight. I cannot indicate to him that six months from now or a year from now we might be taking that. Certainly it is not an unreasonable suggestion that my honourable friend makes.

Mr. Cheema: I think the Canadian Mental Health Association deserve a lot of credit for providing some of the information to me and to the other Members of the Legislature. I shared the information last Thursday. This is one of the recommendations that should be followed, the word "should" probably should not be used, but may be considered in the near future. One of their concerns was what provisions are available for support and for respite to family members who care for persons with long-term mental illness.

Mr. Orchard: We have a committee formed right now charged with the mandate to develop guidelines for respite for care givers. The group is attempting to put in perspective the provincial needs and methods of how we might address those needs and of course the key to making that determination is to get a handle on what sort of resource allocation might be needed. It is again a laudable goal and obviously one that would have benefits should it be achieved and probably a pretty healthy part of the reform of the mental health system.

To date we do not have a significant contribution of resource towards that and before we add, without a longer-term goal and direction for the mental health system, we want to quantify or get a handle on what the project across the province would entail in terms of the demand potentially that is there and how we would meet that demand with what amount of resource and the resource sourced from whence.

Mr. Ashton: I have a number of questions in regard to the shift into the community. I know the Minister referenced the Dauphin, Parkland situation. I know a similar issue was taken by the Brandon Mental Health Centre, I believe, in '87 or '88 involving six long-term patients. What I would like to ask is: what support

mechanisms were put in place for both the Brandon relocation, I believe that was January of 1988, that took place and the Parkland, the Dauphin, relocation of the patients that the Minister referred to.

Mr. Orchard: Ten people were involved in terms of leaving the Brandon Mental Health Centre, and each person has the services of the community mental health worker. Four of the individuals are semi-independent and in co-operative living arrangements, and staffing support has been through the Proctor Program. Three are in the St. Christopher licenced facility. One is living with his family in Swan River, and of the 10, two have returned to Brandon Mental Health Centre. We are in the process of identifying another couple of individuals who might fit the program.

Additional resources to those I have already mentioned were the addition of an effective half-staff year for an additional—another half-time community mental health worker in the Parkland region.

* (2100)

Mr. Ashton: I was just wondering, in terms of the future of such initiatives, what plans there are in terms of further relocations, if any. What type of resources are being put into place? For example, how many proctors are being put into the various regions affected? I am just wondering if the Minister would give us some idea of the future direction.

What I have been able to determine is that there has been some success. I know people in the mental health field do have some concern about the level of support that is provided to ensure that the people relocated have a proper quality of life in the community relocation, but it is certainly something that has been strongly supported by the communities affected. I am wondering if the Minister could give us some idea of future initiatives in this area.

Mr. Orchard: I think my honourable friend, in posing the question, has really in fact answered it. There very much has to be a high degree of support in the community and a willingness for the community to participate. That is why of course Dauphin, and the Parkland region, was chosen for this particular initiative. I would venture to say that given the success here that we would find more communities willing to participate.

The only thing that really inhibits moving in that direction is the availability of community supports, because the community has to be quite highly involved. In the Parkland project, our commitment to staffing was a half SY for the region, which one would say is—first blush you say a half SY 10 patients relocated from Brandon Mental Health Centre. The full year basis of operating involves residential assistants at \$45 a day, 365 days a year for those 10 individuals, and then day programming for \$20 a day for 260 days a year.

It is not simply the additional staffing from the department side. It is having the facilities and the support programs in place that can access the per diems in this case and support the day programming as well. I think you will see other communities mature

in the development of those support systems and as they do and appropriate candidates are identified at both Brandon and Selkirk, you will see a gradual move to this.

Let me tell my honourable friend, and I think he already knows this, that this program will not be for every individual who currently is in chronic care in either Brandon or Selkirk. That is why it is rather critical and key to make sure that we do it right, if you will, so that we have successes to talk and to promote the furtherance of the system rather than a negative experience, which takes away from the initiative.

So as I say identification of appropriate client, appropriate community, and an attempt to match the two; we are willing to make those efforts providing we can reallocate the resource as we did in this case from Brandon because we took 10 beds out of service and transferred a substantial amount of the budget.

Mr. Ashton: I certainly accept the Minister's point that we have to be careful and not rush into a program of this type. Obviously the success of initial—call them pilot projects if you wish. These two things would certainly be classified as pilot projects as the key to further developments. You are dealing with some pretty dramatic moves here.

I understand in the Brandon situation that the average number of years in the Brandon mental health facility was around the 35-year mark. It was just phenomenal. These were not short-term patients. They were long-term clients of the facility, and to be able to move the individuals into a community setting is certainly quite a dramatic move.

In fact I would like to ask the Minister if there is any feedback on the Brandon relocation. He has provided information on Dauphin, but has there been any preliminary indication of how successful that move was?

Mr. Orchard: I am not sure I understand my honourable friend's question, but you know when I was indicating the status of the 10, two had returned to Brandon Mental Health Centre. Now I do not know the individual circumstances in each case, but I would suspect they may well be individuals, as my honourable friend described, who had been there for 35 years, and they were simply unable to adjust to a different environment. I am not sure I understand my honourable friend's question.

Mr. Ashton: I was referring to the initial movement out of the Brandon facility in January I believe of 1988. There was a relocation of six long-term clients with an average of about 35 years. I am just wondering if there was any indication of how successful that move had been.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I think my honourable friend is referring to the Community Residence Project that was developed in January, '88. As far as I know that is working well. As a matter of fact, I met a couple of the individuals at the training centre that was newly opened at Brandon Mental Health Centre, and they seem to be quite happy in terms of their new freedom.

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Mr. Ashton: I am certainly pleased to hear that. I am wondering if the Minister could indicate what has been happening in terms of the housing. We have referred to the support services thus far, but in terms of the type of housing facility provided to individuals placed in a community setting, in particular to what degree the department is attempting to provide proper standards in housing, and what type of housing is being made available to individuals in a community setting?

Mr. Orchard: Well, let me indicate that in the project now that my honourable friend just referred to, the six into the residential setting in Brandon, that is working relatively well now although it did experience its growing pains, because maybe some of the support systems were not mature enough when the individuals were first placed in the community. I guess by and large those wrinkles have been essentially resolved.

In terms of the housing, I suppose we have a range of renovated to brand new depending on the circumstance and the sponsor group. There are basic requirements in terms of space and comfort and safety, fire and otherwise that we require, but basically built around trying to assure a reasonable location for individuals. Quite often I think it is an upgrade in terms of physical surroundings.

Mr. Ashton: I am wondering the extent to which the department takes into account the views and experiences of consumers in this area, clients. I am wondering if there is any follow-up, because I know one of the concerns that is often expressed by agencies in this field is in terms of once again quality of life, particularly the desire to have the fullest freedom available for people to live in the community in the fullest extent possible as a normal part of that community. I am just wondering whether there are any mechanisms in place to achieve the input from consumers of the housing.

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

* (2110)

Mr. Orchard: I think the individuals themselves who are involved in the move from, for instance, Brandon as we have been discussing, to community settings, I think there is a regular—maybe I am using the wrong terminology, regular, but certainly the success and their desires are very much part of the program. That is why, for instance, a couple of the individuals of the 10 involved in the Dauphin project returned to the Brandon Mental Health Centre. That was because that was a choice that they made, that they did not feel comfortable or I guess confident with their new surroundings. There is I think, a fair attempt at making sure what we provide is viewed appropriately by those to whom we are providing it.

Mr. Ashton: Moving to the institutional setting, I as MLA in the past received complaints either from individuals in institutions or from family members of institutions about conditions, allegations of abuse, et cetera, in terms of existing facilities.

What I would like to ask the Minister is, what mechanisms are in place to deal with those types of

complaints and whether there is any mechanism by the department itself or whether such complaints are strictly dealt with by the institution. It is always a sensitive issue. I am not trying to make blanket accusations or suggest anything, I am just simply reporting the fact that accusations of abusive situations have been brought to my attention. I would just like to ask the Minister for the department's policy in dealing with such allegations of abuse.

Mr. Orchard: There are a number of checks and balances that are in place, and I am assuming I am talking about allegations of what is believed to be inappropriate patient treatment within the facility by staff and/or professionals, et cetera. When those complaints are received they are investigated first of all with the management of the institution. If there are any irregularities those are corrected and duly noted.

If there is not satisfaction with that process—sometimes, let us be frank, if family members are the ones bringing the allegations to Government, they may not be satisfied with the organization providing the care, doing the investigation and saying that we are all right. In those cases there is the opportunity to refer the matter to the Ombudsman who has full independent investigative powers, if you will, to assure that no inappropriate actions have been taken at the facilities by staff and professionals. That does not happen all that often. I do not know whether there has even been one go to the Ombudsman in the last 18 months.

I am just gathering more information. The Ombudsman does have a substantial request for investigation, but to our knowledge here the Ombudsman has been satisfied that appropriate measures or appropriate treatment was given. I do not know what conclusions he comes to in terms of resolving the patient complaint, but he did not find fault with the methodologies used in the institutions.

Mr. Ashton: As far as the investigating procedure, the Minister is saying that they look into it. Is "they" the department or is it the institution itself, with the second recourse being the Ombudsman? The Minister I think is indicating yes, so in other words the departmental policy in dealing with complaints will be to refer them initially to the institution, and if they were not satisfied with the internal analysis of the situation to then suggest they talk to the Ombudsman.

Mr. Orchard: There is a whole range of opportunities that one can take. We could go right to the Ombudsman first off, but normally if complaints come through the office or through the chief provincial psychiatrist or through any number of avenues, that the families have to lodge a complaint or the individual has to lodge a complaint, each is investigated. Anything that comes across my desk is referred out to the Mental Health Division and in turn is investigated. First off, a report is requested on the circumstances from the institution, and if in the course of that there is not satisfactory answers given, then a further investigation can be taken by staff.

If that does not resolve the issue, the Ombudsman can be referred to. At the institutions, so that patients

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know that this is their right, there is a large sign on each ward which indicates how one might be able to access the Ombudsman and launch a complaint, each sign having the Ombudsman's office phone number so that contact can be made.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I appreciate the information. I think we can all recognize the importance of balancing. The institutions need to be able to have adequate control of the situation in providing this treatment, on the other hand patient's rights, and I appreciate the Minister's answers.

I would just like to ask a couple of questions in regard to the facilities and that is to the average length of stay in both the Brandon and Selkirk facility. There has been a dramatic drop from the early 1980s. In the case of the Selkirk facility from an average length of stay for patients in for less than 365 days from 93.7 to 47.4, and in the case of Brandon, on the same care area of 70.1 down to 49.6.

I would like to ask the Minister if there was any up-to-date figures on the trend, whether it is continuing or whether it is stabilized in that particular area.

Mr. Orchard: The latest figures I have for Brandon on patients in the centre less than 365 days is up slightly to 54.9 days; Selkirk is up slightly at 48.2. In terms of patients over one year, both are down from 20 years at Brandon down to 19.4 in terms of the long term; Selkirk 12.1 down to 10.3.

Mr. Ashton: I am just wondering if there is any explanation for that. I realize there is some fluctuation. Although in the case of the Brandon facility, that would be an increase over the last couple of years, a pretty noticeable increase, and I would assume on the other hand that the figures in terms of the long-term placement, in the case at Brandon at least, would be affected by the movement of the long-term patients out of the facility into the community setting.

I was just wondering if there was any indication of why the length of stay has increased.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairman, I have one correction to make in terms of '88-89 actual experience. In '87-88 at Brandon for patients in the centre for less than 365 day was 49.6, and I indicated it was up to 54.9. That is not correct. It is down to 45.6. It is down slightly, but Selkirk's is up slightly by eight-tenths of a day.

Mr. Ashton: My apologies, I was temporarily distracted, but I just wanted to indicate in terms of the long-term trend. I am not suggesting—

Mr. Orchard: Well, I had the wrong number in there because Brandon for patients in the centre for less than a year, was 49.6, '87-88, and has gone down to 45.6 so it is continuing on basically a trend-line down for the last five years. Selkirk has basically levelled off, in fact increased. It was 47.4 days for average length of stay less than a year, and it increased to 48.2, slightly up, but essentially you could say that it is continuing

a downward trend to shorter lengths of stay. I think that indicates a couple of things that are positive in terms of ability to provide service.

Mr. Ashton: It is positive in terms of the general trend I think. I am pleased to hear in terms of the revised figure because that shows a general decline of the Selkirk one being within the range of a year to year fluctuation but the general trend is continuing and it is certainly one measure of the general success of changes that have been made in that area. I think it is something that should be watched fairly closely because clearly one of the goals in terms of mental health should be to limit the length of stay, both of long-term and short-term patients. I think that is absolutely key whether it be in terms of getting people back into the community in a monitored sense or getting people back into the community, period.

* (2120)

I would like to ask actually the Minister, he gave some comparative figures in terms of patient loads, various other figures, I would just like to ask what the situation is nationally, how we compare to other provinces in terms of length of stay for both long-term or short-term patients.

Mr. Orchard: We do not have those with us tonight and we will make the best effort to provide those, but again sometimes we have difficulty getting absolutely comparable institutional settings provincially or province to province but to the best we can—you want a comparison as to how Brandon and Selkirk would compare in less than a year's stay to other long-term facilities in other provinces. To give you an idea of what happens with the two institutions, the Brandon and Selkirk, compared to the hospitals, we have 45.6 at Brandon in the last fiscal year; 48.2 at Selkirk in terms of stays of less than a year averaging in those range, so say between 45 and 50 days.

The general hospital psychiatric units are quite dramatically lower with the Health Sciences Centre being 22.4 and Misericordia 29.7 days and Victoria 24.8 days. So I guess it is fair to say that there is an integration of service with the longer term people being placed for the average longer stay periods in Brandon and/or Selkirk.

The exception to that of course is Grace Hospital in Winnipeg where their stay is very much comparable to the institutions at 49.6, but their patient count includes psychogeriatric individuals who are significantly longer term stay people whereas the other three hospitals, Health Sciences, Misericordia and Victoria are not so.

Mr. Ashton: I appreciate those figures as well although obviously you are dealing with different patients, different clients if you will in terms of the needs, I think that is clearly a reason for the difference. The reason I am asking for the information for the national figures is just to get some sense of how we compare because obviously that is the other criteria we should be looking at.

I have a number of other questions. I know we are pressed for time in terms of Health Estimates so if the

Liberal Critic has some further questions I would be more than glad to hand the Estimates back over.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, could you pass the section 4.(g) and then we could go to 4.(h) and I have some questions there.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Helwer): Okay, we are on (g)(2) Other Expenditures, \$226,100—pass.

We will go on to item (h) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: provides specialized treatment to children and adolescents with psychiatric disorders in the community.

Item (1) Salaries \$776,800—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health tell us the number of practitioners providing mental health services to children throughout Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I can. In terms of psychiatric professional support we have a half-time psychiatrist in children's mental health at the Mental Health Division. We have eight psychiatrists on part-time contract at the Child Guidance Clinic and four psychiatrists on part-time contracts for children's forensic services.

In terms of community mental health workers for the child and adolescent area, Central region has two, one in Portage la Prairie and one in Morden; Eastman region has also two, one in Beausejour, one in Steinbach; the Interlake also has two, one in Selkirk, one in Stonewall; Norman region has two, one in The Pas and one in Flin Flon, and both of those are new recruits just as of this month. Parkland region has two, one in Dauphin and one in Swan River; Thompson region has one in Thompson, for a total of 11; and the Brandon Mental Health Centre has six.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, what is the average waiting period for a simple consultation in this area?

Mr. Orchard: I am informed that with the Regional Services throughout Manitoba it would be quite quick, very fast service, very fast investigation.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister maybe elaborate on what is the fast service in this area in terms of how many weeks would it take for someone to have a psychiatric assessment done for a child in Winnipeg as compared to Thompson and other northern communities?

Mr. Orchard: Pardon me, I am going to have to ask my honourable friend to repeat that because I was dealing with commission staff. We are not going to get to the commission tonight and I thought I would indicate to commission staff—we have half an hour, we could pass it.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I do not think we want to give this Minister the same opportunity he had last year. He was inexperienced and certainly my inexperience and I was between two of the most

experienced people in this House, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) and the Minister of Health. We ended up discussing most of the stuff in Manitoba Health and the Minister of Health ended up making that half an hour allegation at least 50 times in the House. I would certainly not give him that chance.

* (2130)

Mr. Orchard: I was only merely trying to be my usual co-operative self and make that offer because we did have a half an hour. It is fair to say that we are not going to get to the commission tonight.

Mr. Cheema: I will ask the Minister what will be the minimum period for a simple assessment for a child in Winnipeg as compared to Thompson or other northern communities.

Mr. Orchard: As I said earlier, the community mental health workers can provide very quick service outside of the City of Winnipeg and in terms of the psychiatric assessment that we have within Winnipeg, I am not sure whether we have current—how quickly, where can I find out—I am informed that it is within two days in Winnipeg.

Mr. Acting Chairman, one of the reasons why we have relatively quick access to service is the acute treatment and consultation team concept that we developed and of course the patient group that service is to be provided to are children and adolescents from infancy to 18 years and their families in the City of Winnipeg.

We have referrals to the acute treatment consultation team from parents, school systems, hospitals, Child and Family Services, doctors and group homes. The objectives of the team's work is to provide brief treatment to children and families and to provide consultation to other systems—schools, Child and Family Services, families and doctors, and to co-ordinate access to the most appropriate level of mental health intervention. I think that is the important key to the consultation team and to improve co-ordination of interventions provided by the Government departments and agencies, and to reduce the waiting time for children and families and to intervene quickly and provide brief treatment.

Staffing is five Ph.D. level clinical psychologists, one occupational therapist, two social workers, and an administrative staff support person. The team is currently undertaking to secure the services of a consulting psychiatrist as well. It commenced operation on October 10, 1989, just very recently, and by November, by early November, less than a month, the team had handled a total of 27 separate cases.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

They have been actively involved in a critical incident stress debriefing in Charleswood following a series of break-ins. It appears to be able to deliver on the quick and timely provision of service to reduce waiting lists. It is a significant improvement in service level, Mr. Chairman.

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Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, it is definitely an improvement as of last year. Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) indicate what the number of staff is dealing with the children at Health Sciences Centre, and how many vacancies are there right now? What is the impact of those vacancies on our teaching program?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I think we are going to have to—again we could have got into the commission tonight, because I cannot give those figures to you. We do not have them here tonight, but—oh my, maybe we do have. Do we have the vacancies though? All we have is the number of staff that have been in place, but I cannot give you the vacancies. We have one—in effect one and a half SYs in terms of child psychiatrists. We have one psychiatry resident, one psychologist, one occupational therapist, one social worker, one head nurse, seven nurses, seven EFTs and nurses, and two child care workers.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, that does not answer my question. I am simply asking the number of the children specialists dealing with psychiatry, because I think it is a major concern the number of the staff is at the lowest. There is one individual who left a few months ago, and that could have impact on the teaching program, especially when the recertification is coming in early 1990. If the Minister does not have the information now, maybe he could provide me when the Manitoba Health Services Commission comes.

Mr. Orchard: I am informed that we do have an individual replacing the psychiatrist that left.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, is the Minister saying that we have an adequate number of staff at Children's Hospital and in the Department of Psychiatry to deal with all the caseload and also have the staff of the Child Guidance Clinic, along with providing all the consultation services to the rest of Manitoba? Do we have an adequate number of staff?

Mr. Orchard: I guess that is an issue that has been before us, and any answer I give will not satisfy my honourable friend, but what we are attempting to do is work—and there has been a significant amount of co-operation between St. Boniface and the Health Sciences Centre to attempt to assist whilst efforts are made to enhance the service delivery capabilities.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, all that assurance would satisfy the recertification by the Royal College.

Mr. Orchard: I do not know what it is going to take to satisfy the Royal College, but these—certifications, is it not called?—recertifications are part of the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface's day-to-day living, if you will. They have in the vast majority of instances succeeded in meeting the requirements of the Royal College, and I would anticipate, hope and expect they will be able to continue to do that exclusive of this issue.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, the Minister earlier had given a statement, and that could answer a number

of questions such as the training for the community health workers for children at Ellice Centre. If that is being done, I would certainly be satisfied with that.

Can the Minister of Health tell us how many new initiative programs have been started to deal with the sexual abuse problem, because that was made a concern in the media for the last few months?

Mr. Orchard: Let me answer the first question my honourable friend had first. There is a six-month mandatory training period prior to certification and employment in the field of child and adolescent psychiatric services for the staff.

As we discussed earlier on this afternoon, the issue of sexual abuse is one that was brought to regional meetings by the regional co-ordinators as an issue that there is growing focus on, concern about and activity in at the regional level, and I would suspect a more pro-active involvement of regional staff in working with school divisions and family services in the regions.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Kildonan—pass. Item 4.(h)(2) Other Expenditures \$161,200—pass.

Item 4.(j) Brandon Mental Health Centre: Provides institutional care and treatment for mentally ill persons. 4.(j)(1) Salaries \$16,682,500.00. Shall the item pass—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, we have discussed the clinic component of both the Brandon and the Selkirk Centre earlier today and on last Friday. We have questions on the issue of non-clinical component.

Can the Minister of Health tell us how many positions are vacant in each and every category at Selkirk Mental Health Centre?

* (2140)

Mr. Orchard: These figures were as of September and there has been some hiring into positions since that time.

I will give you the vacancies as of September some of them hired into. There were -(interjection)- Oh, I cannot give you a photocopy of this, this is top secret.

Of 15 medical staff we have four vacancies; of 313 nursing staff we have five vacancies; of resource services, which include dietary, laundry, housekeeping, et cetera, of 106 positions we have four vacancies; in administrative support of 37 we have two and a half, or two years and 26 weeks, so that is two and a half; of 21 and a half positions in clinical records we have one vacancy. That is it, for a total of 16 and a half vacancies out of a complement of 613 and a half, and that is at Brandon. As I say, some of those have been hired, that was as of September.

Now let me give you Selkirk. Do you want the individual, where they are? -(interjection)- Pardon me? The same as I did before?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Orchard: Okay.

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Of medical, we have five vacancies out of a complement of 12 and a half; of 245 in nursing, including the school of nursing, four and a half vacancies; one vacancy in seven in psychology; 17 in occupational therapy, one vacant; 79 in resource services, the dietary, laundry, et cetera, one vacancy; one vacancy of 16 in clinical records; and in administrative support we have 25 as a complement with one vacancy. So there are 14 and a half vacancies out of a complement of 451 and a half.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, maybe the Minister can give us, again, a preview of tomorrow's Capital Expenditure. There was a proposal to construct a 100-bed special psychogeriatric unit at Selkirk. Is that proposal being considered for this year?

Mr. Orchard: I do not know how to handle this. My honourable friend keeps wanting these sneak previews.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: I asked the Minister of Health a question.

Mr. Orchard: I intended to deal with the Capital Estimates when we hit the Manitoba Health Services Commission. I sort of want to follow my honourable friend's advice that we follow this line by line.

Mr. Cheema: I think I have failed to convince the Minister of Health that he should probably give the good news this evening, but I think we will wait till tomorrow.

Last year there was speculation and certainly a lot of fear among the School of Nursing at Selkirk. Can the Minister of Health tell us whether the School of Nursing will continue to exist?

Mr. Orchard: That is the case, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Cheema: If we remember correctly, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) made some remarks during the discussion last year, and at that time he was not sure. This year certainly he has changed his mind, and that is positive, because I think the School of Nursing is providing a valuable service. I think the Minister deserves credit to change his mind, and certainly we welcome that.

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend is taking liberal—liberty with my personal reputation here.

An Honourable Member: Liberal liberties, that is bad. Liberties is bad enough, but a Liberal liberty, that is the worst type of liberty.

Mr. Orchard: Liberal liberty is the worst kind. I simply want to tell my honourable friend the question was—and my honourable friend ought to know it, because he sat beside the questioner—was there a review of the psychiatric school of nursing ongoing? Yes there was as there had been for the previous four budget cycles.

As I indicated to my honourable friend then, there were no designs to close the school of nursing, as the rumour mill was rampantly grinding out in Selkirk and in the hallowed halls of the Liberal Caucus room. I simply indicate the same exists as I speak to my honourable friend today.

What we have succeeded in doing is to—because everything is dynamic in health care in terms of the training, and the demands on staff and their roles in the system, and psychiatric nursing is no different. Bear in mind, and my honourable friend knows this, that when you go east of this province—am I not correct—east of this province there are no registered psychiatric nurses. It is a western phenomenon and I think quite a good one. I think the registered psychiatric nurse has filled a very valued role in mental health services.

In the changing context of reform of the mental health system, new challenges, new goals, new requirements on staff are going to become a reality. To attempt to meet that future, years down the road, we have a psychiatric nursing working group struck involving the association, members of the department and both schools of nursing, in the Brandon University Department of Nursing and Health Studies, and the Canadian Mental Health Association, to take a look at what the future role of the registered psychiatric nurse ought to be in terms of meeting current and future challenges and to examine whether their educational preparation appropriately prepares them to meet those current and future challenges.

That study group is very much actively pursuing that investigation and are directed to report to myself and to the Registered Psychiatric Nursing Association of Manitoba's Board of Directors, because the association, as you can expect, is very highly involved in that kind of a discussion.

The training at Selkirk and Brandon are ongoing components, but we are investigating with the RPN, as an association, what the future ought to hold, what the future ought to look for. I think that is a progressive, co-operative move with the association to maintain Manitoba's leadership in terms of registered psychiatric training and training to meet potential challenges and goals in the future.

We are enjoying support from the RPNAM, and I look forward to their eventual report to myself and to their board.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I certainly thank the Minister for that answer.

I think the role of the RPNs and all other professions in the changing mental health system in Manitoba is going to be very crucial, and we will have to use all the resources possible and in the best economic sense and also in the best academic way. I think if it is done in the way this department is dealing, it is certainly moving in the right direction.

My final question about Selkirk hospital is: what is the status of day care hospital at Selkirk? Last year there was concern expressed and there were some deficiencies in terms of the availability of staff. Can the Minister update the information on the day hospital?

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Mr. Orchard: Is my honourable friend referring to the proposal by the Selkirk General Hospital in terms of the day hospital proposal? You are not referring to the Selkirk Mental Health Institution?

Mr. Cheema: The Selkirk Mental Health Institution.

Mr. Orchard: There are six patients at any given time on the program at the Mental Health centre.

* (2150)

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I have repeatedly asked this question about psychogeriatric delivery outside Winnipeg. Can the Minister tell us, what is their plan, not only in Selkirk and Brandon but the other places, to expand the delivery of mental health for elderly people and especially to have inpatient assessment units?

I think tomorrow the Minister should give us good news about the Dauphin Hospital, so he can probably go there and make an announcement about the expansion of the Dauphin General Hospital and to make accommodation for the geriatric day care hospital there.

Mr. Orchard: How much time do you want to spend on this, because I have a lot of resource that I can share with my honourable friend?

Mr. Cheema: If you could give me a photocopy that would be fine.

Mr. Orchard: This is kind of top-secret stuff again.

Mr. Cheema: It is open Government, it should be open.

Mr. Orchard: Gulzar, you have been hitting me pretty hard tonight, and I am not as nice as I used to be.

As part of the reorganization, we have piloted a psychogeriatric project in central Manitoba. We do have that, and I am looking for the right—yes, here we are. The system commenced operations mid-October 1989, and the staffing involved one registered psychiatric nurse, one social worker. We have on staff a half-time clerical position, and we are recruiting four part-time positions for occupational therapy. We also have a consulting geriatrician and psychiatrist identified to assist us with that program.

Basically, it is targeted at a group of individuals who experienced the first onset of mental illness at the age of 65 or over in the central region. What we are attempting to do is prove the efficacy of such a multidisciplinary team in providing early identification, support and assistance so psychogeriatric patients will not be underserved and then have to rely on the more formal institutional setting for a higher cost level of service.

We think this will be effective in assisting families, staff and others in understanding the problem and in assisting with providing support in the community.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I do not have further questions, I just want to put a few remarks on the record before we end the mental health area.

Certainly, we had a very open discussion, and a number of initiatives have been started by this administration. They are very positive, and certainly we encourage the Minister. We will support him in his way of performing the Manitoba Health care system, and certainly the people of Manitoba will appreciate it in years to come, I think, what is being done.

I want to express my sincere thanks for the Executive Director, Marg Watson, if I have pronounced it in the right way, and I wish her the best of luck. I think she is doing more than expected from any executive director in any department, and especially when we are forming a system. The responsibility is a difficult task, and certainly I think she is not giving any excuse to have a Minister say, well, things are not being properly done. I think she is doing an excellent job and her staff needs the appreciation. We want to thank them for coming over, listening to me and listening to all of us, and certainly that will be helpful. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—pass; 4.(j)(2) Other Expenditures \$1,836,400—pass; 4.(k) Selkirk Mental Health Centre: Provides institutional care and treatment for mentally ill persons, 4.(k)(1) Salaries \$14,200,800—pass; 4.(k)(2) Other Expenditures \$2,079,500—pass.

Resolution 68. RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$40,609,900 for Health for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990—pass. The Honourable Minister.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I did not take the opportunity to thank my honourable friend from Kildonan for his compliments, because he has been very precise in his analysis and particularly in his last statement that we have had some monumental dedication within the Mental Health Division under this reform effort. I had mentioned that several times.

Individuals, Marg Watson, others have put in a substantial amount of time in attempting to bring about reform of the system. They have brought new programs to the people of Manitoba that will serve us well. They have gone above and beyond in terms of provision of Mental Health Support Services in Lynn Lake, and truly they are doing a remarkable job. I thank my honourable friend for his recognition of that.

Mr. Chairman: The hour being 9:56, what is the will of the committee? The Honourable Minister.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, possibly with my two honourable friends here, since things have gone so well tonight, could I just give it to my honourable friend, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema)? That would not be balanced, would it?

I will tell you what, I thought we would get to the commission tonight, and if my honourable friends wish, I could leave them with a copy of the capital report so that we can get to the commission tomorrow. Would that be appropriate? I will see what I can find.

Mr. Chairman: Committee rise.

SUPPLY—WORKERS COMPENSATION

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): The committee will come to order to begin consideration of the Estimates of the Department of the Environment on page 46.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Chairman, I believe we passed the Minister's Salary already, so we are out of order dealing with the Minister's. We plan on dealing with a number of policy issues, but we plan on dealing with those policy issues dealing with Workers Compensation in the legislation the Minister has before the Chamber, which is appropriate, and at the committee dealing with legislation that the Minister has forward. We plan on dealing with those issues there, and I think the Liberals plan that as well.

You could do all those issues under that legislation because that legislation is an omnibus Bill dealing with all the workings of Workers Compensation, and it allows us the latitude, the debating latitude, probably even more so than even -(interjection)- Yes, so we plan on doing it in the legislation. Okay?

Mr. Chairman: So it is the will of the committee to pass the Workers Compensation basically.

Mr. Doer: It is already passed, you do not have to do anything. No lines, done. Call in the Department of the Environment.

SUPPLY—ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): Is it the will of the committee to take a 10-minute recess while we are awaiting the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings)?

* (2010)

RECESS

Mr. Chairman: The committee will come to order to begin consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Environment. We will ask the Honourable Minister for an opening statement.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Chairman, I have copies of my remarks for my critics. I apologize for the little bit of delay that I have created at the start of these Estimates.

* (2020)

Since the department last appeared before this committee, Mr. Chairman, there have been several substantive changes. Effective April 21 of this fiscal year, the Manitoba Environment became a stand-alone department dedicated to protection and promotion of the environment. This change emphasizes the Government's commitment to the environment and, as will be indicated later in this presentation, the Government's commitment is not just represented by words, but it is supported by a significant increase in

resources, along with the development of a comprehensive plan respecting the strengthening and the reorganization of programs and activities which the department will be putting into place during this fiscal year.

I believe, and I am certain that I am supported by Members of this committee, that concern for the environment has gone beyond provincial and national boundaries, taken on an international significance. I only need to refer to issues such as ozone, greenhouse effect, the ongoing concerns and problems encountered respecting toxic hazardous wastes and the city's drinking water.

Clearly Government must be prepared to take forceful action if the environment is to be protected and enhanced. Directly linked to addressing these environmental issues plus others is the whole sustainable development thrust that is presently in the forefront of public policy. Sustainable development, which is strongly supported by this Government, seems pivotal in protecting the environment to the use of future generations. The economy and environment linkage is critical if mankind is to survive on this planet, Mr. Chairman.

I would hasten to add that the direct impacts of sustainable development initiative will not, in the strictest sense, be immediately felt. It is going to take some time for the concept to take hold and grow and become a routine part of economic environmental decision-making.

Before getting into the details of my presentation I do wish to indicate to Members, the department has again prepared Supplementary Information for Legislative Review related to these Estimates. I believe all Members have received a copy of this information, and I would hope that this information will assist Members in the review of my department's Estimates.

I wish to send my thanks to departmental staff, as well as the organization members of the public that relate to the department who participate in an ongoing basis on the programs that we deliver.

I now wish to describe in some detail the integrated strategy the department has developed on environmental issues which will be implemented over the next two fiscal years.

As Members are aware, the new Environment Act was proclaimed effective March 31. One of the requirements of that Act calls for the preparation and presentation of a State of the Environment Report. The department is currently undertaking the necessary planning to satisfy this legislative agreement, and as a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, only this afternoon I was briefed on the outline and who will be authoring this legislative requirement.

Additionally, under The Environment Act the department intends to provide or increased monitoring of environmental quality. With respect to the State of the Environment Report and the increased monitoring activities, I will provide details shortly on the resources that were added to these initiatives.

As was indicated during the Throne speech, the department intends to proceed with an amendment to

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The Environment Act to provide for greater penalties for those convicted of non-compliance.

This Bill has now been tabled, and I look forward to the co-operation of Members opposite to ensure it becomes law before the end of the Session.

Additionally, regulatory changes will occur in several areas. Specifically, marine discharges into the water will be addressed and municipal landfill regulation will be amended. With respect to the second major piece of legislation the department is responsible for administering, that is, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act, it is our intention to proclaim very shortly Sections 8 and 10 which deal specifically with the licensing procedures relative to handlers of licenseable hazardous waste, licensing respecting the transport of hazardous waste, the licensing of disposal facilities and the process that will be required for licensing to occur.

In addition, under this Act the department has committed additional resource to better facilitate emergency response by the department to make that process more visible to the public. It is our intention, with the co-operation and financial participation of the Government of Canada, to establish a youth employment program which focuses on environment and environmental projects.

Although details are not yet developed to the point where I can make an announcement, I do wish to indicate that I see this as an important link to an overall environmental strategy. With respect to the area of hazardous waste, Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corp is aggressively proceeding with the siting process. They will determine a suitable site for an eventual hazardous waste management facility.

Concurrent with the siting process is the development of an effective hazardous waste management system within the province. This includes aspects such as the manifest system, consideration to establish collection points throughout Manitoba for hazardous waste and undertaking actual hazardous waste disposal activities.

Another significant initiative is the whole area of recycling. A number of activities will occur in this regard. Firstly, it is our intention to introduce and pass recycling legislation this Session which clearly spells out our intentions. A comprehensive Bill, the first of its kind in Canada, has been introduced, Mr. Chairman, and I expect that we will have great public interest in this legislation when it goes through the House. I anticipate there will be more than one group which will wish to address us at the committee stage. I know from private conversations with many of you that this is an area of active interest. I look forward to successful discussion in this legislature and the co-operation to ensure that it becomes law in the not-too-distant future.

I would also point out the discussion document says recycling is now the time. Additionally, the department will be working aggressively with various interest groups in the province to commence the establishment of many recycling initiatives. To fund these initiatives we are exploring the establishment of a self-sustained fund

which will be forwarded by way of a predisposition fee attached to certain products—pardon me, it should say “be funded by way of a predisposition fee,” Mr. Chairman.

I believe this is consistent with one of our key principles, and that is that polluters should pay. This funding will be used to fund various recycling projects undertaken within the province, and I believe this is a unique approach within Canada.

Proposed legislation on recycling will incorporate the principles on which our recycling initiatives will proceed and will commit the Government to develop and be accountable for a waste reduction strategy. As well, it will highlight the environmental innovation fund referred to earlier. In addition, I originally appointed a Recycling Action Committee to not only advise us on the components of our recycling initiatives but also to assist with the delivery of some of them.

A major conference in March 1990 will provide a full component for developing a comprehensive strategy which will be implemented. Projects currently under development include the Bag Curbside Collection Project, the Establishment of Composting Project and many other projects as the recycling initiative unfolds.

Another area of consideration with respect to recycling relates to procurement. Well, Government alone cannot make significant inroads in this area without the public doing the same, and it is our intention as a Government to encourage the purchase of recyclable and recycled products in this province. Those products could include paper and oil.

As related to recycling and waste production, we have seen the creation of a new and unique organization known as ACRE, Association for a Clean Rural Environment. This organization represents an experiment in sustainable development that I know will be the subject of some discussion during these Estimates.

To increase the public awareness and understanding of environmental issues related to rural Manitoba and to this end sponsor research, education, and public participation of rural environmental issues, co-ordinate the funding and management of specific environmental programs as may be assigned to it by the Government or by the board of directors, it will not be a Crown corporation. It will be a non-profit organization. It is based on the notion that if we get together, the people and the institutions will share responsibility for the problem. Given authority and resources, they are likely to come up with a lasting solution.

The first matter to be dealt with by ACRE will be disposable pesticide containers. The third key strategy area our department is embarking on over the course of the next two years deals with the production of our air, water and land resources. It is our intention to enhance it and ensure compliance with transboundary agreements that we have with some of our neighbouring jurisdictions.

I wish to again emphasize a significant concern that Manitoba has with respect to a proposed mine development at Shoal Lake. It will continue to be our

policy to insist that if any development is to be considered in the basin it would be preceded by the most thorough and rigorous assessment possible. Under no circumstances will we tolerate any development that could have negative consequences on the City of Winnipeg's water supply. We will be putting forward our most innovative proposal for the long-term protection of Shoal Lake water quality.

In regard to acid rain, we are continuing our monitoring efforts. We could also continue the enforcement of the regulation that was passed in March 1988 with respect to emissions from HBM&S and the Inco operation in northern Manitoba. It is still our intention to comply with the acid rain reduction program that has been agreed to in 1985.

As well I would indicate to Members that we have entered into a federal-provincial Water Quality Monitoring Agreement with the Government of Canada. Under this agreement the resources of both Manitoba and Canada will be co-ordinated to maximize the benefits achieved from water monitoring activities.

The protection of our air depletion of the ozone layer continues to be of major concern both now and the future. Something must be done or in the long term our planet would suffer severe consequences. While Manitoba represents 2 percent of Canada's share of global emissions, it is imperative that we start somewhere. The department is actively working with other provinces and other environmental organizations to ensure a co-ordinated effort.

It is our intention to introduce legislation dealing with the protection of the ozone layer. In this program we intend to address the prohibition of products that are major contributors to the problem. As well, we intend to implement a public information program to better inform the public. We will also be exploring the feasibility of a demonstration project on safe recapture and recycling of CFCs.

Finally, in this area the matter of radon will be addressed. Although radon is a naturally occurring problem, I believe again there are some steps in Manitoba that we can take which will assist in alleviating the effects of the problem.

In this regard it is the Government's intention to amend the existing building codes to ensure proper sealing of new homes to prevent the migration of radon into homes. That is being done in co-operation with my fellow Ministers. As well, it is our intention to provide information to the public in order that they might be in a position to properly judge the situation with respect to their personal status and take appropriate corrective steps. It is our intent to ensure the testing industry stays squeaky clean and that no fly-by-night operators are allowed in this area.

On the basis of all the initiative actions I have just addressed, I hope all Members would agree the best way to proceed to deal with the environment is to take certain specific concrete actions. Frankly, I believe the activities I have just outlined speak for themselves. Perhaps the best way to sum it up is to say that not just words but we believe we have lots of action.

* (2030)

In a related vein, looking at the ambitious mandate the department has set for itself for the next two years, I would like to make Members aware the department has undertaken, with the assistance of an external consultant, a major review of the department's organization. With the new legislation being brought into being within the past few years coupled with the continually changing and complex environmental issues the Government is required to deal with, and the department particularly, I believe it is timely that the organization of the department be reviewed to ensure that it is properly structured to respond and deal with issues at hand.

It is expected the results of this reorganization review will be completed and in place in the next few months. I wish to provide some information to Members respecting the resourcing related to the activities that I just described. I am pleased to advise them that in support of the ambitious mandate for the department there will be a significant increase in departmental resources.

Overall the resource increase for the '89-90 fiscal year amounts to 14 additional positions plus an excess of \$1 million in additional funding.

With respect to resource particulars, although we will be addressing these in detail as we carry on with the detailed review of these Estimates, I would summarize the increases in this manner: eight positions plus some \$300,000 in funding have been allocated towards Sections 8 and 10 of Dangerous Goods. When these sections are proclaimed, that will come into place. Significantly these positions will address the assessment and licensing of hazardous waste management facilities, assessment and licensing of transporters of dangerous goods, the monitoring of hazardous waste by way of the manifest system, and through the provision of additional human resources to support our in-emergency response function. As well, the staff will be involved in the assessment and licensing of hazardous waste generators.

To put some scope on what this means, we estimate there are some 2,000 generators within the Province of Manitoba that will require assessment and licensing. Some \$70,000 in new funding will be devoted towards the department's emergency response activity. These areas that will be covered through this funding include funding to provide for payment of costs incurred in the clean-up of environmental accidents or spills, funding to provide better emergency response training for our staff, and thirdly, funding to provide additional equipment for the emergency response staff, for example, personnel safety equipment.

With respect to the administration of The Environment Act, four additional positions have been approved along with funding in the amount of \$150,000.00. These positions will be devoted to the following areas: dealing with water related concerns as these relate to the City of Winnipeg; specifically addressing licensing requirements for drainage out falls; and private facilities in three major waste water treatment plants. Though it is expected the licensing activity will take some time

to be accomplished by the department, the department will be working closely with the City of Winnipeg officials to ensure that this process is carried out to the best advantage of the environment.

An additional position has been approved to permit the department to continue with its classification of watershed activities. This process involves identification of water usage for all bodies of water within a watershed, determination of existing water quality and proposed objectives, holding public hearings to develop a plan, and developing discharge units to ensure long-term water quality protection. It is expected that this additional staff and an additional one to two classifications a year will be possible. As referred to earlier, the department now has a legislative requirement for a state of the environment report.

One additional position related to the water quality aspect and state of the environment reporting has been added to our staffing complement. This position will also relate to the previously reinforced Canada-Manitoba Water Quality Monitoring Agreement.

The last position approved in The Environment Act relates to the inspection, monitoring and enforcement of existing licences relative to industrial waste water discharges. As well, this position will deal with the assessment and licensing of new developments.

To support our ambitious public education communication initiatives an additional position has been added to the department's community relations branch. This position will be involved very extensively in the preparation of public information materials and participating in the development of educational curriculum material, and in general support the expected expanded information requirements associated with The Environment Act, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act.

The final additional position approved relates to the carrying out of an ecological monitoring project which is required under the Northern Flood Agreement. Although this project is funded through the Department of Northern Affairs, because the Department of Environment has the expertise to oversee this project, responsibility for delivery rests with us.

On a more general note, I wish to recognize the continuing contribution on a number of other activities made to the protection and maintenance of our environment. Worthy of mention is public health inspection activity, water air terrestrial quality monitoring, and laboratory analysis services provided by W. M. Ward Technical Services Laboratory. All of these efforts collectively are critical if we are to maintain the type of environment that we presently have.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks and I would be prepared to work with my critics to go through these Estimates, and once again I wish to apologize for my late arrival.

Mr. Chairman: I will now ask each of the critics to make their opening statements.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Minister for his

statement. I am sure this is recyclable paper he is handing out to us tonight.

An Honourable Member: I would hope so.

Mr. Doer: Would I assume correctly? I thought so, although I note he is reading from non-recyclable paper on his own notes.

Mr. Chairman, it is indeed a pleasure to rise on the Estimates of the Environment, probably the most important set of Estimates in this Chamber of all the Estimates this year.

I want to make some very, very pointed comments about the Environment Estimates. First of all, we believe that the Minister, present in the House today, is a Minister who is much more able to deal with the full environmental issues than we had before us previously. We believe that it is a very serious subject and the previous Minister just did not have a grasp on the issues, nothing personal quite frankly, but we often felt that his running of the Department of Environment was consistent with his first statement on the environment.

Do you not recall when the former Minister stated, oh, the Department of Environment, it just runs itself, just put it on automatic pilot, it just runs itself? The Department of Environment does not run itself. We will make very specific comments on the items that have been raised by the Minister. I do say to this Minister as it was very extensive introductory remarks that he provided to this Chamber, and we may disagree with what he is dealing with and how he is dealing with it, but at least we will acknowledge that this Minister has a tremendous amount of items on the agenda of the Department of Environment.

Therefore, we take very seriously his comments and will debate what the Government is doing and how it is doing it. I do applaud the ambitious agenda that is before us because it is certainly loaded with issues that by definition we will disagree with. Nevertheless it is a totally diametrically different approach to the environment than we received last year with this sort of automatic pilot approach to the environment, which proved to be a great deal of political difficulty for the Government last year, and therefore there were changes made by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) quite appropriately so in the stewardship of a very, very difficult, complicated and publicly important department.

We think the Government has a very lengthy agenda. I think that the term sustainable development has been misused by the Government. It has been more development and less sustainable when we proceed through the environmental issues. There is a number of major litmus tests in terms of whether this Government believes in environmental protection or whether it believes in just using public relations terms and sustainable rhetoric rather than really sustainable development.

I suggest to you when we look at every major environmental issue and we are able to take -(inaudible)-sustainable and development that this Government has proceeded in a way that has been more consistent with the development side of that equation, not the

sustainable side, I am afraid to say. I think that will change over time and I think the Minister will have some influence in his department, but I think that we have to look through the major issues.

An Honourable Member: What about Rafferty?

Mr. Doer: Rafferty-Alameda is the first one. It is obviously a major issue of environmental protection for the citizens of Manitoba. I thought the position that the Member for Lakeside, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) took in the public hearings, not only did we applaud the Ministers, we came out publicly. We came out publicly and said, yes, right on, an independent full federal Environmental Impact Study.

An Honourable Member: Our strategy worked, did it not?

* (2040)

Mr. Doer: We did not find any reason to be negative about the positions of the Government. When they came out, I believe the Member for Lakeside, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), came out in the community of Souris, and then the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) came out in Brandon—it may have been reversed—they took tremendously positive positions urging the federal Environmental Impact Study to be quite independent and quite extensive and, yes, let us have sustainable development, but let us make sure it is sustainable to begin with.

I thought that was a major departure from the position of the former Minister of Natural Resources and the former Minister of the Environment. We said so publicly. We went on record and we did not quit, but as soon as the court decision came out and the Government immediately changed their position we did not pick around and say—we did not even use the word flip-flop—we said, right on. This is very, very positive. Then I was absolutely shocked and I do not want to be cynical, but I watched the First Minister go down to a meeting in Quebec. I know he probably spent a little time with the Premier of Saskatchewan. I knew the Conservative convention was taking place the weekend after. I know that the Prime Minister met with the Premier of Manitoba that same weekend, it was reported after that. Then all of a sudden we have another conversion on the way to Damascus, but the other way.

We have another when Lucien Bouchard, one of the famous Bouchard brothers, one of the famous brothers that is destroying western Canada, Lucien and the other one—

An Honourable Member: Benoit.

Mr. Doer: Benoit. They sometimes threaten us that if Meech Lake is not passed they are going to leave federal politics and go back to Quebec. I cannot think of a better reason than to defeat Meech Lake. That is probably—I guess this issue is too serious to make light of it. If they ever gave us a reason to defeat it—one guy ruins our railway and the other guy ruins the

environment—I cannot think of a better reason. If they think that scares Manitobans, they sure have the wrong track. Of course, they have gone to their second strategy and that is to send out a senator to talk about Senate reform.

I was very disappointed when the Minister came—first of all he went to Saskatchewan, the federal Minister, and tabled those documents. He tabled those documents at a press conference. About four seconds after the lights went on for the press conference the bulldozers were already running in Estevan and into that project. I do not know, maybe I am naive, but it sounds to me as if those people knew what was going to happen. I think those people knew what was going to happen. The cats were rolling. Now I am not against the cats rolling into the valley for this project for development. I am opposed to it rolling before we know.

An Honourable Member: . . . rode the 600.

Mr. Doer: That is right. Cannons to the left of them, cannons to the right of us, onward, onward, onward rode the 600—the NDP theme song.

Those bulldozers started rolling and it was very happy days in Saskatchewan. The Premier of Saskatchewan was at this happy day press conference with Lucien Bouchard, then he came to Manitoba and tabled those same documents an hour and a half, two hours later. I was very disappointed because I think this is a really important issue. I read the licence. I read the documents. The documents definitely stated, definitely proceeded from the environmental impact that we indeed do not know the effect on the water quality on the Rafferty-Alameda project on downstream water in Manitoba.

They also said and the Minister knows this, we do not know the sections on water quantity. If you look at the technical report that was released by the former Minister of Natural Resources and read appendix 7, page 7, it is not hard to understand why the Government could not predict what was going to happen with the Rafferty-Alameda Dam. In that section they clearly have tremendous technical difficulty identifying the water flow to Manitoba.

We have the same position on the Rafferty-Alameda Dam as we had in the emergency debate last year. Let us have this go to the environmental court. Let us have the proponents of the project put their position on the table. I do not know whether they are right or wrong. I have heard people say this is going to be great for the Souris River and the Souris River valley. Let us have people that are opposed to it put the data on the table and let us have an independent judgment. Let us know in the sustainable areas where the water quality and water quantity will be.

We were given a licence that I think is not only negative for the Rafferty-Alameda Dam, but I think causes tremendous difficulty for the morality of our environmental position with other provinces down the road. I am citing from memory now, the conditions of the licence that were provided. Conditions 5, 6, and 7, I believe, maybe 5 and 6, maybe 6 and 7 of that licence said the federal Government and the provincial

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Government shall determine the water quality objectives in consultation with Manitoba.

I have read a lot of legal documents and negotiated about 350 collective agreements—

An Honourable Member: Not 350, more like 300.

Mr. Doer: Well 300, 350, I should count that someday. There may even be more than 350, I cannot remember. It was over 200 and under 500.

I do know conditions of that licence. Every one achieved without a strike. The Minister, and I respect the Minister, stated—he is a good guy, he has a tough job, and I do not want to put the kiss of death on him.

The licence states, “may” and in consultation with the Province of Manitoba. That is not a determining authority for water quality. We do not have any water quality authority in the Agreement. Oh, yes, we will have wishy-washy monitoring committees, and we will have downstream studies, and we will have this, and we will have that. These are very important issues and we are not going to rush, I am sorry.

These are very important issues and we do not have any downstream water quality protection in that licence. I defy anybody to show me in black and white in that licence where Manitoba has legal authority to protect its water quality. That is going to be a tremendous problem down the road.

How do you argue one way with the Tory Government in Ottawa and a Tory Government in Saskatchewan and then try, later on if we get into a dispute, and I hope we do not—I hope we get satisfaction from the Government of Ontario. I hope we do have downstream water quality protection from Shoal Lake to Winnipeg, but I suggest to you that this Minister, by changing the position they took going to court and asking for an independent environmental impact study, has lost the moral precedent in terms of downstream water effect because you cannot argue one way with a Liberal Government in Ontario and try to argue another way with a Conservative Government in Saskatchewan, given the fact that we have already agreed to the licence.

I say we are disappointed. We will continue to criticize and disagree with the conditions of the licence and the fact that the Government has not joined other environmental groups in asking for what we are entitled to, a full and independent environmental impact study, as the technical documents that Lucien Bouchard tabled in Manitoba really recommend.

* (2050)

Second, the Minister has letters from all political Parties I believe on Repap. It would be interesting to table the letters for the various political Parties, because I have not read the—I have read our letter on Repap in August of this year I believe, or early September

An Honourable Member: An historic reading? You could start reading it again, you know.

Mr. Doer: I know that the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) keeps raising it, but I would like to know what

letter Sharon Carstairs sent to the Minister dealing with Repap. Did it take this piecemeal approach?

An Honourable Member: The hindsight environmentalists are at it again.

Mr. Doer: Yes, well, I got rid of the City of Winnipeg exemption, contrary to the gang in '19, when I was Minister of Urban Affairs. I do not need any lecture from the old gang of '19 in here. You see the gang the Liberal—did you see the Liberal gang going on this week?

The Minister tabled a little study going on with the waste disposal sites, and who was the first one that attacked them? The Liberals at City Hall. Chris Lorenc was the first one out there attacking the Tories. I supported the Minister in licensing those sewage treatment sites, but it was the Liberals at City Hall—you know, the Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) always says to us, pick up the phone and talk to your federal Leader. Pick up the phone and talk to Brian Mulroney.

If I was the Minister of Environment, everytime the Liberals asked me a question about City of Winnipeg environment issues, I would ask them to pick up the phone and talk to Ernie Gilroy, Sharon Carstairs' campaign manager, pick up the phone and talk to Chris Lorenc. Pick up the phone and talk to Christine McKee—all those Liberals now that control City Hall. I will tell you, the Liberals are going to have to be pretty silent on City of Winnipeg environmental issues because they are talking out of both sides of their mouth, one way in this Chamber, and one way in the City Council seat.

An Honourable Member: They have been taking lessons from you.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Chairman, I will table my letter any day. I want to see the Member for Wolseley's (Mr. Taylor) letter on Repap because I think that is the second litmus test. It is not that popular in The Pas as you know.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Doer: Let me finish. It is not that popular in The Pas to say to people, we believe that we should have a full environmental impact study of the first phase, the second phase, and the forestry management stage together. When you say that in The Pas you are not that popular. When you say that to the unions and the workers and the families, it is not that popular.

I have done that in The Pas and I am not that popular, but you cannot say one thing to the Government about Rafferty-Alameda and say another thing in The Pas because you are worried about losing a few votes on the environment.

An Honourable Member: No, you did not say the same thing.

Mr. Doer: No, Mr. Chairman, we did say the same thing in both communities, and the Minister knows that

because the Minister has our letters. You have our letter. I am sure you have read it.

I am pleased that the development has been slowed down and I am pleased to see that Repap, as a corporate management decision, realizes that sustainable development also means sustainable. I am pleased that Repap, and the Clean Environment Commission did not rubber-stamp it quickly because it was a very important environmental issue and Phase 1, Phase 2 and the Forestry Management Issues should be considered together. I do not know where the Government is going with that.

I do not know where they are going with it, but they will have our support for a totally comprehensive review prior to the construction stages proceeding even though it may be in the short run unpleasant, because in the medium run it is sustainable development to do it that way. To do otherwise is to again make mockery of our speech from the Throne and to make a mockery, quite frankly, of the Minister's own statement in this Chamber.

Sustainable development is actually doing it Repap's way, not the way it was first planned, Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3 in separate environmental stages.

Dealing with The City of Winnipeg Act, I was pleased to see the Minister point out The City of Winnipeg Act was proclaimed effective March 31, 1988. Now the Minister and I have had some disagreements about The City of Winnipeg Act, The Environment Act for the City of Winnipeg, and today I noticed just almost minutes before Estimates that the Charleswood bridge project is going to be evaluated with an independent environmental impact study, not an independent environmental impact study. It is going to be conducted by the City of Winnipeg, consistent with The Environment Act of the province.

An Honourable Member: The city is doing it?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Chairman, am I surprised? No. I tabled two legal opinions in this Chamber that said that was required. I think that if the Minister reads back Hansard he kind of cuffed me like a neophyte bear cub in terms of that recommendation.

An Honourable Member: Just your approach, Gary, it was nothing personal.

Mr. Doer: No it was not personal but quite frankly we asked the Minister what authority he had to go without an environmental impact study consistent with the Act with the bridge. We asked him a lot of other questions; the snow in the rivers; the disposal of sewage into the rivers; and the sewage treatment sites. The city is doing it but it is closer to meeting the legal requirement. It is not what I would like. I would like the province to do it because the city is a proponent of the project and -(interjection)- The money is not in the capital budget yet, any group that approves something can disapprove something.

Mr. Chairman, why did we have to wait until the kind of last minutes before the Minister was presenting his Estimates—

An Honourable Member: I was not supposed to be in here tonight.

Mr. Doer: You were not supposed to be here tonight—we are getting a little worried about the way the Minister is issuing these statements and press releases. He has a reputation of being an honest person and straightforward. We disagree with the Minister on a lot of issues, but I am getting a little worried that you may be getting too controlled by the Premier's control office down there, the public relations Pravda for working for the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

I notice a press release dealing with snow not being dealt with until 1992 was issued on a Friday afternoon. I do not think that is the Minister's style. Do they tell you in the Premier's Office to hold off on that announcement because it would be criticized, or did the Minister plan on releasing it at five o'clock on a Friday afternoon? Not his style, what is happening? Too much control from the Premier's spin doctors in the office? I think so. We do not expect him to be like Boy Stalin, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), you know, gag rules and everything else. He has a different reputation, very disappointed in terms of the City of Winnipeg announcements.

We believe that this sweetheart committee with the City of Winnipeg that was established by this Minister's predecessor should be stopped. This Act was not changed to take away the exemption with the City of Winnipeg to set up a sweetheart committee with the City of Winnipeg and the largest municipality.

I believe and will say so strongly that this Minister should cancel that bureaucratic committee immediately as a substitute for The Environment Act. Yes, have liaison with the other levels of Government, federal, provincial and civic, have liaisons with the needed environmental groups, but there is no substitute for implementing the law and The Environment Act with a "bureaucratic committee" that was opposed—the City of Winnipeg was opposed to The Environment Act to begin with. They came before committee, the old gang came before committee and said we do not want to be covered by The Environment Act. We cannot trust the City of Winnipeg to follow the obligations in The Environment Act and that is why the province must act as the independent referee.

I believe we should be independent, I do not believe we should allow the city to be the advocate for the bridge and the environmental referee for the bridge. There will be more projects. The same legal precedent that we argued about before will be the basis of many other legal activities in the city and the province. This Government has two options: it can follow the full Environment Act legally or it is going to be sued with project after project after project, and it is going to come under the new Environment Act kicking and screaming, following the citizens, not leading the way of The Environment Act which I believe is appropriate.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister has talked about Shoal Lake. It is a very important issue. We believe that the Minister should be funding some of the community based groups that are helping us out. I think the

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community environmental groups are doing a tremendous job in helping us know what the developments are in the lake. Is it not nice when the Department of Environment is taking a vigilant approach to this project, and community groups are taking a vigilant approach to this project in terms of protecting the Winnipeg water supply?

* (2100)

We believe that this project must be stopped. We are disappointed that the Minister did not support, nor the Liberals in the House of Commons, an NDP Bill for safe drinking water, a federal Bill that would supersede Environment Acts for safe drinking water.

Walter Baker, the Liberal Member for Newfoundland, talked it out last June, and we are going to get it back on the Order Paper in this Session of the House of Commons. We believe that type of Bill should be supported. I hope my Liberal colleagues in this House talk to their Liberal Caucus Members in Ottawa, because we think this is a good Bill.

We also have a similar Bill on safe drinking water in the Ontario Legislature, and we hope the Liberals join the NDP in passing a safe drinking water Bill in Ontario at Queen's Park, because that will give us extra protection over and above just the normal Environment Act.

Surely drinking water is different than any other environmental impact issue. Surely drinking water is an extraordinary environmental issue and therefore should be treated in an extra special way.

We think the Shoal Lake issue is being vigilantly watched by this Government. We note the First Minister raised it at the First Ministers' meeting in Ottawa. If there is anything we can do in a co-operative way to raise questions in Ontario to the Liberal Government, if there is anything we can do, I say to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), if there is anything he wants our caucus to do with our federal counterparts or our provincial counterparts, we are volunteering, Mr. Chairman, to work with this Minister because we do not believe this is a partisan political issue, we believe it must be stopped. We believe the Rafferty-Alameda project hurts us in the long run but that the Shoal Lake project must be stopped.

In terms of legislation, Mr. Chairman, we will be looking very carefully at legislation. I would just note that the other side of legislation—a new legislation and tough fines is enforcement. I do not know of many Tory Governments that have prosecuted many firms on the basis of pollution and with the new Environment Act and the new Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act, there is tremendous power now in those Acts and now we need enforcement. We do not need great public relations Acts and no enforcement of those Acts. We will be listening to the Minister on the enforcement side through committee. I notice he has extra resources in his department and we will be paying very close attention to the issues of enforcement in all the Bills that he is proposing.

In terms of the Hazardous Waste Corporation, Mr. Chairman, we do not agree with the Government

establishing ACRE, and I said this in this Chamber and I was quite disappointed when the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans), the Liberal Agriculture Critic, supported ACRE. I do not know whether the Liberal Environment Critic supports ACRE or not, because I know that environmentalists believe that the disposal of pesticides should be done by the Hazardous Waste Corporation, the Crown corporation. I was surprised—I do not know whether the Member for Fort - (interjection)- Are you opposed to ACRE? Yes, well, that is why I am confused and that is why I wanted to ask, because the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) said, we support ACRE—in this Chamber two weeks ago Friday. He said, we support ACRE.- (interjection)- I did not think the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) would support ACRE.- (interjection)- Well, okay, because I cannot figure this one out here. I do not know which Liberal position to accept. I have troubles—what is that? -(interjection)- Well, I know. I kind of hear the environmentalists say, we are opposed to ACRE and then I hear the Liberal Agriculture Critic say, we support ACRE, we have raised it in the House, and I do not know where they stand.

An Honourable Member: It is kind of like the slush fund debate.

Mr. Doer: Yes, it is like mush, you know, the mush fund.- (interjection)- Well, I know the Liberals are panicking. The longer they are in this Session and in this Chamber, the further down they are going and I can understand that.

Mr. Chairman, we disagree with the establishment of ACRE. We would not be opposed to the Hazardous Waste Corporation being the pre-eminent body for the disposal of pesticides and using groups like ACRE to possibly work in local communities, but to have it the other way around is absolutely contrary to the Hazardous Waste Corporation mandate. I wonder whether the Minister checked this out with the round table, because I do not think he did. I do not think he went to the round table. I do not think he went to his sustainable development group. I think the sustainable development group they have established, the round table they have established, is a public relations exercise because real issues do not get referred there. They did not refer this here. You did not take ACRE to that group, I know you did not. You just passed it and announced it at the meeting. That is not sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman, we also believe that the location of the Hazardous Waste Corporation must be thought out very carefully. I notice now that the Liberals are going around Fort Garry and St. Norbert stating that they are opposed to the site of the Hazardous Waste Corporation at the Brady Landfill site. You know, one of the most irresponsible things we can do is spend a lot of time saying we are opposed to putting that site and spending no time saying where we are in favour of it. Subject to sound environmental impact studies, we believe that 80 percent of the waste is produced in Winnipeg and it should not be transported across Manitoba.

Yes, we should be doing decentralization of Government Services and, yes, we should be moving

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some of our Government departments; but, no, we should not use the Hazardous Waste Corporation as one of those projects. It does not make environmental sense and we will want to hear what the Members say.

In terms of recycling, we have a long way to go on recycling, and we will be talking about that shortly.

Mr. Chairman, just in conclusion, we believe that sustainable development is a public relations theme of the Premier (Mr. Filmon). We believe that it is sustainable rhetoric, we do believe that the litmus test—we think this Minister is a dramatic improvement over the last Minister but we want to see the sustainable in sustainable development. We see the development, we do not see the sustainable, and that is why we are going to have some serious issues to raise in the Estimates of the Department of Environment. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: I will now ask the critic for the official Opposition to make his opening statement.

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): I was interested to hear, over the comments by the Leader of the hindsight environmentalist, that he wants to see a sustainable Minister here. I am sure that the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) will be very pleased at that. It is interesting to have heard the preceding rhetoric and filibustering in juxtaposition to that, that was also going on this afternoon at Workers Compensation, because the environmental Act that we have in this province, while some good first steps were made, there were loopholes, Mr. Chairperson, large enough to drive D-9 Cats through, that were left to us by the former administration—the fact that the Minister has the discretion on whether Class 3 projects will or will not have a full environmental impact assessment complete with public hearings.

That should not be a whether-or-not for the biggest projects, that should be an automatic, that should be a norm, that should be the way we operate in this province. The fact that the Minister has—

An Honourable Member: You cannot put that on the record.

Mr. Taylor: I am putting that on the record. The Minister has the ability to exempt certain jurisdictions or certain projects from the provisions of the Act. Again, I do not think that should be.

I think we have the interesting news of the Charleswood bridge which had been exempted by the previous Minister, and it was said that the City of Winnipeg is doing the same as environmental impact assessment and we are satisfied. All I can tell you is that the official Opposition certainly was not satisfied and continued to raise the issue, and the people of Charleswood certainly were not satisfied with that matter. The joke of it was is that the city's work was in no way a comparable piece of work to that of a full environmental impact assessment, complete with public hearings. It was a sham, quite frankly. There were no public hearings or anything that could be construed as such. There were a few information meetings, and

to say that the work was as encompassing as an environmental impact assessment is far, far from the truth.

(Mr. Gilles Roch, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

* (2110)

Mr. Taylor: I have to say that I like some of the words that the administration of this Government comes out with. I think all the right words are there and the environmental buzzword generator is working full tilt, but I cannot say that the action has been following. Probably one of the greatest disappointments I had was this year when after in June our Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings), speaking at the same meeting I was at in Melita, called for those same environmental impact assessments and public hearings for the Rafferty-Alameda Dam project. In southeastern Saskatchewan when his colleague in Ottawa, Mr. Bouchard, reversed the position and issued a licence without those exercises being carried out, and this Minister, in effect, rolled over and died and did not fight it, either politically and chose not to fight it in the courts which was his Government's option. I have to say that I and other environmentalists were very, very disappointed.

Well, it is back in court again and we will see the results. Unfortunately it is a black day for Manitoba that we are not in that same court and we will not have our lawyer at the table. I think that is really, really a shame.

It is interesting to have had the Minister's notes prepared for us in this fashion and I say I appreciate it and I also say it is interesting that this appears on recycled paper. However, I would have to say that much of the policy in the legislation coming forth out of this Government is also going to have to be recycled because it is not satisfactory in the form that it is coming forward now.

We can take a good hard look at what the Tories are doing on the three R's of the Environment of reduce, reuse and recycle. It is interesting that Private Members' Bill 10, The Beverage Container Act, which would be a very, very positive step forward in the form of legislation for this province to deal with what has always been a chronic waste problem, and litter problem in this province. It has been stayed in the name of the Health Minister. I would have hoped that we would have seen support on the Government's side, as opposed to that action.

When one looks at Bill 84, which is the very recent Act, The Waste Reduction and Prevention and Consequential Amendment Act—what a mouthful—that has come out recently is that I do not argue with the philosophy of this document. I think the philosophical statements that are contained in the document are reasonable and I think are things that we should try to achieve. I do have more than a little problem, however, with the provisions of this Act and the regulations as well. I am sure we are going to have some very interesting debate because whether one talks about the waste reduction and prevention strategy

philosophy and then one juxtaposes that with the actual action that comes out of this legislation, or other initiatives that could be companion to this legislation, one sees the very great gap between the philosophy and the reality that is going to happen.

I see in that Act, for example, designation of environment officers. I say, good, I think that is exactly what should be. However, the provisions to encourage compliance, i.e., the penalties, I do not think in any way meet the matter at all and we will be getting into that in some detail. I see no companion initiatives to be working with environmental groups, to be working with industry, to be working with individual private corporations. I see none of that worth noting in the last year and a half that should be a party to, a dovetailing with, this Bill 84. That is a real disappointment.

Unfortunately, we still seem to be doing an awful lot of studying and not enough action. It is not saying that you should not be studying issues, but there is an end point at which it ceases to be productive and in fact is counter-productive and is nothing less than a delaying tactic.

Back in April of this year I called for an integrated and comprehensive environmental impact assessment for Repap. I am very pleased to say that the financiers of the Repap takeover and expansion have also seen fit to say that same thing. As they say, that warms the cockles of my heart. I have not seen the same thing coming out of the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness), or the Environment Minister (Mr. Cummings), or the Natural Resources Minister (Mr. Enns), on what probably is going to be the most important commercial deal for this province for decades to come.

I do not see how we can get away from linking Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3. It is nonsensical in my mind to have looked at only the first part, that first \$200 million. What about the other \$800 million? What about those rather large upgradings in scale of that plant? What about those changed processes, the fact that those changed process nowhere in the world, nowhere in the world, are there substitution of 80 percent chlorine dioxide for chlorine, nowhere whatsoever. What we do have is a process initiated and developed by the Swedes operating on a 20 percent substitution basis and one plant on an experimental basis from time-to-time, i.e., no continuous running, does it at 40 percent. From there we are going to jump to an 80 percent substitution in three years? It boggles the mind that technology is going to move so fast. Why are they not doing it elsewhere?

We are being sold an environmental Bill of goods on this. I quite frankly think they should change the name from Repap anyway. Repap, by the way, is paper spelled backwards. Given that we are not going to have any paper production in Manitoba once they have done the conversion, I think we should change the name of the company to PLUP, that is pulp spelled backwards because that is the lower level of product that we are going to have coming out of that plant. I think it would have been preferable if we were not supplying just pulp to the American paper market but that we would still have paper production in this province at that location.

I would also suggest that it is most interesting that there are new kraft paper mills opening in the world or are on the drawing boards to be built in the next three years when the suggestion has been that the kraft paper, the best kraft paper produced in the world today comes out of The Pas plant because of its process today and because of the type of wood fibre from those northern trees that we will knock that out and we will have a product that is more environmental detrimental. The potential is there for that and we certainly have not had the reassurances to date that anything less than that will happen. The only question will be to what extent and to whether that extent is acceptable or not.

I have had more than a little trouble in the whole speed it up process that has gone on as well, the speeded up process given what is involved, the fact that this province as yet does not recognize intervener status and does not recognize intervener funding. As such, we had the firm with the ability obviously to buy the first class services of McLaren Plansearch and the environmentalists going catch-as-catch-can because there was to be no funding for them to deal with the matters of the technical competence, the scale of the project, the time frames and all those other real life considerations that are involved when one comes before a Clean Environment Commission. It to me says that it is almost as though the die were cast and I hope that certainly was not the case. But it certainly appears that way.

We also have the case of the Government not in any way wishing to recognize interveners status or intervener funding when it comes to a group like the Water Protection Group, a group of Manitobans who have some interest—to say the least—in the quality of water that 60 percent of this province drink, and I am referring to Shoal Lake, the proposed gold mine on Stevens Island and the other 11 gold mines proposed in that area.

* (2120)

I think that while the Government on one hand speaks at interprovincial meetings about the enhancing of transborder compliance on environmental matters, first of all rolls over and dies on the matter of Rafferty-Alameda after saying the right thing—saying absolutely the right thing—and here was all three Parties saying that right thing in late June, in the heat, in Melita. But I guess they could not take the heat because there was no follow through, and on top of that to see what I would say is nothing less than an abominable track record on Shoal Lake.

When the Liberals raised this issue some 14 months back in the House, we were assured by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) that the Shoal Lake accord was all that Manitoba required for protection. Yes, it is a serious matter, but when I was Environment Minister I put the Shoal Lake Accord in place and that is what gives us our protection. Hooey, just so much hooey. That Shoal Lake accord, quite frankly, is on the shoals. It does not give us protection and in fact it must be on the verge of non-functional because either this Government when it came in place we know the NDP did not like the Shoal Lake Accord and apparently did not use it. This Government, I think, in that they were the

originators of the mechanism, should have made sure that it was functional. Apparently they did not because the information flow out of Ontario is not what is required by Manitobans. Whether it is Manitobans in Government or interest groups or just the average consumer of water out of Shoal Lake, it is not working, and why is it not working? Either somebody does not care or it is incompetence, and that is the sort of question I think that has to be asked.

The fact that the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) took literally months to get his officials out onto the site, the fact that testing was not done on what should have been done, that samples were not taken of what should have been taken really makes one wonder. What we had in July was an interim report come out from the Department of the Environment of Manitoba saying that we have seen these effluent flows coming out of the holding ponds of the Shoal Lake Mine on Stevens Island and, therefore, we do not worry.

The fact of the matter is the exploratory mine had been out of production for two years. So hopefully, the effluent, whatever it might have been, would certainly have been reduced. The question was, what would be produced in a productive mine context? Why were the ore samples not taken? Why were the leaching tests not done? I do not know. We are not talking about something that is either terribly expensive, and so what if it were expensive, and we are not talking about something that takes one heck of a lot of time, we are talking about something in a normal process. When samples were taken, results would have been had maybe in two weeks at the most. We still have not gotten answers on many of those questions to date.

I think we are going to need a lot more than the performance we have seen so far, and now we are going to be looking to this Department of the Environment and this Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) to ride herd very, very closely on the matter of Shoal Lake. I think there is some education required of Ontarians and I think there is education required by their Government, and yet education has to be done by Manitoba and by Manitoba Environment particularly, and that is only doing what should be done. That is only doing what is necessary.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

It is interesting to see, going on to another matter, this Government is going to be taking action on chlorofluorocarbons. I keep getting some asides from the former Environment Minister, but we will go on with that. We know there are CFCs available in other forms in this province other than some of forms that were originally here. There are still some aerosol cans that have CFCs in them. That is a fact. We know one of the biggest sources of CFCs is refrigeration and freezing equipment, and we know that the older equipment and the smaller equipment are the two types that are most at fault for putting out any form of CFC into the environment.

The fact that Ontario took a lead in this, passed what the Montreal Convention had agreed to, was criticized by this Government. I find that, to say the least, reactionary. I think the matter is so serious that anybody

trying to find a better way to reduce the production of this material with its hideous impact on the ozone layer has got to be at least looked on and seeing that they are doing something or attempting to do something productive and see if we can learn from that, as opposed to reacting and say, you are not in lock step with our federal cousins, therefore you are out of step. Nonsense, absolute nonsense. One of the problems with the Montreal convention is that while it did talk about the reduction of the production of CFCs in the industrialized world it did nothing, did absolutely nothing about the production of CFCs in the Third World and guess what is going on? They are building more factories to produce CFCs, so we are cleaning it up to some extent in the industrialized world, and meanwhile, what else is going on?

I think we have to go a lot, lot further if we are going to be serious about this and not be looking at further deterioration of the ozone layer with the potential impact on human and other species on this planet, because if it is not attacked it is going to make the greenhouse effect that we are also trying to deal with look like a nothing issue in comparison, because the impacts of ultra violet rays on animal tissue is something that we do not want to have to deal with.

One of my concerns has been a recently announced initiative by the environment Minister (Mr. Cummings) and this is a group called ACRE, Association for a Clean Rural Environment. The interesting thing, and I hear the Education Minister (Mr. Derkach) from his seat saying, how can I be against something like that, I am not against some of the things—oh he did not, well, if he did not say that I will withdraw that comment then.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Education.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): It appears that the Liberals have difficulty when it comes to hearing comments made from this side of the House. Some time ago we had the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) get up from her place and accuse me of referring to her as "poor baby" when I did not do that. Tonight we have the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) making remarks about my saying something from my chair. I have not uttered a word, I just want the record to be clear on that.

Mr. Chairman: Did the Honourable Minister stand on a point of order? The Honourable Minister does not have a point of order. The Honourable Member for Wolseley.

Mr. Taylor: In all fairness to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), I did think I had heard his voice as I was bending down reading my notes but obviously it was one of his colleagues and not himself.

The point of the matter is that one of what is to be the main initiatives of this organization, is something that we called for back in, I believe it was December '88. This was the matter of cleaning up the chemical containers that are used in agriculture.

There has been case after case in this province where there has not been proper flushing of those containers

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and proper handling of the destruction of those containers. When brought up in the House almost a year ago the comment by the then Environment Minister was: it is not really a problem and you are fearmongering and it is not an issue, and my cap is off to this Environment Minister for recognizing that it is a problem.

I do not necessarily agree that this was the only way to deal with it but he has recognized the problem and I think that is the first thing that has to be done. He has recognized the problem. I am glad to see that with a changed Minister and with some learning over the last 11 months we have a reversal of position.

I do have concerns though that we had to set-up a group like ACRE to do it. I am not certain that we have seen an analysis of whatever mechanisms could have been used, including potentially our own Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation to deal with the matter. If this were after analysis, and I have not seen that analysis the best way, and the cheapest way to go is this form of corporation, then I guess two things come to mind.

* (2130)

The first is, why are there not rural environmentalists on the board of this organization? I think some of the best environmentalists in this province it has been my experience to meet are from the rural areas. They are often very, very close to the environment, to nature, and they see things in a different way. I think it was wrong for them to be excluded from the board of an organization and initiative like this.

The second thing is, if we have this sort of an initiative, if it is not ready now there should be preparation for a similar type of initiative, if this is the Minister's belief that this is the best route, a similar sort of initiative to deal specifically with environmental problems in the urban areas, because I for one, as an urban Manitoban, do not think the environmental issues in the cities and towns are being attacked properly either. That does not take from ACRE, that just says good here, good over here as well.

The initiative on radon gas was another one of those, gee, we better take quite a long time to do some learning here, but what has come is some of the answer. It means amending building codes, yes, but it also means correcting the context in existing buildings, be that residential, be that institutional, be that commercial, be it industrial, all those buildings that do have the phenomenon of radon gas coming into habitable space with potential impact that will have to be dealt with fully. What I am also waiting to see is how are we going to deal with the issue of consultants, contractors, matter of certification. I think we have a ways to go yet.

It is interesting, though, that we do have the red and white booklet now, we have it, a start. It was not a problem a year ago, what happened? I am pleased to see that the Environment Minister of the Day has agreed with the Liberal position that, yes, something needs to be done on that. It seems to be happening on a number of issues.

I for one am looking for a complete transformation of that department, and I think we have a ways to go

before we will see that come out of this administration, but I see little changes in position, some nuances, some things moving in the right direction, and I for one am not going to discourage that. I am going to do my darndest to encourage it and there be more of it and it happen faster.

An Honourable Member: I need all the help I can get.

Mr. Taylor: The Minister said he could do with all the help he could get. Well, we will see how much we can help him, because the issue is much bigger than any one Party. Everybody takes cheap political shots and does the scoring off of each other, but we have to make progress in this area or we are in deep, deep trouble. One of the things that we are going to require is a greater priority for this department in the whole scheme of Government in Manitoba, and that includes more legislation, more compliance and environmental police to deal with it, or watchdogs, depends on your approach, how you want to say it. It is also going to require more education, more co-operation with industry and environmental groups, and it is going to require some initiatives and some coercion, some encouragement.

One of the things I am more than a little disappointed in is that while we see the experimental blue bag, domestic garbage recycling program which started in my riding, in Wolseley, which has been under way for some two and a half months now just recently be expanded in that area from about 500 homes to 1,100 homes starting the 1st of December, and with another 1,100 homes coming into the program in Fort Garry in the south side of the city, we yet have no response from Government even in a general sense as to their inclination towards this.

The public is clamouring for this program. Councillors are getting call after call. People are getting blue bags in whatever way they can and dropping their garbage off in Wolseley often on a Wednesday morning before 8:30 because they want to participate in this way. I think we should encourage this, but it will require Government activity -(interjection)-.

Are you suggesting there might be Tory skeletons in those blue bags? There are lots. I can assure the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) that there are many Members putting those blue bags out, and they are serving that purpose.

In all seriousness, it is a matter that has caught the public's attention. It is a way of recycling and minimizing our garbage problems. I would hope we are going to see—we have not seen it yet in these speaking notes from the Minister, we have not seen it in the Estimates in any way that I can see it, we have not seen it in any way connected with the new Bill 84—I am hoping very soon to hear an announcement from this Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) of how the blue bag program in short order and by short order, I mean over the next year, can be put into effect over the whole of the City of Winnipeg, followed by the City of Brandon, followed by any other urban centre that is large enough to sustain an effort of that nature, and given of course the practicalities of transportation links into where

sorting can be done and into where it is practical to ship the recycled material, whether that is plastic or glass or tin or aluminum or newspaper.

I would also ask the Minister to think about another matter on recycling. The Western Diversification Fund offers an opportunity to have money come from the federal Government to help create new industrial jobs across the West. One of the ways that we could be doing something of that nature is by tapping that fund, as we have said before, for a de-inking plant. A de-inking plant could be located here in Winnipeg which is the largest consumer of newsprint material in the province, or it could be located up at Pine Falls which is the production centre of newsprint for Manitoba.

It would create jobs, and we would see fewer trees cut down to create newsprint, but at the same time it would be as much if not more newsprint produced, and there would be more jobs, and more jobs at a higher technical level. That is the sort of initiative that should be coming out of this Government, and it is the sort of thing that we in the Liberals will expect to see in a positive form, something from the Minister other than rhetoric.

There have been times where I have called the Conservative administration lip-service environmentalists, for example, because of their use of the term sustainable development and then not having projects that are sustainable. Let us put a lie to that, let us see some positive overt action on the part of this Minister, and let us get some action on the environment. Thank you.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, I will just respond very briefly to some of the remarks from the two critics, and then I will ask staff to join us to get on with the Estimates. I guess I would only like to rebut the concern that the third Party indicated where they said that they felt that somehow sustainable development was a catch phrase that this Government was going to use to try and bamboozle people into thinking that we were really going along with the concept of sustainable development. They accused us of talking only development and not sustainability.

I guess I take some umbrage, given the fact that the Liberal Party also referenced the same concept in relationship to Rafferty-Alameda and the Repap hearings, because if ever there has been a hearing process that started out this summer on the change-over of a plant and the amount of input that has gone and the very transparent, in my opinion, examination that the Repap proposal was put to and the amount of time that the commission has put into the thought process in examining this conversion, it seems to me that anybody who would indicate that was not done with the very clear intention of making sure that environmental concerns were correctly addressed, then I would suspect that they are out of sync and out of step with what the people of this province are looking for.

* (2140)

In my opinion, we have seen the imposition of the requirements of The Environment Act on a conversion

that, up until very recently, and I would say up until the last six to eight months ago in this province, would very likely not have even received an environmental hearing or anything more than have to get its licence from the director, not even a licence that would require the Minister's approval, but it would have been approved under a director's licence.

Certainly I would expect that both Opposition Parties would give us credit for having moved a considerable distance in that direction, and I believe that there is an element of criticism of this project who are looking at it with an eye of possibly, even in some cases a preconceived feeling, that they would rather not have this project proceed. That disturbs me because if there is one type of industry that can and should be able to be considered sustainable, it is forestry.

As someone who comes from an agricultural background, I realize that there are certain connotations that people dislike in relationship to forestry and farming, or reforestation as it is referred to in the industry, but nevertheless, given normal weather conditions, forestry is a sustainable and renewable operation, and I really do believe that the concerns that we have to deal with are in fact being dealt with in terms of sustainable development.

I am disappointed as well that some would feel I just released the press release on the Charleswood bridge today, knowing that I was going to be in Estimates this evening. Coincidental, but nevertheless a difficult decision. I would want to put on the record, Mr. Chairman, that the Charleswood bridge decision is one that is coupled with a determination on my part, and I am sure an equal determination on the part of the city, to get on with development of a working arrangement. It may ultimately, and I believe will, move toward amendments which the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) will be working on in conjunction with my department, so that we can very clearly know that the province should not have to interfere in the vast majority of the situations that arise in the city.

The Environment Act calls for the recognition and appreciation of the rights of municipalities and the responsibility of municipalities. This is a case where I believe we were hung up on a technicality, and I want to tell that this relates to many things that I do in my department. It is not my belief that the first place Governments should end up is in court when they have a disagreement, and whether that applies to Rafferty-Alameda or whether it applies to the province and the City of Winnipeg, there should be a clear recognition of responsibility.

Ultimately, I hope and I believe and it will be my objective that there will be an ability on the part of the city to demonstrate clearly that their process is equivalent to the requirements that the province would make under The Environment Act, and that they need not worry about the province coming to move on them at unexpected times.

The third Opposition called for disbandment of what he referred to a sweetheart committee whereby the province and the city work together on implementation of The Environment Act. I have always dismissed the

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statement that the city is not under The Environment Act. There are, however, as an example, the treatment plants where they needed to be licenced. I now would indicate that the work of that committee is being demonstrated inasmuch as there are several things that are being brought forward that now are a conclusion of that negotiation.

I would indicate, when the Liberal Critic referred to the blue bag and whether or not there was ability to fund environmental innovations, I would reference the fact that we are working towards the establishment of environmental innovations fund from which programs of innovation in environmental fields can be funded. I think that the Green Paper that was tabled in this Legislature indicates manners in which the environmental fund can be developed and qualifying proposals could apply to it.

I do want to make one thing perfectly clear. I do not think that recycling of products in this province should have to rely entirely on the public purse to make sure that recycling is able to be put in place. There should be something that is driven by the value of the product as well as by the willingness and the determination of the people who have the product to do the recycling. I certainly believe that there is a broad spectrum of initiatives, the blue bag of which may be one, but if the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) thinks that he is going to get me to make a firm commitment on a broad basis as to the manner in which recycling will develop in this province, I would indicate that the report of the Recycling Action Committee will have a great deal of bearing on the ultimate design of our recycling program in this province.

Mr. Chairman, rather than myself going on, on individual topics I would ask staff to join me and we will start attempting to answer questions from the Opposition.

Mr. Chairman: We were about to ask the Honourable Minister to invite his staff and introduce them.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce Norm Brandson, my Director of Environmental Services and, as can be demonstrated, despite my figure we are a lean and mean operation.

Mr. Chairman: As usual, we will leave item 1.(a) for the last and we will begin with 1.(b).

Shall 1.(b) pass—the Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Chairperson, I notice there are some figures here that I would like to get straight. There seems to be some difference between the figures as announced by the Minister in his opening remarks and the figures as they appear in the Supplementary Estimates.

In particular, it looks like there is some additional 17.5 staff, 4.5 which appear to have been added in Administration and Finance, 4.5 which seems quite high, but in the Minister's opening remarks he suggested the department has added some 14 additional positions.

I am wondering if he could just clear that discrepancy up for me.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, the number 4 is correct under the heading of Administration and Finance. I am not sure what quote the Member is referencing to in my opening remarks; there are 17 but not in Administration and Finance.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Chairperson, on page 4 of the Minister's opening remarks at the bottom of the second column, he says, overall, the resource increase for this year amounts to 14 additional positions. That seems to be at odds with what we have here. Be that as it may, if the Minister will look at the detailed Estimates at the bottom of Administration and Finance, he will see that the Adjusted Vote for 1988-89 is some 30.26 or 30.5 staff years and year end March 31, 1990 it is 35, which is 4.5 staff years. I assume that the additional half is, well I can see that the additional half is the Minister's additional compensation because he is a full-time Minister. So there are four besides himself, I guess.

I would like to have the Minister indicate what two executive support positions have been added, what are their titles, and who are the executive support personnel?

* (2150)

Mr. Cummings: I have one executive assistant in my office and I have two part-time executive assistants that job share at the research level, as a matter of fact, and work part-time in my office and part-time out in the country.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Chairperson, I had asked for the names of the seven people, including the people that work as the Minister's EAs. Could he give us that information?

Mr. Cummings: My assistant is Bryan Gray; the other assistant position is shared by Joanne Pollack and Myrtle Christensen; the other names I would have to table.

Mr. Storie: There are two additional staff as well in the community relations area and I am wondering whether the Minister can indicate who those people are, those additional staff, and what their function might be, and indicate as well how many of the four are professional, versus secretarial-administrative, of those six people.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Squires, Mr. Kustra, one secretarial, and one position is still vacant.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Chairperson, we appreciate the fact that in the area of the environment that the Minister knows as well as anyone in the Chamber how touchy, difficult, complex and easily sensationalized environmental issues can be. We all understand the need for some additional community relations people. I guess the concern that we have when we see two out of the 14 or whatever additional staff that have been added are what some people would term public relations people.

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I know that they are called community relations staff and their functions do not always have to be public relations staff, but I guess the reliance on community relations or public relations people for the dissemination of information and for dealing with public concerns, particularly at a time when the Minister's resources are limited, we acknowledge, I certainly acknowledge the fact that there have been additional resources added to this department. It is of concern that we do not have more technical people who are in the field dealing with environmental issues more directly rather than worrying about the Minister's image or the Government's image.

There is obviously some addition to the budget and I guess the Minister has to establish his own priorities in the department. There will be many people who will ask whether the addition of two community relations positions should have been the Government's priorities.

What concerns me even more when I look at the Administration and Finance is the area of Planning, Research and Evaluation. This Minister, and this Government, talk a great deal about implementing new policies, about implementing the policy of sustainable development. We all know that to do that effectively the Government at some point is going to have to develop a strategy, is going to have to attempt to implement that strategy, and is going to have to evaluate that strategy, because the Minister should know from his years in Opposition that from time to time when Governments implement programs their best intentions go awry. Programs that are implemented have to be evaluated.

Before programs are implemented significant planning activity has to occur and we have a case. In this division alone, in the Administration and Finance area where there have been some 4.5 additional staff, two of whom are being applied to the Minister's Executive Support staff, two of whom are being applied to the Community Relations or public relations part of the department and the Planning, Research and Evaluation, which would seem on the surface to be the most important when it comes to dealing with environmental matters, is left with no increase.

I think the people out there who are attempting to grapple with the issues like the danger of the mining operation on Shoal Lake or the dangers to the waterways—Saskatchewan River, or when it comes to the adding of the bleaching process at the operation in The Pas, raised genuine concerns about the Minister's insistence, I guess the Minister's priorities, when it comes to this part of the department.

I know that the Minister will be able to justify the need for community relations people by telling us that yes, the community is demanding more information, but we know that these people are primarily public relations people. Their job is to keep the Minister out of hot water. I am not even saying that those staff should not be added. I know that there is a job for them to do and this Minister will probably only be in hot water up to his knees. It was the previous Minister that was over his head in hot water and got scalded as it turned out. Perhaps it was the previous Minister that needed these two people and not the current one.

I would like to ask the Minister why, in allocating the scarce resources in this department, the Planning, Research and Evaluation Branch has been left stagnant in a time when the demands for really understanding the environmental impacts that projects have in evaluating Government programs have not been given a higher priority.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, there are some very logical explanations for the questions that the Members asks. Number one, go back to my personal staff for a moment. Unlike some of my predecessors who have had Autopac responsibilities along with their ministerial duties, I have not chosen to bury additional support in the department somewhere. That has been done directly through my department without supplementation from Autopac.

If the Member or the public in any way believes that somehow my assistants in my office are in excess of what is needed, consider that they have the responsibilities not just for this department but for MPIC as a whole, and for Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corporation, to handle those concerns when they come to my office as well. Obviously during the splitting of the two departments what was previously shared is now required to be split between the two Ministers.

The additional responsibility that I brought with me was MPIC and basically what I have for personal staff is one assistant at the EA level and a job share at the research assistant level which means that I am running this office on the personal support level considerably cheaper than offices were run in this Government under the previous administration.

In terms of the Planning and Research Branch I think that the Member probably knows the answer, but in fact this department is run in a rather unique manner. Although I suggest that it is not unique totally to this department or this department of Government, because we believe that all parts of the department should work together in planning and involve the staff from all areas of the department to work through the Planning Branch. While it can always be argued that the Planning Branch is busy, they are receiving considerable support and working closely with all the other areas within the Department of Environment, so it is a very well put together concept whereby all parts of the department feel that they have input into the planning of the department and do not feel that the Minister and the planning branch are somehow dictating from afar how the process should work within the department.

Mr. Chairman: The hour being 10 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Deputy Speaker.

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IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. William Chornopyski): The hour being after 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and remains adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. (Tuesday).