



**Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 16, 1994

The House met at 8 p.m.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY (continued)

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

#### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau):** Good evening. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The committee will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 4.(a)(1) on page 41 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass? Pass.

4.(a)(2) Other Expenditures \$312,200.

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do notice there is a decrease in Communications again. I wonder if the minister could just explain to us what has been reduced there.

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training):** This is the trimming process that has been in place in government for several years now. A lower expectation of distance telephone and also on some other operating expenditures, \$8,000 worth of—last year in this area we spent \$8,000 less than we had planned for, so we just reflected that this year across the whole miscellaneous, Other Expenditures line. So, in other words, we were reflecting more accurately last year's experience.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Shall the item pass? Pass.

4.(a)(3) Advanced Education and Training Assistance \$1,716,300—pass.

4.(b) ACCESS Programs \$7,903,200.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to begin the discussion here by moving a motion.

I move that this committee censure the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Manness) for failing to protect the interests of disadvantaged students by cutting ACCESS Program funding while continuing to provide Workforce 2000 grants to businesses for questionable projects, despite obvious program abuses in a program where hundreds and thousands of taxpayer dollars are paid in private training grants to businesses which are not being held publicly accountable.

I move that, seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** I will get back to the committee in just a few minutes on this. I am just going to take it under advisement.

**An Honourable Member:** Are you taking representation, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as to the admissibility of this motion?

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** I will rule on the motion, and we can make the decisions then.

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think this motion is—

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** You cannot speak to the motion. It is not before the committee.

\* (2005)

**Mr. Manness:** I am not speaking to the motion. I am speaking to the admissibility of the motion.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. I would like to advise the honourable minister that the motion at this time is not before the committee. I have taken it under advisement. When I come back with my ruling, I will be more than willing to listen to the members' opinions on the motion.

We will now move on to the next item which would be (c)—[interjection] item 4.(b) ACCESS Programs \$7,903,200.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to make some comments in terms of the ACCESS Program, while you are taking the motion under advisement, that are related to this particular line item. As soon as you are ready to make your ruling, I will defer to other members of the committee who may wish to comment on the motion.

I was at a very special event on Friday, the graduation of the social work grads in Thompson, faculty of social work, University of Manitoba—an ACCESS Program. The ACCESS Program has been in place for 10 years. There are 57 graduates currently; there are a further 11 with this graduating class. It is a tremendous success story, and it was partly the mood of the graduation. There were 11 students, many of whom I know personally, who have put in a tremendous amount of effort to be able to graduate as social workers. Many of them now—many, of course, are from the North, who will be remaining in northern Manitoba.

There was also a great deal of concern expressed by many people at that graduation, including many of the graduates and including many of the former graduates, about the cuts that have taken place to this particular program and the particular philosophy that this Minister of Education seems to be now applying to the ACCESS Programs.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have raised questions in the House on this particular issue because it goes to the fundamental basis of the ACCESS Programs, which is to provide accessibility for those, and in the case of northern Manitoba, particularly aboriginal people, who have not had the opportunity for social, economic, educational and personal reasons to attend post-secondary institutions. That is why we have the ACCESS Programs. That is why we have had the particular programs in place, not just in terms of a physical building or staff or program that is offered in the North, but particular funding that

makes allowance in particular for the financial difficulties that people are faced with.

I have known many of the ACCESS graduates. I knew many of the ACCESS graduates from this past Friday. I can tell you, if you only knew the personal stories of the individuals, it is just unbelievable that many of the graduates have been able to go through a program, many of them coming from remote communities, coming from communities which did not even have a high school, people who did not have the opportunity even to go to high school, who were able to work through the program, support each other and graduate as fully fledged social workers in this case, and in the case of BUNTEP, as teachers and the other ACCESS Programs.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, you just cannot believe the stories. The first thing that I asked when I was at the graduation and people expressed concern about the cuts is, what was likely to happen to the people in the program because they are affected by the cuts? People who are currently in the program were not grandparented by this minister. They will be subjected to this new student-loan type of system.

The bottom line is there is a real concern that many will drop out of the program; many will drop out. That is of tremendous concern to me because if people are placed in the kinds of circumstances this minister and this government will be placing ACCESS students under, it will lead eventually to having an ACCESS Program in name only. The bottom line is that the program was set up to account for particular hardships, including financial.

We are dealing here—and I will just talk in a general sense of many of the stories that the individuals have gone through in this program. I have known, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, people who with a Grade 7, Grade 8 education have upgraded their educational skills, they have had two, three children, have gone from being on income security, single parent with several

children, Grade 7, Grade 8 education, and have completed the program.

I have had the unique experience of seeing it from both sides because, also, I have had the privilege to be an instructor for IUN, and having had students in the course from the social work program, I can tell you they are second to none and would match up with any students at the Fort Garry campus.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, this is what is at stake. And you know what I find makes people particularly bitter in the North, people who support the ACCESS Programs? They look at other items in the budget and they see private schools getting 8 percent more, where they see Workforce 2000 and corporations like IBM getting \$50,000 a year for corporate training and many of the other corporations.

\* (2010)

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

This is the bottom line here. There are choices that have to be made, and this government, by insisting on moving to the full student-loan system of eliminating student allowances is going to be destroying the ACCESS Program. Because I ask you to put yourself in the position of someone who is a single parent on welfare in York Landing, one of my communities in my constituency, looking at having to face upwards of \$8,500 a year in loans.

I will tell you, York Landing, there are no banks. I doubt there is anybody in my community of York Landing that even has a loan, whether it be a consumer loan, let alone a student loan. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you will effectively be stopping people like that from continuing the program. Not only that, I have talked to people in the programs and one of the items that is going to be affected by the cuts is the ability to bring in students from remote communities. So that in itself would inhibit people from remote communities.

It goes even beyond that. Because of the changes—whereas before, the program administered the student allowance programs, the bottom line was they were able to have flexibility, and when students hit a financial crisis, when they hit a

personal crisis, there was some flexibility. Students were able to be loaned the money from their student allowance and would pay it back at a later point in time, and it was critical in getting people through the program.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what do you say to somebody—and I will give you one example, without mentioning names, of the kind of situation people are faced with. A student in the program currently whose former husband was incarcerated, then came out of jail and started to appear back on the scene and put a tremendous amount of personal pressure on that individual. How can you equate that with a minister who then turns around and says, I do not want to hear the stories, there are so many stories out there, who then equates the ACCESS Programs with the standard programs at the universities?

You know, I went to school in Thompson, I graduated from high school. When I went to the University of Manitoba the toughest thing I had to deal with was homesickness. It was not that easy at times. It was not easy for many rural and northern students. Can you imagine the personal pressures these people are under? So I want to just finish, because I am sure you have a ruling on this particular motion. We can deal with it in a more substantive way by saying that I am here today, I was at the graduation on Friday, I promised I would raise the concerns of the ACCESS Program, as a strong supporter of the ACCESS Program that I am, and I will be doing that throughout these Estimates and throughout this session.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) that this committee censure the Minister of Education and Training for failing to protect the interests of disadvantaged students by cutting ACCESS Program funding whilst continuing to provide Workforce 2000 grants to businesses for questionable projects despite obvious program abuses in a program where hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars are paid in private training grants to businesses which are not being held publicly accountable.

The motion is in order.

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I feel badly that the member for Wolseley had to bring forward this motion, and it is not in keeping with the fact. It is beyond the answers I have given on several occasions within the Chamber in response to questions put forward by members opposite. As I indicated before, all government programs, not excluding ACCESS, are not in any way trying to diminish the remarks made by the member, particularly, for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) who talked about some of the glowing success stories under this program, which I have no difficulty believing or accepting.

\* (2015)

Notwithstanding any of the commentary to this point, the fact is that this program, no different from any other educational program, deserved to have and has had close scrutiny and a review done, and there are some telling aspects that have come to light. I wish at this time I could table that analysis, but it is not complete. It will be, and the promise has been made to make it public, but there are some telling aspects of that in-depth analysis.

For instance, the examples cited by the members opposite when they talk about individuals obviously in need, individuals who in many cases are single parents and who are trying to improve their lot through education, I honestly sense that happens in the program. But, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what we are beginning to find is that there is no rhyme or reason to how the individuals are selected to be a part of this program. We are finding that in many cases the institutions themselves, the hosting institutions, are going out and making decisions as to who gains entry into this wonderful program.

We are beginning to find that there are even individuals that come from, believe it or not, homes and families with significant financial resources, certainly not the majority and maybe not even a large minority, but certainly more than a few. The member turns up his nose; he cannot believe it. But the fact is, we have looked at that. This is what happens when you do an analysis, you find things out. You find out that 75 percent of the costs, or not quite, I think two-thirds as I used in

the House the other day, do not go directly to the client but go to the institutions. The member makes the point that there are some tremendous results in the area of social work, and I do not deny that, but you also find out that there are incredible job opportunities.

So why, today, regardless of what your calling is, from where you come—the members have to give me a rational argument—is it that if you are guaranteed virtually employment at the end, and indeed the government puts up to, in some cases, \$138,000 into the training of one person, particularly those who attend university and/or \$60,000 for anybody going through post-secondary education, somebody has to tell me in the name of equity why those individuals should not be expected to be subject to the same criteria as put into place for every other citizen in the province of Manitoba, and that is you present your case to the Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board and you be judged in that same way.

Indeed, if you are found in need, then, not through three levels but through one level, at least you are expected to take out a Canada Student Loan because, after all, when the state puts \$138,000 into your training, the expectation should be there that if there is a job at the end, then you should be expected to pay some of that back. I will argue that at any time, any place with anybody.

**An Honourable Member:** And you will lose.

**Mr. Manness:** I say to the member for Dauphin, I will not lose. I will win, and that is what is behind it.

So what we have said is two things; I have said two things. I have said that firstly, if there are administrative cost savings, and the report will point that out, and they can be equivalent to several hundreds of thousands of dollars, maybe over \$1 million, administratively, then let us take them. If the members are saying opposite, then they are saying that they have no problem with bureaucracy, overlap, duplication, and high administrative costs, and I have said that. Now the members may say, well, we will not take your word for it. Fine. But again I am restating for the

record, the biggest portion of the write-down is where we think we can find administrative savings.

Secondly, we are saying that in cases where, if you come from a family of means like more and more of the ACCESS students are because there is no criteria in place for the selection, can the member today tell me how it is one needy person is selected to be in this program over another? No, he—

**An Honourable Member:** They have a whole series of criteria.

**Mr. Manness:** The institutions have criteria. That is right. Are they in keeping with what social justice would indicate? No, the evaluation proved that that is not the case.

**An Honourable Member:** Well, table it.

**Mr. Manness:** Well, I will. I will when it is ready. I have said that.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, these are all important dimensions, but the biggest question is, is there going to be a reduction in the number of people who are eligible to come under this program? Absolutely not, and to the extent that somebody who wants to come under this program fits the criteria and, thirdly, is prepared to go through the same criteria eligibility as any other citizen of this province, he will make it in.

\* (2020)

Of course, what the citizens of this province are saying is, my goodness, if you have good chances of employment at the end of the day, you should be expected to have some level of indebtedness, I mean, given that there are no end of Manitobans who today upon graduating from university have personal debts in the area of, what, \$40,000 and more.

And what is the argument? Are there two classes of people in this country? Definitely not. When you call upon the state to support your education, you are treated the same as all.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are talking about access to post-secondary education. That is what we are talking about, and I am saying to the member and I will say to anybody who cares to

listen, the reduction, as printed, for the most part reflects administrative savings and the fact that now part of the responsibility, the funding liability, now will shift to the individual by a loan.

I say, that is the fairer system and I will stand up anywhere and say so.

There may be other comments, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with respect to this motion.

**Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development):** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to make a few comments with respect to this particular topic.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Could I ask you to bring your mike up so that Hansard will pick you up.

**Mr. Derkach:** I would like to make a few comments with respect to this particular motion and also with respect to the particular topic.

I guess I go back a long way in dealing with this kind of subject and so therefore I would like to share with members of this committee some of the things which we found when we took over government in 1988 with respect to programs that were being offered by not only the Department of Education at that time but by other departments as well.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one of the issues that seems to be creeping up is a criticism of Workforce 2000 and perhaps the opposition not wanting people who are working in industry to be retrained and trained properly. From time to time we have seen the argument come back and a criticism that we are spending money for big companies, which is not true. Actually, Workforce 2000 is meant to train the worker or retrain the worker so that he or she can equip him or herself with a better set of skills to perform the tasks at which he or she is employed.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I go back to 1988 when we took government. At that time we had a program operating called the Limestone Training Agency, and when I hear the New Democrats criticizing Workforce 2000, all one has to do is look back at Limestone Training. If you want to

see a horrible abuse all you have to look at is that program.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will never forget when I was introduced to Limestone Training, I said, what kind of money did we spend on Limestone Training over the period of time that the program was running, and I think when the figures were all tallied up, it was something in the neighbourhood of \$42 million, and I think the budget that was set for it was somewhere around \$20 million.

Now, when you start looking at some of the projects that had taken place and some of the training that had happened, I said, well, for \$42 million we should have had a tremendous amount of training that had taken place. We should have had graduates and people with certificates and curriculums all over the place because I know the NDP have asked about curriculum for various programs in Workforce 2000.

\*(2025)

Well, I can tell you that in Limestone Training I could not find specific curriculums. I could not find graduates in the program. I think there were 15 or 17 graduates in total out of the program.

Now there were people who had taken programs. [interjection] Now, the member for Thompson—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members to carry on their conversation a little quietly, and we will have a little bit more decorum. The honourable minister to continue.

Mr. Derkach: —says that there were over 2,000 people trained. Now he makes the point about the value of Workforce 2000 because you do not need to have a specific curriculum. Indeed, if you are training people for a skilled task, then you simply train them for it, and then you let them get on with life.

So, therefore, I found only 17 or 18 people who had actually graduated from programs that had certificates in them at that time. [interjection] The member for Thompson now raises the issue of equipment. Let me tell you about equipment.

When we sold Manfor to Repap, I was invited by Repap to come and look at a building in The Pas because he said it belonged to the Department of Education. So I took the time and effort to go and look at this particular building, and when I did, I found equipment lying strewn all over the property of Manfor—equipment, heavy construction equipment that was identified as that belonging to the Limestone Training Agency.

We started gathering up this equipment because we had lists and lists of serial numbers of equipment that we knew was around the province somewhere that had been bought by taxpayer dollars, and we were supposed to be putting this to effective use.

Well, we found it all over the place, all over the North. As a matter of fact, we had to bring it back eventually, put it together and assemble some kind of a sale.

I have to tell you that in the back of Keewatin Community College there has to be a lot that is five to seven acres in size, and that lot was literally filled with equipment when we finally gathered it up. Some of this equipment had been so badly abused that people who wanted to buy it—this was equipment that was costing hundreds and thousands of dollars. I know one particular piece of equipment was in the neighbourhood of \$250,000. It had been left in a swamp over winter and had just become a valueless piece of junk.

We found that all over the North, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. So when the NDP talk to us and want to chastise us about using dollars for training effectively, let them not criticize Workforce 2000 because, indeed, if we want to take a look at an abuse of a program, all we have to do is look at Limestone Training. I have never seen such a massive abuse of taxpayer dollars as had happened in Limestone Training.

Today we have a motion before us that wants to censure the Minister of Education and Training. I have to say that we have a minister here who has really identified what some of the abuses are in taxpayer dollars with education. Indeed, he has to bring some order into this.



The member for Dauphin keeps talking about used car salesperson training. Let me tell you, even that training would be leagues above what was happening with Limestone Training. Of course, the member for Dauphin would not be interested, and he was not aware of what was going on up north, I am sure, or else he would have spoken out against it in his own cabinet, in his own caucus. I am sure that no one can be so irresponsible as to stand by and watch that kind of thing happen in northern Manitoba. Who gained by it? Nobody.

\* (2030)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have to tell you another instance where we had someone who was in charge of Limestone Training, who should have been living in Thompson, was living in Winnipeg, and any time he or she wanted to go up there, hopped on a plane at taxpayers' expense and out to Thompson. But it was more convenient to live in Winnipeg and have an office at the corner of Portage and Main. Now this was an office for Limestone Training. Now folks, let me tell you that if we want taxpayers to get angry about how dollars are spent for education, they should have taken a very close look at what happened in Limestone Training. There is no excuse. There are no reasons why something like that should continue or should have continued.

What we have here today is a minister who understands the importance of equality in training, so that people from all across this province can get a meaningful opportunity at education and training. Yes, they have to invest some dollars. We all need to invest some dollars in ourselves. There is nothing wrong with a student who has a guarantee of employment after he or she has graduated to invest some of his or her own money that they may earn in the future into that training. It is not denying them training at all. It is simply saying that you are investing in yourself.

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** We are living in a different world.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Dauphin says we are living in a different world. You bet, we are living in a different world. Maybe the member for Dauphin

had better come to grips with reality because up until now he has not.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I believe in Manitobans getting access to opportunities of education and training. I also understand that when someone invests in his or her own training, they are going to be much better for it. As the Minister of Education and Training says, a lot of the adjustments are not being made at the individual student's level. Many of those adjustments are made in the administrative aspects of the programs.

I have been involved in that area, and I have seen some of the changes that have needed to be made. Yes, we are making them, and we are making them for the benefit of students who are going to be entering these programs in the future. If we continue to waste the money, if we continue to simply keep throwing good money after bad, students in the future are not going to have the opportunity that they deserve to get meaningful training, to get meaningful education so they can contribute meaningfully to this society.

I say that the member for Thompson has made an error. I believe the motion was made by the member for Thompson, was it not?

**An Honourable Member: Wolseley.**

**Mr. Derkach:** Oh, I am sorry. The member for Wolseley (Mr. Friesen) makes an error, because I believe that indeed if she had thought about it, if she had taken a look at the history of what has gone on in education and training, she would understand that what the minister is doing here is actually giving those Manitobans right across this province equal access, equal opportunity, allowing them to invest in themselves. Yes, allowing them to take on a little bit of debt, but indeed it does put students on a level playing field.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think that I would like to conclude by, if I could, asking the Minister of Education whether he feels that the rates that students who enter our institutions are on a level playing field and indeed whether it does provide for them an equal opportunity to ACCESS Programs regardless of the types of programs that they want to enter into.

**Mr. Manness:** I have enjoyed listening to the commentary provided by my colleague because he brings forward very, very important history with respect to what we found in the field of training and how taxpayer dollars had been so severely abused by the government before us.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want members to know that, of course, one can define fairness and equality in how many different ways, I guess, it depends how many people are prepared to try and give a definition to the word. What do we say to the public, to those people who want to maintain the status quo and keep the numbers, given the budget restraints, given the fact that federal government has been pulling, pulling, pulling out of this, given the fact that under the old regime the total numbers being able to access ACCESS would continue to fall maintaining the status quo.

Yet what we are proposing here in terms of the change will allow for increased entry. What do we say? How do the members opposite—when I come out with the numbers, in 1993-94, 744 people were part of the ACCESS Program, and in 1994-95, with the change in regime that we are proposing that now 832, 11.8 percent, additional people will be able to be part of the ACCESS Program, what do the members say publicly? How do they defend their actions? Well, they cannot. They cannot possibly defend their actions.

What are we asking? Based upon need, because not everybody that is in this program requires financial support. But based upon need—and the criteria eligibility put into place by the Canada Student Loan program, regular students now, all other Manitoba students, first of all, have to borrow \$165 a week from Canada and \$110 a week after that from Manitoba alone, even though the province has to pick up 40 percent from dollar one. Then after that, for those that have need, there is a study assistance, a bursary, nonrepayable of \$40. Yet ACCESS students, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are asking them at Level 1, the \$165 per week, to provide for their own requirements by way of loan, of which we guarantee to pay 40 percent, guarantee 40 percent,

and members somehow are saying that that is unfair.

Again, the cost of setting up these programs—anywhere from \$60,000 per student for attending college, \$130,000-plus for attending university. And we are asking somebody—guaranteed employment, to use the words of my friends in the opposition—asking them basically to have at the time of graduation a loan, an indebtedness, in the area of \$16,000 to \$20,000. And that is based on a 34-week program.

**An Honourable Member:** It is not a 34-week program.

**Mr. Manness:** Per year.

**An Honourable Member:** It is not a 34-week program.

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, some are 34-week programs. So the member says—what is the member saying? It is a 50-week program? Some are longer than 34. I understand. BUNTEP and others are longer.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the point still stands. That is why, taking into account the longer year and obviously some of the other areas, we did not request that ACCESS students have to flow or make requirement for the second and third levels.

So I say to the member opposite it is certainly fairness that is in place. But, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what else are we doing with this savings? Well, just recently the new centre—the member would know this, that BUNTEP opened the new centre in Thompson. The member knows that. It opened at the end of April, just this summer. Oh no, we did not hear anything about the—

**An Honourable Member:** Well, you did nothing. You had nothing to do with that. It was KCC that provided the service.

**Mr. Manness:** Ah, we did nothing. We did nothing—[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. I would ask the honourable members to please refrain from ruining the decorum within my committee. I am really having a hard time hearing the minister and I am sitting next to him.

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what a foolish statement the member for Thompson says: It was not you, it was KCC. Who funds KCC? The taxpayers of the province of Manitoba—[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. Could I ask the honourable member one more time to just refrain a little bit while the minister—everyone will have an opportunity. Order, please. Everyone will have an opportunity to put their words on the record, but this time it is the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Ashton:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we did not say anything when the minister was initially recognized, although we are debating the motion. The minister who spoke previously, the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) had, when we were debating a motion, asked a question to the minister. You then recognized the minister.

\* (2040)

I would ask, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if perhaps we cannot have some alternation in debate. We are quite willing to hear the Minister of Education's debate on this particular matter, but I believe that the normal procedure is when we are dealing with a motion, we are debating the motion. We are not in the normal process of asking questions to the minister and dealing with a line item.

So if I am a little bit anxious about the minister speaking for the second time on what was a question from the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach), I would perhaps ask that we have some alternation between members, because I know some of our members in particular have a lot of points they want to put on the debate on this motion, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** The honourable member did not have a point of order, but I would like to inform the committee that I will not be keeping a formal list, but I have had hands coming up all over the place. I will get to each and every one of you as soon as I possibly can. At this time the honourable minister has the floor.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I was reacting to the statement when I thought I heard the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) say that it was not in essence taxpayers. He did not use the word, but in the sense he said KCC funded this, I say well from where did KCC get—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, all I know is that federal government has been backing out of ACCESS since we took office. The former Minister of Northern and Native Affairs, he made several trips down to Ottawa to fight on behalf of ACCESS. The Minister of Education went to Ottawa to fight on behalf of ACCESS. I think there were a couple of other ministers long before I came along.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member does not have to give me a history lesson on ACCESS funding. Our government has fought and fought and fought and picked up more and more of the cost every year, and yet when we try to make a change in program which is going to be fairer to everybody, every post-secondary student in the province, which is also going to allow for greater opportunity of entry by the client group that the member is supposedly speaking on behalf of today, and when we try to allow some of the saving to flow over—and who knows where, there could be another post-secondary institution hosted location or event or program in the North—the members opposite say no, keep the status quo.

Keep the existing program but put more money at it, because what they are saying is that the program that we have in place now has been in place for 10 years and it has worked perfectly. No changes. And I am saying to the member, nonsense, there is not a program in government that should not be studied, No. 1, and No. 2, reflected upon, and certainly if the evaluations point out that there should be changes, let the changes flow.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the members, after they see the report, will stand and applaud the action of this government.

**An Honourable Member:** Table it.

**Mr. Manness:** The member says table it. I have full intention of tabling it when it is in a form ready to be tabled. I have had it for a long time, but the consultants still are not done. I have had a draft copy for a long time.

I again point this out for the record. The members can make all of the commentaries they want, but the fact is most of the saving, the printed saving, will be in the areas of administration and also in asking some of the students to take on some indebtedness.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson,** I cannot believe that members opposite would not want a program that was fairer and allowing greater entry into it. It makes no sense to me. I cannot believe that they would not want us, be encouraging us to make the changes that would allow for greater access to the program, but the members do not see that.

They see it purely as a cost-cutting move because it prints from 99 down to 79, and they figure they can make an awful lot of political hay on this, that they can go and beat the bushes and try and have people convinced we are throwing them out of the program, and, of course, nothing is further from the truth.

So, **Mr. Deputy Chairperson,** I will not even move into the Workforce 2000 program aspect of the motion because I know we are coming up to that line and the member for Wolseley particularly will want to spend a lot of time on that issue. So it is probably not in keeping with the desire of many of the other people at this table to want to speak to move into Workforce 2000 at this time.

But let me reiterate for the final time, **Mr. Deputy Chairperson,** this program change was made purely on the basis of fairness to all of those people who want to access post-secondary education institutions within our province.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I have just a couple of questions for the minister, and then a couple of questions also for the mover of the motion. It is an attempt to try to get some clarification on the whole issue.

What I would like to be able to do is to first ask just a couple of very brief questions with reference

to the ACCESS. The minister indicated that in the '93-94 year there were 744 students that went through ACCESS, for '94-95, 832 students. I just want to confirm those numbers, and if, in fact, the minister can indicate would there be any change or level of funding to those individuals year over year.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. At this time I would like to remind the honourable members that we are debating a motion that was brought forward by the member for Wolseley. We will have an opportunity to ask the minister a number of questions once we get into the direct line, which is ACCESS Programs, but at this time I would like to remind the honourable member for Inkster that we are debating the motion that is before us.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Just to speak on that, we have the NDP critic indicating that there has been a significant cut in funding to the program. I think it is important that we understand as a committee in terms of the real impact of that particular cut, and that is the reason why I had asked the question in terms of, in real terms, how many individuals or the number of students will this actually have an impact on. So I would ask the minister if he could just clarify those numbers for me.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** I would like to bring to the attention of the committee that I believe if there are any questions within your debate that you are putting forward on this motion, I am sure the minister will have plenty of opportunity when he comes back again to answer those questions. At this time, I do believe the proper way to handle this is for the members to move into the debate, unless it is the will of the committee that the minister be allowed to answer questions during this debate. What is the will of the committee?

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Lamoureux:** On a point of order, I think that it is most appropriate to be able to ask a question of the minister to find out, in fact, the real impact this motion is going to have. So it is strictly relative to the motion at hand, and we would not want to have individuals voting, not having the necessary information for us.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** The honourable member for Wolseley on the issue of— [interjection] The honourable member for Thompson, on another—

\* \* \*

**Mr. Ashton:** On a matter of procedure really. It is not essentially on a matter of order.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** This is on a matter of procedure because at this time I am just getting to see if the committee is willing to allow the minister to answer some questions during the debate.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I realize that the Liberals may have some difficulty making up their minds on the resolution. I just want some assurance that if it is going to require questions, there will be a limit to the number of questions, that we are not going to be here for God knows how many days while the member for Inkster decides which way he is going to vote on this particular motion. So we are willing to allow leave for one question, well, perhaps one or two questions, but please, so long as the record can indicate that it is not unlimited leave here to proceed into questions.

\* (2050)

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Then, with leave, we will allow the honourable member for Inkster the opportunity to ask a number of short questions just to get clarification.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am not entirely convinced that one should not be able to ask questions prior to being able to vote on the motion. But the question has already been put. I would ask the minister whether or not he can respond to the actual number of individuals that this will have an impact on in terms of future students and the type of resources in particular in terms of forgiveness of the individuals applying for this particular program.

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I said before, right today, enrolled in all the programs, in terms of this school year, '93-94, there are presently, or at least to start off with, 744 individuals. The expectation, the information that we have been receiving, is that in terms of '94-95,

the number will grow by 11.8 percent to 832 in all of the ACCESS Programs.

Now, obviously, some number of the 832 then are going to have some level of indebtedness associated with their studies.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** But the figure that we see is in fact to facilitate the 832.

**Mr. Manness:** Yes.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess this would be a question for the mover of the motion, in trying again to get a better—

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. The honourable member cannot put forward questions to the mover, but if the mover so chooses, when she takes the floor—

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have been inside committee before where motions have been moved and questions have been put. I would ask maybe that the Deputy Chairperson take it under advisement before we start ruling out any questioning of a motion. I think it is ridiculous not to be able to ask some questions for clarification. In fact, I am not going to hide behind rules. If in fact they do not want to provide information, fine, we can have the question.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not think the motion could be clearer. We are opposed to the cuts in ACCESS funding; the government feels it is the appropriate course of action, and we have pinpointed the fact that we would rather see the money in ACCESS than Workforce 2000. I do not think we have to spend much more time.

It is a question of which side of the issue you are on. We know which side we are on. I know which side the government is on. I am not sure which side the Liberals are on. If they need time to decide that, I would suggest they discuss it within their caucus rather than waste the time of the committee back and forth in terms of questions. I mean, we cannot make up their mind for them.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Could I just have one minute while I do a little bit of research here?

Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order. If the honourable member wants to put his question on the record, I am sure when the honourable member for Wolseley has her opportunity to speak to the motion she will answer the question directly.

\* \* \*

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just wanted to make a couple of points here. First of all, I found it interesting when I heard the former Minister of Education speaking about Limestone Training and the total negative impacts it has had on northern people. I find that very surprising coming from a former minister. [interjection] Well, you said it was a total waste of money.

The other statement was what happened to the trainees, where are they now, and that there was only a few number that graduated. I think you used the word 16 graduates or 17 graduates. That really surprises me, but in a way it does not because it shows how so out of touch the former Minister of Education is pertaining to northern Manitoba.

When you deal with individuals that are going for certification in carpentry, in plumbing, in electrical [interjection] No, I was not in carpentry. [interjection] I used to be. To say now that only 17 graduated with their certificates, I think that is a great accomplishment. When we looked in Manitoba in 1986 we found three aboriginal people that had their carpenter papers, three in all of Manitoba, and we could not hire any of those people because they already had good employment opportunities.

To say now after a program that was in place from 1986 to even today, it was started in '85 and it was finished in 1989, that is four years. If you know anything about apprenticeship, anything about northern Manitoba, how can you have a person graduate with a carpenter certificate or electrical certificate or any apprenticeable paper when you know the construction season in northern Manitoba is three months at the most, and it takes 1,800 hours to accumulate one year of apprenticeship time?

So the Minister of Education does not even understand that. So how can you complete four years when you are only employed three months out of the year? That is the construction phase in northern Manitoba.

So when you look at that—and if you want a true gauge, look at some of the people, do an assessment of how many northern Manitobans received their carpenter papers from 1985 to 1994, where some of them have had the opportunity to accumulate their required number of hours to write for their papers.

Most individuals cannot even write their first-year papers until after at least three or four years of job opportunity. So how can you say that they only graduated 17 when if you want a true assessment, if you want to look at a true assessment, look at how many people graduated from Level I, how many graduated from Level II, how many graduated from Level III, and then how many graduated from Level IV. How many are still working to try and accumulate their hours to get their papers? If you go to any northern community in any northern reserve, who is building the houses today? It is not the southern contractors.

**An Honourable Member:** They are not Limestone students either.

**Mr. Hickes:** You go up there and have a look.

Before the people that built those houses used—most of those houses were built by southern contractors, the employment opportunities were from southern people that took the jobs from those communities, where it was 85, 90, 95 percent of the people unemployed, and today you go there it is the local people that are doing the work, and most of them are still on apprenticeship programs.

If you look at who is running the heavy equipment in those communities, who is maintaining the roads, who is driving the trucks, if you look at who is driving the trucks, who is working for the bands, it is the people that got their training through Limestone Training. Most of them got their training through there.

The other thing was what the minister had said, and I am really surprised that his staff never

educated him on this. He said he went to the Manfor site and there was a whole field of used and old equipment just sitting there.

**An Honourable Member:** It is Keewatin.

**Mr. Hickes:** Yes, Keewatin Community College. Keewatin Community College was at Manfor. Do you know where that equipment came from? It never came from Limestone Training. [interjection] Did not. I was right there when they moved it. It used to be in the backyard. [interjection] Darn right that was part of it. It was in the backyard of Keewatin Community College. They used the old equipment to do heavy equipment training years and years ago. Most of that equipment is so rusted up and outdated. [interjection] A few pieces had LTA.

\* (2100)

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. I am really having a hard time hearing the honourable member for Point Douglas. The honourable member for Point Douglas to continue, please.

**Mr. Hickes:** That is the other point I wanted to make, because a lot of that equipment that was sold off for nothing was very valuable equipment. There was a brand new CAT. It was brand new, it was running, and it was the same CAT and the loader that they used at Limestone Training that we used for training, and the northern— [interjection] There was nothing wrong with it.

The northern communities could have used that equipment, and what did they do? They auctioned it off and they got nothing for it. Very, very little. Instead of looking at it and helping the northern communities— [interjection] It shows how little the former minister understands.

The other thing that Limestone Training did was it engineered, it helped to get aboriginal people into the engineering program. They did upgrading in the chemistry and the maths area for aboriginals to get into the engineering program, and those people that went into the engineering program, there were five that graduated this year. If they had not got that opportunity to upgrade, there would not be five aboriginal engineers that graduated from that program.

When you get into the ACCESS Programs, ACCESS was started 10 years ago. If you looked 10 years ago, how many aboriginal people did you see in Manitoba that were engineers, dentists, doctors, social workers, teachers? How many? There was very very few. That is why the ACCESS Program was brought into place, to try and help the aboriginal community to get the proper education to start delivering—

**An Honourable Member:** It was more than aboriginals.

**Mr. Hickes:** Well, minorities came on, but most of your students are aboriginal.

**An Honourable Member:** But there was more than that.

**Mr. Hickes:** Yes, I fully understand, but most of your students from the ACCESS Program were aboriginal, and the reason that ACCESS Program was brought in was to try and get more aboriginal people into the employment opportunities that we did not have access to. That was the whole purpose of it.

**An Honourable Member:** It was not just for aboriginal people.

**Mr. Hickes:** No, I am not saying that, but I said most of your students were aboriginal people. That is what I said. I made that very clear. Most of them were. Most of the students that are ACCESS students are single parents. So when you talk about individuals that have to now take out loans or work part time, where do the single parents get the time? Where?

They are trying to raise a family. They are trying to study. They are trying to take upgrading in order to try and succeed in their chosen careers, and a lot of them are in 11-month programs.

If you look at the Winnipeg Education Centre, they are there for 11 months, and the same as most of your programs. If you look back and you say, well, we want to be fair to everybody, and we want to make sure because they are going to get employment opportunities, look at how much money the government is saving. Most of the students that are in ACCESS Programs, they come from welfare. Did you know that? From welfare.

Do you want to continue paying welfare for—what?—20, 30 more years? It costs you more to keep a person on welfare for 20, 30 years than to pay for education for—what?—four years, five years in some cases. It is a heck of a lot cheaper. That is where most of the students come from, from the welfare rolls. So why are you cutting it now? By cutting it, by changing the criteria, you cut 20 percent from the funding.

But anyway, when you reduce the funding or make it harder for individuals to succeed, like I said, most of them are single parents that are now trying to upgrade themselves, trying to get an education, trying to raise their children, and now you are saying, now you have to work part time to try and make ends meet.

Did you know most of these students that are ACCESS students already have to take out additional loans and additional dollars in order to succeed? The minister says it is because we want everyone to be the same, we want to be fair to everyone. Well, if the minister would look back 10 years ago, there were very few aboriginal people going to university, and ask yourself why. The other thing was, who had access to university, who those people were, and you will see most of them came right out of high school or most of them were single people that had the opportunity to live with their parents or had parents that were well enough off, that could subsidize and help them to get through university. That is who the university students were.

Now we see aboriginal people that are now getting the opportunity to get educated and the opportunity to make a better life for their families. Now we see the government trying to cut that back.

So that way, what you see is this government bringing undue hardship directly, because the majority of your students are aboriginal, upon aboriginal people when we have the same government, an all-party agreement of supporting the inherent right to self-government.

What? It is a simple question. What is the key to aboriginal self-government? It has to be education; it has to be education. Without the aboriginal

people having education opportunities, self-government is doomed. Government, they must understand that. So how can you support the program? How many students will be able to attend ACCESS with—[interjection] You believe it is really more? It is not more. [interjection] You would not have more. You know that, and I know that. I hope the aboriginal community will challenge the government in some form on this because it is so crucial for the wish of self-government to come about to have proper education.

Just go back 10 years. [interjection] Well, go back 10 years. I asked you a question. How many aboriginal people had university degrees 10 years ago, and then today, and now you know how many more have it because of the ACCESS Programs. You cannot put more barriers. You are just putting more barriers back onto people.

When we talk about training programs, the community of Wabowden is asking for truck driver training programs. If Limestone was such a big failure, why are they asking for truck driver training programs now? Do you know? I really believe that the government has to reassess this, and I hope they will in their wisdom choose not to penalize aboriginal people any further and to ensure that the aboriginal people—no more hoops, no more barriers to leap through, because most of those have been eliminated, and to continue to help promote the wishes of aboriginal people for self-government.

I was really amazed when I saw all of the ACCESS students in the gallery. There was about 70 of them that were going to be directly hit by this, and most of them were single parents trying to raise families, and they said, you know, we do take out loans and everything else. Then I saw the Liberal critic out in the hallway, the great saviours of ACCESS, and I think the Liberals forget that in 1988 they campaigned to cut or eliminate the ACCESS Program, to eliminate it and campaigned on it.

Then in the next breath, when there are 70 students out there, they are in the hallway, the saviours of ACCESS—[interjection] No, it was



not Kevin, it was their Education critic. I spoke to some of those students, and they said do not worry, the Liberals—and I kindly reminded them what their campaign promises were.

This is such an important vote that we have, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I move that the question be now put.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just on a point of order, we would like to be able to continue to discuss this particular resolution, and I think it is important to note that the member from Point Douglas (Mr. Hicles) is in fact limiting the debate, and we find that most inappropriate for the official opposition party.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** All those in favour that the question now be put, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

#### Formal Vote

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** I request a formal vote.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** A formal vote has been requested.

Order, please. I would like to inform the honourable member for Thompson that two members have to request the vote. We are going to adjourn for a few minutes.

\* (2110)

Members, rise to go to the House for a formal vote, please.

*The committee recessed at 9:10 p.m.*

#### After Recess

*The committee resumed at 9:34 p.m.*

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. At this time we will still be debating the motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, indeed once again I am somewhat relieved that democracy has prevailed. I know that this is not necessarily the first time in which we have unfortunately had to entertain a motion of closure from the official opposition. In fact—

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Ashton:** A point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Liberal House leader should know somewhat better, know that we are now debating the motion. I assume by the decision that was just taken in the House that that is what his intention would be. It is definitely not in order to revisit a decision of the House, and I would suggest you ask him to bring his comments to order, in particular to the motion that is before us.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. The honourable member, I am sure, is getting close to dealing with the issue before us at this time, and the honourable member did not have a point of order.

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**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I can understand why the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) would be very sensitive. After all, back at the beginning of June 1994 was the last time when he, in fact, had moved a motion of closure, and—

**An Honourable Member:** We have not hit June '94.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** June of '91. Somewhat scary—whenever I look at the member for Thompson, I guess it kind of brings it out on me. I recall the headline where it read the member for Thompson was in wonderland as NDP urges closure, and one could go on for quite awhile.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. Could I remind the honourable member that we are dealing with the motion put forward by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), and there are many members who would like to put their words of wisdom on the record.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the motion the New Democratic Party has brought in is something that we will in fact be supporting, but there are some concerns we do have with respect to this particular motion.

The New Democratic Party has been very hesitant in terms of any form of support for Workforce 2000. We share a number of the concerns that they have in terms of monitoring and accountability and how it is being implemented, but we recognize and acknowledge that there is a need for a program like Workforce 2000 and that both programs should, in fact, be working and complementing each other.

With reference to remarks that the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) had put onto the record in terms of the Liberal Party's previous position on this particular issue, I would take exception to those remarks and would ask the member for Point Douglas to actually bring forward what it is that he is referring to when he says that the Liberal Party did not support the ACCESS Program. I will wait for those particular remarks.

I would have liked to have seen a better explanation from the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) when she brought in the motion, because I think that there are some concerns, some questions that could have been answered, understanding that we could not ask specific questions. I guess had we had the opportunity to ask some questions, one could have sought clarification from the member for Wolseley with respect to what is the position of the New Democratic Party with respect to the Workforce 2000 program as a whole.

Hopefully, in somewhat of a preamble to the motion, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) would have had the opportunity, because if the New Democratic Party's position is that they do not support the Workforce 2000 program in its entirety, we would disagree with that. If it is just the grants that they are calling into question, it would be nice to receive a full list of the grants that they are calling into question.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I know in the past that they have been very critical of some—and no

doubt for good reason, but I would challenge them to indicate in terms of what it is that they find about some of the occupations that they criticize. [interjection]

No, we are speaking about the motion. The motion refers to Workforce 2000, for the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). He should have read the motion himself.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do believe that it is appropriate to have given some form of a detailed explanation in terms of the content of the motion, much like I thought it was appropriate to get some sort of an idea from the Minister of Education in terms of the number of students this is going to be having an impact on.

With those few words, I will indicate that we will be supporting the motion, but we do have some reservations with respect to why it is the New Democratic Party does not accept, at the very least, the concept. We share their concerns with respect to the monitoring of the Workforce 2000 program, but we do not share the thought that the program should be put to a complete halt.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

\* (2140)

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** The question before the committee is the motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

#### Formal Vote

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** I would request a formal vote, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** And the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is here as well.

Two members have requested a formal vote. We will now proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

*The committee recessed at 9:40 p.m.*

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**After Recess**

*The committee resumed at 10:33 p.m.*

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. When this committee last sat, we were dealing with 4.(b) ACCESS Programs \$7,903,200.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think the motion that was carried in the Chamber speaks volumes in terms of what the general feeling is with respect to the government's treatment of the ACCESS Program which has been concerns which have been expressed through Question Periods and so forth. Hopefully, the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) will give it reconsideration in terms of what it is he is doing with this particular program.

I would ask the Minister of Education what he is prepared to do with respect to the ACCESS Program, given the most recent vote inside the Chamber.

**Mr. Manness:** Well, I am just absolutely delighted the member has put that question. I have learned long ago that it is better to put your fate in the House of all the elected people rather than committees. If the member is saying the fate of ACCESS is directly proportional to the way a committee of the House has reflected upon the issue, I would say no, let us go right to the House as the final authority.

The skirmishes that we have gone through tonight will not cause me to change my mind with respect to what has been done in allowing greater entry for more people into a program that the government, obviously, has supported over the years and found millions of dollars more when the federal government was backing out of this program and have been very supportive of the program.

So I want the record, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to show very clearly a number of things, and some of them will be repetitive. First of all, the government supports the program. The government has made a commitment of millions of dollars of additional funding to the program over the course of seven budgets. The change reflected in this budget is one where, first of all, we were trying to reduce the administrative costs in the institutions which are providing this service and in our sense, in some respects, have additional costs built in which we really should not be paying for. Thirdly and most importantly, in fairness to all of the post-secondary students in this province, many who have sizable loan portfolios upon leaving the post-secondary school education system, that they be treated no differently than any other citizen in the province.

So we stand by the decision, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and I will again put the House's faith into a decision as to whether or not I be censured. What I find kind of different is that, of course, the Liberal Party—I agree with the NDP in one sense—did not know where they were coming from on this one or where they are going. They still do not even know what ACCESS does, let alone where they want to stand on the issue.

The Liberals are going to have a lot of explaining to do over the course of the next number of months, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. One thing I have learned about Manitoba Liberals, they are an awful lot different than Atlantic Canada Liberals. Atlantic Canada Liberals, they have some basis. They have some principle, and they have some focus. They know what direction they are going.

I have watched this party over the last six years under two Leaders, and I have never seen a party vacillate more, stand on one foot then to the other, shift. There is an old saying, if you stand for nothing, you will fall for everything, and the Liberals, of course, have shown that to me over and over and over again over the course of the last six or eight years.

I will tell you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am not troubled by this, because when we take this motion

to the House like we will, the Liberals may very well stand and support the government because it is 24 hours hence and, you never know, there could be a mind shift again. So I am not going to lose a lot of sleep about it, and yet I have to point out that the Liberals feel, of course, that they were duped by the NDP.

They did not know this motion was coming so they are kind of angry at the NDP. But when it came down to the 11th hour, in this case the 12th hour, of course they showed their true colours, and that is, try to take the political advantage while you can because tomorrow you may have changed your mind and missed the moment.

I mean—no, I will not say that into the record, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I was going to relate it to real life experiences when there are only two people involved. But let me—from different genders, too, I might add. Do you want me to stop? So I hope I have answered the member's question in totality.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I can understand why it is that the Minister of Education would now be somewhat embarrassed, or at least he should be.

**Mr. Manness:** I may be a lot of things right now, but I am not embarrassed.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** He says he is not embarrassed. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I was there when the Minister of Education was then the Minister of Finance, and we were in a committee room when he decided, well, as minister responsible for Repap I am done answering questions and took the liberty to walk outside of the committee room and grind things to a halt. I remember the research that was done on that particular case, in which—

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members to please refer a little bit to (b) ACCESS Programs \$7,903,200? I believe the motion that we had in the House has already been taken care of, and at this time we are dealing with ACCESS.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I was just drawing the similarities to that particular incident and the incident that we just finished having inside the Chamber, where once again this

particular minister is breaking new grounds. I have only been here, albeit, somewhat six years. I would turn to the dean of the Chamber, and I do not know if he might, in fact, be able to advise me on whether or not he is ever aware of a minister that has been actually censured before. So I do not think this is something that should be taken all that lightly. I know if I was in the minister's situation it would be somewhat embarrassing.

\* (2240)

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson,** again I would ask the Minister of Education—he has made reference to a number of individuals who have expressed an interest in '94-95, where he is anticipating, I believe it was 832. I am wondering if he can comment in terms of the general demand of the program. Is this something that is coming more so from—the increased demand, is it more so from rural Manitoba predominately or the city of Winnipeg?

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, certainly still the largest demand is from northern Manitoba. I mean, that is a given, given the history of the course. But there is also a growing demand by those who of course see an incredible deal, I mean an incredible opportunity, people who may in some cases have sufficient means of their own, but they see this as an underwriting of a total government program. Again, in some cases over \$100,000, and of course, they are growingly interested also.

So the question is then, what criteria are used and who should make these decisions? Who makes the decisions today with respect to who is eligible to be part of the ACCESS Program? Well, that is a question worth asking, and it is one worth answering. I dare say, once the report comes down, it will probably draw some attention to that question.

So I say that geographically most of the greater demand comes from northern Manitoba. We understand that. That is why we continue to support the program, and that is why, even though there will be a new regime of support, it will be there to provide greater opportunities or an

opportunity for greater numbers, and that again speaks to our overall support of the program.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister can indicate whether or not there has been any background work to substantiate that the ability or the means of individuals able to participate in this program have been enhanced through other programs that no longer require them to have the subsidization that is currently there?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will try and attempt to make it a bit more clear. Can the minister indicate whether or not the financial capabilities of individuals that are applying for this particular program have in fact been that much greater? Are there individuals that have more money—as the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) says—able to participate in this particular program?

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you cannot make categorical statements. What the review has indicated is that there are some people presently in the course who come from economic backgrounds—certainly not the majority, as I have said before, maybe not even a large minority—but there are some cases where we sense there are means in place that would dictate that individuals present that information by way of student loan application and let the same criteria that are in place for every other Manitoban be in place for them. Nothing more.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to ask about the report that has been done on the ACCESS Programs that the minister is refusing to release, either by freedom of information, which I requested many months ago and which the minister has said no to, and again in this session. The minister has refused to table that report, so that the very basis of the minister's observations, the leaps of faith that the minister is making in estimating the number of students who will be involved in ACCESS Programs under his new criteria, are simply not available to anyone else other than the minister. I want to know how the minister defends that in front of the Legislature.

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I feel compelled to put some information on the record. I

was hoping to see it released as part of the whole overall assessment in the evaluation document on the ACCESS Program.

It should be noted that the ACCESS students were surveyed, and 26 percent of a very healthy, large base number that were surveyed. These results came forward in '93-94. ACCESS students who applied for Canada Student Loan in their first year of study had access to more or comparable resources than other regular applicants in six of eight Canada Student Loan group types.

Secondly, in three married, single, parent group types analyzed for '93-94, ACCESS students applying for a Canada Student Loan in their first year of study had, on average, more resources than regular students applying for Canada Student Loans in their first year of study.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we do not make these decisions lightly. We do not rush into a program which we have supported with millions of dollars, put ministers on the road several times to convince Ottawa that it was not worthy for them to reduce their level of funding. We believe in this program. We always have.

As I said to the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey), and as I have said to other members, because a program has been around for 10 years does not allow it to be stamped as a sacred program. This government has committed to itself, and indeed to the people of this province, that programs, when they are around for awhile, will be reviewed and analyzed, and if they are found wanting they will be changed. That is the hallmark of this government, and no program escapes, including ACCESS.

So we brought outside people in to review it in a dispassionate and objective fashion. The surveys were done. The scientific techniques to analyze this program were put into place, and it was found wanting in some respects when put into comparison with what is available for the vast number of individuals in our society who have to borrow money for post-secondary education purposes, and we have made the change.

But there are people across the way who say you cannot change it, do not dare change it unless you put more money in to maintain the status quo. That is not acceptable, and they can make all the political commentary they want. The Liberals can fall off any log they have ever stood on with respect to objectivity. It is a pretty narrow fence. It will hold a Liberal up on objectivity, I can tell you—or a pretty wide fence. But the reality is tonight they have shown me that they took the cheap political side, and that they do again, that they would use political expediency over common sense all the time.

Now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with that information, which will be part of the larger report when it is released, I hope the members understand why it is that we have made some of the changes that are emerging, and that they realize that it is government's responsibility in support of the taxpayers to review all programs, and when they are found wanting in some respect, that changes have to be made. Changes always cannot call upon additional resources. Those days are gone.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister is asking us to take a great deal on faith. The minister has specifically refused, through freedom of information, to allow us to have access to the same numbers that he has. The minister now quotes us one selected statistic from that report. He may or may not be right, but because he has specifically refused to allow us access to the same information that he has, we have no way of evaluating the selective numbers that he is giving us.

\* (2250)

In '93-94, if those were the people who were surveyed under the Hikel report. There had already been substantial changes to ACCESS Programs at that point as a result of the withdrawal of funds by the federal government. The nature of selection had already changed by '93-94, so the very students whom you are surveying in '93-94, those in the first year, are quite different than the ACCESS Program had been over the years.

**An Honourable Member:** So?

**Ms. Friesen:** Well, the minister says so. It is very difficult to get across to him that what he has done is changed the basis of selection in the ACCESS Program. Selection was one of the bases of success, of retention in the program. Those are the hallmarks of success of this program, is the nature of the high rate of retention. I assume that the Hikel report also looks at that. I would like to have access to the same numbers that the minister does. Why is he consistently refusing, in writing and again in front of this committee, to give the public access to a report for which they paid and for which the minister is now making substantial changes to a program?

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if these Estimates were held in June, they may very well have that report ready for tabling at that time. I do not now. Now the member says, why do you not make it available right now? Because it is not ready. [interjection] Yes, we made the decision, and we are held accountable for those decisions. We are governing. This party is governing, and we have made the decisions. You are right, we made it, but the member is right. She refers to Mr. Hikel. Well, what did we do? Did we reach the wrong person?

**Ms. Friesen:** I have no idea.

**Mr. Manness:** Well, but the point being, I mean, we reached to a former assistant deputy minister of Income Security under the NDP. That is who we asked to do this survey, somebody who is knowledgeable in the whole program and the whole social program area, and who formerly taught in the ACCESS Program. Now, the members may call into question the methodology, and they are speculating on that too unless they know for sure, but the reality is now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that when the report is complete and it is in a form that can be shared, it will be shared.

The member talks about eligibility. I mean, can she tell me from the university perspective how students are chosen? Can she tell me how one disadvantaged, needy student is chosen over another? She does not have a clue, because there are no criteria in place today, no consistent,

objective criteria in place for selecting one student over another.

So how do you work a program that way? Who gets the benefit of the scarce number of positions? Who receives that? Who makes that decision? The institution? The band? Well, of course, nobody really knows, because you have a system today which confers upon some individuals an incredible benefit, and yet there is no consistency of selection criteria.

Vis-à-vis other students in our province, many who upon graduation have a student loan which they have to deal with for some number of years—so why do the members not at least have the courage to come out and say that post-secondary education should be a free good to everybody? Why do they not have the courage and the gall at least to do that, but they do not. They do not, because that is the ultimate in fairness to make it a free good to everybody.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, well, the minister has responded first of all by bringing into question the capabilities and the impartiality of the person who did the survey. I will remind the minister that he is the one who raised that. I am asking specifically for public information. I have done it in writing, asking for freedom of information on this report so that we might be able to judge the kinds of decisions which the minister has made and the kind of policy which the government has put into place. That has been denied. The issue is not at all the—[interjection]

Well, the minister is saying—but in fact I have asked for freedom of information on this report, and it has been denied. Does the minister have an alternative explanation?

**Mr. Manness:** The member has been advised that this information, this document will be provided within the 90 days that is eligible under the freedom of information legislation. The member has been advised. She knows fully well this document, this evaluation, this internal assessment done by Hikel of Peat Marwick will be made available to her.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I applied for this information well in advance of Estimates

so that I would be in a position to discuss in a rational manner, using the same information that the minister had available to him, the kind of policy decisions which he has been making. That information was denied. The issue is not the person who has conducted this. The issue is the methodology; the issue is the generation of students which has been surveyed and the kind of results which have been accumulated and which have been denied in preparation for these Estimates.

The minister has also said on other occasions that portions of that report may be made available, so I am interested now, is he now committing himself to table formally the entire report?

**Mr. Manness:** No, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as the member knows fully well, we indicated that the full report would be provided.

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

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I must say to the minister, he should appreciate our frustration here. The minister has made a significant decision in terms of the ACCESS Program, and the minister should realize, in going through the Estimates, that this is a significant decision, certainly in terms of the percentage of funding that is affected, regardless of where that money comes from in terms of administration and other items or directly in terms of student allowances. That is one of our major frustrations here.

The minister has a study which the minister is quoting from partially, which, he says, has not been finished, and yet the government has gone ahead and made the decision anyway. I would ask what some member of the public would think of this. Why have this study in the first place if it is not available at this point in time, when we have had a situation where the government has made a decision, and this committee now is reviewing the decision, and by its own motion of a few minutes ago has indicated its strong opposition to the cuts that have taken place to ACCESS? That is, indeed, one of the first concerns that I think should be placed clearly on the record.

The second point, I find it is quite interesting because the minister talked about administrative savings as being part of the area in which this money would come from. We do have one document that has been released. It has been a public document—the Roblin report. What did the Roblin report say in terms of post-secondary education in northern Manitoba? It said what we on this side of the House, the New Democratic Party, had been saying for a considerable period of time, and that is, there is a need for a co-ordinating body in northern Manitoba to ensure that the best use of resources is made.

In fact, we have repeatedly moved resolutions in the House calling for a northern university, a northern polytechnic, whatever framework you want to talk about, because we have said from Day One that a lot can be done in terms of bringing resources together.

I just want to add something to the record: It is obvious that the minister and some of his colleagues are not aware of what is happening in terms of ACCESS Programs, because there was some reference made to the BUNTEP centre in Thompson. I want to place this on the record, because I think it is indicative of the fact that this government has not moved whatsoever in terms of providing that co-ordination.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, what happened essentially is that the BUNTEP program in Thompson was unable to afford to pay for the rented spaces it had. The BUNTEP program approached KCC for space—KCC indicated that space would be available, and this is KCC now under the current governance, et cetera—it did not go directly to the government. But I did not let it rest at that point, I was contacted by people who were concerned about the future of the program, because if BUNTEP did not have a home in Thompson, there would be no BUNTEP in Thompson. It was very clearly stated.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, you know what I had to do? I have raised it in the Legislature, I have raised it in correspondence, I have raised it repeatedly with the previous Minister of Education. I realize the minister has been

subsequently appointed and may not realize what the minister responded: The Minister of Education indicated that she had no control over this, that this would not be something that she would make any recommendation on, and that I should contact BUNTEP. Of course, we went around this circular argument, BUNTEP said they did not have the money, and we ended back at square one.

\* (2300)

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage la Prairie):** I realize that this information, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, will look very nice in the campaign literature in Thompson, but I fail to see what relevance it has to what we are discussing here.

**An Honourable Member:** Maybe you have not been following the Estimates.

**Mr. Pallister:** No, I have been following them, and I fail to see what relevance it has to the topic at hand. I think it would be very nice to get back to the point of the discussion in the interests of all committee members, except the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose):** The honourable member did not have a point of order.

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**Mr. Ashton:** I would just like to point out to the member for Portage that BUNTEP is an ACCESS Program. It was raised originally in discussion in the debate earlier tonight, and that is what I am responding to.

But I want to point out what happened with the BUNTEP program, what it had to go through to be able to remain operational in Thompson. Do you know what they had to do to get the capital renovations funding to be able to move into that building? They got nothing from the provincial government. The former Minister of Northern Affairs was talking earlier as if, oh, somehow they were responsible for it.

What happened was, I ran into the director of BUNTEP downtown in Thompson, my wife and I, and we recommended that they look at using the



UI system. They got individuals under the UI system—this is under the UI system where you pay a small top-up on the wages—who then did the capital work in that facility. So it was under a federal government UIC top-up program that it was done—no co-ordination, no funding, no direction, no commitment, nothing at the provincial level. The previous Minister of Education was quite happy to sit back and say, it is none of my business.

My point to the minister—and this is very relevant when you are talking about ACCESS—before you hack the money out of ACCESS, I would suggest to this minister that he look at the recommendations of the Roblin report and bring in that kind of co-ordination, which would not only provide those cost savings, because there are cost savings to be had by bringing together social work programs, BUNTEP and the other programs under a co-ordinating framework, that money could be saved.

But then it could be put into place in expanding and improving northern education, aboriginal education, education here in the core area of the city of Winnipeg. That is what the minister should be doing, because what this government has done, it has gone and cut back funding to the ACCESS Programs, funding that could have been put into improving northern education in many other ways.

But I want to ask the minister a number of questions because I am sure from the discussion tonight that he does not understand the ACCESS Programs. He said earlier tonight, quoted figures indicating that there were 35 weeks—he was talking about student aid in terms of 35-week programs. The minister probably went through a program of that sort. I believe he graduated from the University of Manitoba in agricultural economics. I went through a similar program, and you know what? You know how I was able to get through university? Like a lot of other people, I worked during the summer. I worked at Inco, as a matter of fact. I was able to do that because I was eight months at school; I was four months off during the summer.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the minister does not seem to be aware that many ACCESS students are not in that position. Most are not in that position. They simply cannot turn around now with the cut in the student allowances and work in the summer, and that is going to be one of the questions I want to ask the minister, if he will recognize on the record that that is indeed the case. What he is doing is he is putting those students in a situation where if they do not have band funding, then they will be under the student loan system entirely with no opportunity whatsoever for any employment in the summer.

The second point I want to raise as well because if one talks to people, the students, et cetera, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, one of the major concerns with the cuts in ACCESS is in terms of the ability of the programs to recruit in remote locations. The minister is wrong when he says the institutions do not have criteria for the selection of students. They do have criteria, a series of criteria. Now, if the minister is willing to admit, as the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) indicated earlier, that there have been changes to the program—because now one of the factors is the ability of students to find outside funding, in this case most normally band funding.

What is happening is it is something like a self-fulfilling prophecy. The minister runs around with figures saying, ah ha, there are all these students getting in the program who do not meet the financial need. But it is this government that changed the criteria for the program, changed the funding for the program last year, which meant that those students who are able to access the program and those who are in the greatest financial need are less able to do it. It is an unbelievable lack of logic on the minister's part.

But I am wondering if the minister is aware that one of the things that is going to happen is that the ability to bring in students from a remote location is going to be hampered. The program is already saying, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, it is difficult to bring in students from communities such as York Landing, Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei, Ilford, Brochet, Lac Brochet, South

Indian Lake. They are all communities that do not have roads, that have to rely on winter roads. They do not even get a chance to be brought in. Many of them cannot afford to come in. They are on welfare. They cannot afford to come in because the programs cannot afford to bring them in. So I would really appreciate the minister recognizing that fact.

The third point, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, is in terms of the impact within the students. First of all, I want to say that I find it absolutely despicable that this government would make these changes that also impact students who are in the system. Right now, there are students in the ACCESS Programs who are having to scramble to get funding. They are having to scramble to get band funding, if they can, if they are treaty students. And you know what is happening? Some of them are not going to be able to get it because many bands have already allocated their funding. They have already allocated the funding, and those students will be unable to access that funding.

I want to talk about the Metis and non-Status students as well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson. They have nowhere to go. They cannot go to a band. They are not Status. They are not able to get that type of funding.

The member across the way sitting from the prospective of Winnipeg says, can they not get student loans? This is not Tuxedo, River Heights. It is not the west end of Winnipeg. I am talking about remote aboriginal communities. I am talking about students who in many cases are single parents with three children, four children, and I can tell you the personal stories, the tremendous sacrifice they have had to make to go into this program.

You know what is most ironic, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, is that the minister talks about this, but what he does not do is, he does not point to what is really happening when someone goes into the ACCESS Program. He talks about the amount of money that is expended per student. Well, the minister should know that if you take any of our post-secondary institutions, the amount that is expended is fairly significant whether it is at the

Fort Garry campus or University of Winnipeg or Brandon University or in the ACCESS Program.

You know I have seen people, largely women, who have gone from welfare, being single parents. The minister may wish to calculate what would be paid out in terms of welfare over one, over two, over three or a four-year period, and you know what happens when they enter the ACCESS Program?

The minister talked about the students as if they were in some privileged position. Do they get more than they would get on welfare? Do they double or triple? Do they even hit the poverty line, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson? No, they do not. Those students end up getting less than they were getting on welfare. That is right. They get less than going on welfare. It is not a great privilege that the students undertake. It is a lot of work, just like anybody else who enters a post-secondary program, and in this case, a lot of them face a lot more challenges.

Well, if the minister wants to talk about this, perhaps you should come to communities in northern Manitoba. Perhaps the minister should have come to the graduation on Friday and talked to the students and found out the situation they are in because I, quite frankly, have had enough of people sitting within the comforts of the city of Winnipeg who have not talked to the students, who make major cuts of 20 percent and now decide that they know all the answers affecting those students.

There are a lot of students in our society who face a lot of hardship to go through post-secondary institutions—

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose):** Order, please.

#### **Point of Order**

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Urban Affairs):** Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am considering a point of privilege, but I am debating which to put forward. I seek your advice.

The member opposite has just made some personal implications, innuendos and insinuations that are wrong and—[interjection] I have never made comments to the member opposite about the

fact that he comes from the North and therefore does not understand the city. I do not appreciate comments being made that from the quote, comforts of Winnipeg, where I have lived since I was 19, that I know nothing about other areas that may be vastly different from the, quote, comforts of Winnipeg.

\* (2310)

**Mr. Plohman:** Why are you making all those remarks under your breath?

**Mrs. McIntosh:** The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is also making comments under his breath across the table, which I do not appreciate.

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose):** Order, please. Does the member have a matter of privilege that she wishes to raise? There is no point of order, and I rule that there is no matter of privilege.

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(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will say again that I was there on Friday at the graduation in the social work faculty and I would invite any of the government members who think they know about that program—[interjection] How about talking to people? How about getting up north? How about talking to northern Manitobans before you cut them?

**Mrs. McIntosh:** You do not know that I have not. You make assumptions.

**Mr. Ashton:** You were not there. You cut the program, your government.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** You are an ignorant person. You are rude.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please.

**Mr. Ashton:** I am rude, Mr. Deputy Chairperson? And you are not. Great.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** I am reacting to your rudeness.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. We will continue when the committee gets a hold of itself here.

At this time we are here to bring forward information and ask information of the minister.

We are dealing with 4.(b) ACCESS Programs \$7,903,200.

**Mr. Ashton:** I make no apology for raising the concerns on behalf of the people I represent in this Legislature, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. This government has cut the ACCESS Programs.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Then stick to doing that and stop being rude.

**Mr. Ashton:** I find it rather ironic that someone—Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when I heckle I might consider that I might be accused of being somewhat rude, but I have the floor and somebody is accusing me of being rude. I think that is somewhat ironic.

So I want to say to that member that I make no apologies for speaking out on behalf of my constituents in northern Manitoba, speaking out on behalf of the ACCESS students that I do not believe are being treated fairly. Let us not forget that the ACCESS Program has been targeted for a 20 percent cut in this budget—a 20 percent cut. That is greater in proportion than virtually any other line item.

The minister has said this and the minister has said that, and I have said to the minister one thing. He has made decisions based on a report that has not even been tabled yet. But you know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am sure of one thing. He has not made these decisions, nor has this government made this decision, based on talking to people in the program, in the communities of northern Manitoba, because as recently as Friday I talked to people and it is really sad to see the impact this government is having.

You know, it was not a matter of anger. It was a matter of sadness. I have found one thing, representing the North as I have these last few years, that one thing about the North is the amount of respect that is made towards governments, et cetera, even when northerners suffer the greatest in terms of some of the decisions that are made. I talked to many people and they were saddened. You know, the first thing they did was they said it

is unfortunate that some of the government people who made this decision could not come and talk to us, not so much at a graduation, but talk to us in our communities, talk to us in the North to determine exactly what is happening.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the minister thinks that you can apply one idea, one philosophy, one great sweeping statement across the province, that what is good in Tuxedo is good in Thompson, that what is good in any area of the province is good in another—we are talking about northern aboriginal communities by and large, serviced by these programs, where unemployment is 80 percent to 90 percent, where people are desperate to get an education, desperate to get off welfare.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister talks about the student loan program. In many of these communities there is no net worth. There is not a banking system. There is not even any involvement in terms of loans. It is that great a level of poverty. You know, I have seen people bring themselves out of that when given a chance.

That is why I am so passionately a supporter of the ACCESS Programs. They work, and what more of a tradeoff can this minister ask. He talks about program analysis. Has the minister looked at how much money has been saved by the many graduates from the ACCESS Program? The 57 who graduated from social work, the vast majority of whom are working in northern Manitoba, are productive, taxpaying members of society. The many who come out of the BUNTEP program, many of whom are now teaching in their own communities, many of whom started off unemployed on welfare, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the many other ACCESS Programs.

I have seen people say—and it is sort of an unusual thing, and we are not used to that in this House where people will talk about their own experiences to that extent, but I have seen what has happened. That is why I am so passionate about defending this program. That is why I will fight on this all the way. That is why I was very proud to vote for that motion earlier tonight, because that is the issue. The issue is this government cut ACCESS programming by 20 percent. It does not

know what it is doing. It has not met with the ACCESS students. It has not met with the people in the ACCESS Programs, nor has it met with the universities that run the programs.

The minister sits there and, based on an unfinished, unreleased report, cuts the program by 20 percent. I really wonder, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and the minister may care to answer this question or not, but what kind of hope for the future can people have in the ACCESS Programs if the minister is going to cut 20 percent based on an unfinished, unreleased report? What is going to happen in the next budget if this government brings in another budget or any other budget that this government might, by course of history, be able to introduce some time in the future? What kind of commitment is there to the program when this program—in fact, I would like to ask the minister even if he wants to put that on the record. How many other programs were cut by 20 percent in this budget? How many others? Even some of the other favorite targets of this government were not cut by that. So the bottom line is here.

I indeed am very frustrated. I make no apologies for saying, the people who are making the decisions, and yes, sitting here in the city of Winnipeg, because this is a program that affects northern Manitoba, and the majority of the people making the decision are not in northern Manitoba—we have got four out of 57 seats in the Manitoba Legislature—

**An Honourable Member:** Does that mean you do not understand Winnipeg?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, the minister says, does that mean I do not understand Winnipeg? I am sure if I were to make a statement as an MLA representing a northern constituency that someone from the city of Winnipeg objected to, they would be the first one to point to that. When the Liberal Leader (Mr. Edwards) made the statements about Selkirk and SHI, I do not think there was any shortage of people, including, I think, probably the minister, many of whom are from city ridings, who did not create some level of concern about the fact they thought the Liberal Leader did not understand concerns in Selkirk. Well, I am telling you, Mr.

Deputy Chairperson, and I agreed with them on that occasion, but you know that is not the point.

The point is, when a decision is made, in this particular case, by people that I believe do not understand the programs, do not understand northern Manitoba, I am elected to come here and to fight for those interests, to fight for my constituents. That is why I voted earlier the way I did. I want some reassurance from the minister that he will not go ahead and do this in the future, that he will meet with ACCESS students, that he will meet with the people in the ACCESS Program. If the minister can answer one question, I would be very happy with that, in addition to the other issues I have raised, which, I am sure, he will respond to, and that is whether he will come to northern Manitoba to meet with the ACCESS students.

I will make him the same offer I did with the Minister of Health, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, because when the Minister of Health was appointed, newly appointed, in October of this year—September, pardon me—the provincial government had brought in rural hospital guidelines which would have cut back hospital care in rural facilities across northern Manitoba, including northern facilities, including the Thompson General Hospital, which would have cut very significantly services. What I did, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is that I said to the minister: Please put those cuts on hold. Please come to northern Manitoba and listen to the people who are affected.

\* (2320)

The Minister of Health, much to his credit—and I publicly credited him for this—came to northern Manitoba. He listened to people. He put the cuts on hold. Those cuts, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, are still on hold. They are still on hold.

I want to ask the Minister of Education: Will he do the same thing as the Minister of Health? Especially following the defeat that this government faced earlier in committee on the motion on this particular item, an historic defeat, will the minister do what the Minister of Health did: put the cuts on hold and consult with northerners, with aboriginal people, with people in

Winnipeg—the Winnipeg Education Centre is affected—and will he consult with them to hear the many concerns they have about the impact the cuts will have?

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know where to begin. Certainly, I recognize the passion of the member for Norway, and I take it as sincere passion—Thompson, sorry. I should tell the member, in another time—not in a different life, but in another time—I was an Education critic, and one of the first introductions I had to ACCESS Programs was in Norway House. I believe it was in 1984 or 1985; I cannot quite remember when. I can remember going into that small classroom, and I can remember the joy of the students there as they were attempting to do—I think at that time they were doing basically remedial work, but realizing that the real core of education was to come and that ultimately if they were successful it would give them an opportunity to provide a very meaningful contribution to society in keeping with what their hopes and aspirations were.

So the member does not have to leave on the record the impression that I do not know what ACCESS Program is or that I have not been close to it or that I somehow am a stranger to it. Although I do not live in the North, and although I maybe do not understand all of the northern psychology, I can tell him I understand what ACCESS Programs are about. I have seen the good they do, and I continue to be a supporter in government of ACCESS Programs.

When I was the Minister of Finance, I always tried to find a couple of million dollars in support of the federal offloading. The impact of that was felt in other departments, not the least of which are the Departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture, Highways, and I could go on and on—Urban Affairs, Municipal Affairs, all those departments that were negatively impacted upon government decisions to try to maintain and, wherever possible, accept totally the offload of the federal government. I have been there. I understand the program, and I understand the benefit of it.

But, surely to goodness, if we are reforming Health and we are reforming education, and the next line is Student Financial Assistance, and the members will see a significant reduction there and they will want to know why, what changes have been made?

There are ways of doing things. There have to be during this period of time when you do not have the revenue of government. You have to make changes at times to try and reach out to a larger number of people, and sometimes that means those who have the free good now, in this case, totally paid-for programming, you might ask them to make a contribution by way of borrowing so that they will have not only the right but indeed the satisfaction of knowing they have made some direct contribution to their education. Yes, indirect is being made. Everybody makes indirect. Everybody maybe has to call on another source of funding. Everybody else has to work. Sometimes you have to organize your affairs and sometimes you have to live in conditions you would rather not. That is a contribution that most of us have made in some dimension as we have gone through the process of formal post-secondary education.

The members across are trying to paint it as black and white. They are saying if you are part of the Tory party, you somehow live in either Tuxedo or Winnipeg south. They try and make believe that 30 of our members come from Winnipeg South—[interjection] Well, however many we have. Naturally we are at the low point now. There will be many more to come in the near future. But the reality is, they try and make it appear like everybody who we know and identify with has the means to support their post-secondary education. Nothing is further from the truth. We have all made contributions, and we all have hundreds of constituents who have made those same sacrifices. I would say to the members, and if indeed there are means there, well, the criteria are in place. You do not get support, any support. You are on your own.

So nobody has to tell me what the government feels with respect to ACCESS. Yet I say to the member, in all his passion, that he cannot for one moment make any other statement that he wants

—[interjection] Yes, action in terms of more money. What he wants is more money. He does not want more positions. He does not want more access to numbers. He wants more money.

**An Honourable Member:** Do not cut.

**Mr. Manness:** Well, that is what he means. When he is talking about cutting he is talking about—what he is talking about in cutting is either cutting the number of potential that can be there or indeed what he wants is the same level of support for everybody that is in the program now even though there are some.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson,** it should be pointed out that 43 percent, as the member said, of the program are Status Indians, and many of them have access to band financing that is never taken into account in this program. The member made a comment about the non-Status Indians, and he is right. He is right. There is not a potential to turn to alternative sources for the 5 percent who now make up the program. He is right.

So what he is saying is, you are going to have a hard time devising a program that takes into account these various subgroupings under ACCESS. So he says, do not have a general blanket policy. Just let it be free and just let the government, indeed, the taxpayers, continue to pay for it. I am saying to him, well, I will debate the issue. I will debate the issue.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson,** I wish society were ordered differently. I wish that members, when they were in government, had not spent so much money, so that we did not have \$400 million we have to spend on interest costs. I wish we did not have that—but we do—because we could do an awful lot more if we had that money.

So, **Mr. Deputy Chairperson,** again I put the statement on the record. Again I say, the \$2 million reduction reflects basically administrative savings and a call upon students now to assume some indebtedness. The net result of it all will be additional opportunity for more students, and I say that is a better approach to follow.

**Mr. Ashton:** I can continue this debate for a considerable period of time, but I would appreciate

an answer from the minister on the very specific question at the end of my comments, and I will repeat it, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, because I realize I put many comments on the record. But the Minister of Health, under virtually identical circumstances—a newly appointed minister was faced with major cuts to rural and northern facilities that were announced in August, although I realize he did not announce them; it was under the previous minister's auspices—he came in, and I contacted the minister. I requested, on behalf of a nonpartisan, grassroots committee in Thompson that had people from all political persuasions, that the minister come to Thompson, meet with people who were concerned. He met with people at the Thompson General Hospital. It included patients; it included seniors; it included nurses; it included people from aboriginal organizations; it included a cross-section of the community.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have said on the record; I will say it again: I commend the minister for doing that. It was the appropriate thing to do, and the minister put the cuts on hold pending a review of those cuts.

**An Honourable Member:** Different issue.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, the member says, different issue. What I am saying is, if the Minister of Health can do it on one issue, where there clearly was not appropriate time for review, why will this Minister of Education not do it on this?

The report, by the minister's own recognition earlier, on the ACCESS Programs, has not even been released yet; it is not even completed, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. And perhaps the minister should understand here; I would have thought she would have been the first one to say, yes, that makes sense. If the report has not even been finished, why go ahead with the cuts? Why do you not postpone the cuts?

\* (2330)

So what I am asking is two things: for the minister to put those cuts on hold—but, more importantly than that, even if he is not willing to do that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, even if he will not put the cuts on hold, will he at least agree to do what the Minister of Health did? Believe you me,

it was not an easy decision for the Minister of Health, I am sure, to go before a meeting not knowing what to expect. I can assure anyone that was not there that it was a very good meeting. The minister himself has indicated it was very well run. People expressed their concerns, but it was done with respect. There was a lot of discussion back and forth, and I really believe it was a very positive exercise.

I know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that there may have been some people even within Thompson who maybe would have expected me to take a different approach and just strictly attack the government on the cuts and not try and bring some resolution of what was happening. I decided to go the opposite route. I phoned the Minister of Health, he phoned me back and agreed to come to Thompson, and the cuts were put on hold.

Will the minister, if he will not put the cuts on hold, at least agree to come to northern Manitoba to meet with the students, staff, representatives of the community, the general public, whoever is concerned about the ACCESS Program, to see indeed for himself—as the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) says here—what the concerns are?

I am convinced that when the minister learns more about the impact of the cuts and what has been happening with the ACCESS Program, if he goes in with any objective view to any meeting such as that, he will have the same response that the Minister of Health did on the question of health care, which is that the cuts will be put on hold. So I will be up-front with my motive, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do believe it would lead to a change in direction from the government. But would the minister at least agree to that, to come and meet with the people affected?

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member makes a strong plea for me to come to Thompson. Of course, only a very small percentage of the ACCESS Programs and the ACCESS total number of 700-and-some students take their training in Thompson. So what he is saying is, well, then visit—he is not saying this, but I assume that he would suggest, well, then meet with everybody.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is not a new issue to me. I have been close to ACCESS since the day I took government. It was almost one of the first issues that confronted our government and a new Treasury Board in 1988. This is not a new issue to me.

I would say to the member, I understand this program. Although I may not know all the locations and all the programs, I understand the basic thrust of this program and what it is trying to do and the basic support I bring to it, more so than a lot of other government programming.

He requests that I come and meet, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. It was because we have been struggling with the financing around the ACCESS Program, and ultimately the criteria for selection and ultimately where the program was going, under the realization it had an incredible cost and provided tremendous benefits for those who were lucky enough to be in the program that we called for the outside review. That is why we called for it.

The member refers to Roblin. Roblin, of course, makes reference to it too. What he is saying basically is that this program, which obviously from starting where it did has delivered relatively well, but that in time it has to be made part of a system. It has to be integrated; it cannot stand out there as a stand-alone. That is why the university and the UGC, in the sense it funds it, calls it an Access Fund.

The question is then, if we all agree that this program, which has been in place now for 10 years or so through its early fostering period, has done a fairly good job, it certainly has caused a tremendous amount of awareness and the graduation numbers are beginning to grow. Surely to goodness, it is time to evaluate it and reflect upon it and to make decisions accordingly. That is all fair and good.

When we table this report, and the member says, well, if it is not finished, then how can you act? Well, the reality is the basic part that we received in the form of a draft has not changed. There is some touching up to do, which has to be done before it is released because it is going to become a public document, but the very essence of it was

known to us and, indeed, to the decision makers in government for a couple of months now, particularly those at Treasury Board.

I say to the member, if he is calling for a pause—to use a terminology that has been used by our Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae)—I say to him, no, we have the information now that we need. We never would have made this decision if we did not have some of the back-up evaluations done, never would have made the decision. We found out an incredible amount, and we will share that with the public in due course.

I say to the member I do not think we are really disagreeing. The members opposite base their whole decision on seeing 9.9 last year and 7.9 this year. They talk about the impact of some individuals involved in the program at this point in time who now are going to have to secure additional funding by way of loan.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will not reiterate for the 20th time why we made the decision. It is based on fact. It is based on common sense. It is based on equity. The member can try and make the compassionate plea, but I can tell him the evaluations have been done, and I will share them with the public.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just cannot believe that the minister will not meet with the students to discuss this matter. I am offering—if the minister does not trust my motives, I mean a meeting can be arranged directly with the program itself. All he has to do is talk to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) about a process we had in terms of Thompson.

The reason I mention Thompson is I am the MLA for Thompson. I can speak of offering to help put together something in terms of Thompson. I am sure the same can be done for the many other ACCESS locations, many BUNTEP locations. In fact, if the minister has any difficulty, perhaps while we are in session we could go down to the Winnipeg Education Centre.

Mr. Manness: I have been there. I imagine the Winnipeg Education Centre was here last week.



**Mr. Ashton:** Indeed, but the minister did not quite have the time or the location or the atmosphere to talk to them.

**Mr. Manness:** I was trying to be calm, but a lot of people were hollering.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I say this to the minister who says he was trying to be calm and they were hollering. I think if he put himself in their shoes, and if I was in their shoes and the government had just cut back 20 percent based on a document that I had not even seen, that is not even finished yet—oh, but the minister says it is only now being touched up—I would be frustrated as well, especially if the only option I had to raise those concerns directly with the minister was to come down here to the Manitoba Legislature as the students did.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what I am suggesting to the minister is let us set up a forum at the Winnipeg Education Centre, let them—  
[interjection] As the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) says, he can bring the report, give them the report, perhaps give them the report for a number of weeks so the people have a chance to see what is being brought up as evidence for the rationale behind this particular cut.

The Winnipeg Education Centre should not be all that difficult to access. I believe we could probably set up a meeting within the next week or two. Will the minister agree to meet with the students in the program, the staff in the program in a forum? I can say, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it would be a forum that would be designed, as it was in the case of the meeting I arranged with the community group in Thompson with the Minister of Health—we went out of our way to make sure that the minister had the opportunity to present his concerns, the opportunity to listen, and it was a very respectful meeting. People who came away from that meeting felt it was a very positive meeting.

\* (2340)

I am asking if the minister is willing to do the same in this particular case, as his own colleague the Minister of Health, dealing with an issue that has anywhere—well, it is not identical. I think the

minister misses the point. If a minister can sit down on an issue as sensitive as health care—I think the meeting took place within a few weeks of the five by-elections in which health care was clearly one of the main issues and which there was clearly a lot of concern about what was happening in terms of government policy. He came to Thompson and it was a very positive meeting. It was an opportunity for people to express their concerns.

I am willing to set up the same meetings as the MLA for Thompson. I know others are in the case of Winnipeg and other areas that are affected. Will the minister at least do that? Perhaps, if the minister is concerned about the report not being finalized yet, perhaps I will maybe make another suggestion and ask him if he is willing to do it when the report has been finalized and released, give copies to people who know the programs best, the students, perhaps some of the graduates as well and the people within the programs and the support groups to those programs and give them the opportunity to see the report and then discuss with the minister both the report, which as yet has not been released, and also the 20 percent cut that has taken place.

**Mr. Manness:** Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am glad the hour is late because, if it were not, I may be induced to get into a kind of a hair pull here, but I will not.

The member for Thompson really does not have to tell me how to do my job and I do not say that in an arrogant fashion. I never have, nor will I duck a meeting that I think I should be at. As a matter of fact, having brought down six budgets I can tell you many of my colleagues, many of the ministers, ultimately under pressure for some of the reductions, have brought me into countless hundreds if not thousands of meetings with their constituents, many of them in education, many of them in health. So I have been there and I have taken a lot of the responsibility for the decisions that have impacted. So I am not afraid to meet anybody and to express the case.

So the member says, well, will you meet with ACCESS students? How do you meet with all of

the ACCESS students, 700 of them? So I guess the offer I make, given the fact that my No. 1 priority today, and the member can quote me if he wants, is reform of the K-to-12 system—I am spending if not a third, close to a half of my time there. I will continue to do that. Nothing is going to push me off my priorities.

Now, the member says, well, are you accessible to individual students. The answer is yes, but I make that decision based on the availability of time, the request that comes in.

I can tell the member I turned down very few people to come to meet with me, but if the member thinks he is going to set up a semi-kangaroo court and is going to want to draw me into that, I am saying, well, I am prepared to go to that, too, if I judge that to be fair. [interjection] Well, the member wants to go to one. That is fine. I have no problem with that. My staff—[interjection] Oh, no, not at all. If the member wants to go to one, fine, I have no problem with that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I hear what the member is asking, and I am saying to him that in fairness to the decision, yes, let us see the document go out. No doubt there will be groups of students, or maybe individual students, who will want to correspond and communicate with me, or communicate in person, and I will try and make the time available to do that.

There is no way that over the Estimates process the member is going to try and force me, because it is part of the public record, to agree to having meetings that would somehow try to reach out all 700 ACCESS students. I mean I am very proud of certain accomplishments, but I am not going to set for myself an impossible task. So that is the way it will have to be left at this time until we bring forward the report.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot believe that the minister would make reference to such, forming a kangaroo court. You know, this is the minister that has cut a program when the report on the program has not even come out. I mean I could have used that phrase earlier to describe the minister's decision. I mean the minister has

pronounced the sentence on the program, and the public—

**An Honourable Member:** Sentence?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, the minister has cut 20 percent of the funding of the program, and the minister has not even released the study on which he claims it was based, and based on the minister's own comments tonight, I do not believe the minister does understand the programs. He talked earlier about 35-week programs. They are not 35-week programs in the vast majority of cases. Some are on the main campus; many are not.

The minister has made repeated statements on the record that are just not in touch with reality. He starts quoting figures, of course, which we do not have access to, and the students do not have access to, but which the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has pointed out are most likely are as a result of some of the changes that have already taken place, changes that are going to be compounded by the changes being made this year.

What I want to say to the minister is, I do not understand why he cannot meet with the ACCESS students. You know, it was not a problem for the minister to come up with some way of meeting with parents generally, K-12, the recent forum that took place, and there was much effort put into that. It would be a lot easier to meet with the ACCESS students in this particular case, a lot easier. One trip to the Winnipeg Education Centre, and the minister could go to a number of northern communities, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, quite easily. The minister could set out whatever forum he wants. The intention is not to set up a kangaroo court.

When the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) came to Thompson—and the Minister of Education should talk to the Minister of Health about what happened. There was no kangaroo court. The minister was not set up. It was a public meeting. It was a very positive meeting. People heard each other out. It was a very respectful meeting.

**Mr. Manness:** I have met thousands of people.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Minister of Education says that he has met thousands of people. He has made cuts to the ACCESS Programs of 20 percent. The minister would do the common courtesy, I believe, if the minister would make some effort to meet with the ACCESS students. That would, I think, only be fair and reasonable, to at least—[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. Could I ask all honourable members to tone the debate down just a little bit.

I have heard the minister and the honourable member for Thompson use the word "kangaroo court." It has been ruled unparliamentary on a number of occasions. I would ask both members to retract it when it is their turns.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think the minister was going to retract it. I will retract it, and I do not believe it was an appropriate use of words in either case.

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would not want to be in violation of the rules. Beauchesne's states it, and I withdraw.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Thank you.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just want to say to the minister, if he would care to meet with students in even one of the locations or I would suggest—I think the best example of this would be what happened last year when this government cut the funding to friendship centres. This government had people from all over the province—

**An Honourable Member:** The kangaroos are still on his mind.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am sure your ruling is correct. It is probably a ruling from Australia where I am sure that would be considered most unparliamentary to make nasty references to kangaroos.

The bottom line is, quite seriously, I do believe we could make arrangements as happened with the case with the friendship centres. People came from all over the province. They came on overnight buses. They carpooled. We have even had young aboriginal people cycle to this particular building, indicating their own overall commitment to their

own ideals. That happened last year. I am sure the same thing would happen in terms of the ACCESS Programs. In fact, last year ACCESS students came from all over the province to come to the Legislature for the protest that took place, because I met many of my constituents who came in.

All I am asking is that the minister meet with people in the ACCESS Programs. I know the minister has met with a lot of people, but that is part of what goes with public life. Another thing I think that also goes with public life is meeting with people who are affected by decisions and listening to them. [interjection]

The minister says that he understands. You know, when it gets to the point where you can say to the ACCESS students, well, I have another party I cannot meet with them, when you have made a cut of this significance, that is when I believe the true level of accountability of any government starts to slip dramatically, when you have to retreat behind that kind of a rationale, that kind of reasoning.

\* (2350)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, a 20 percent cut to a program in which the program analysis has not even been released yet to those people in the program, that is going to have a dramatic impact on people's lives. I say to the minister, there will be people that will have to drop out of the program.

If the minister could come to Thompson, I could introduce him to those people. If he came to the Winnipeg Education Centre, I know there are other people who could introduce him to those people. That is what they are saying, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. They have been devastated by the cut. It has had a devastating impact on the morale of the programs.

As I said, I was at a very joyous occasion or what should have been a very joyous occasion, the social work grad. There was that air of sadness, of concern about what is happening with ACCESS Programs. All people are asking for, all they ask for when I talk to them, beyond asking me the question whether the government understood what it was doing, the impact it was going to have, was,

why do they not come to talk to us? Why do they not find out what has happened?

So I just appeal, and I will continue this appeal at other times again, but I just appeal to the minister in whatever format the minister is comfortable with in the way of consultation, with meeting here in Winnipeg or if he has the opportunity to travel. In fact, I could even say we would probably be willing to pair the minister to travel to northern Manitoba if that is the concern when we are in session. It is that important, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and not a setup—I will use that word in substitution for the other phrase that was used—not something that would aim at political points, but aim at an understanding of the concerns and the need for a commitment to the future of the program.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister who says he understands the ACCESS Programs should understand that the kind of respect that only the First Nations, despite all the many trials and tribulations they faced as a people, have shown the kind of respect that I am sure they would show him as a minister, despite the cuts and the anguish and the sadness and the concern. We will make that commitment to expedite it.

Will the minister—and I just say this one more time—commit to anything that he feels comfortable with that will at least allow for some open dialogue with the people who are affected with a report in front of them, so that we can get some real discussion about these cuts, rather than what we have done here for the last four hours which is out of frustration here in the opposition? We have had to move a motion censuring a minister. I believe it is the first time, certainly in recent memory, if not Manitoba history, in which a Legislature in committee in Estimates has censured a minister, the first time such a motion has happened.

The sad part is that it affected the aboriginal people, the disadvantaged, the people who throughout history have faced the greatest difficulties. Maybe it is ironic in that way that we were able to win on that vote tonight, but it is a hollow victory unless the minister listens to the

message. The message here, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is there will be those who may analyze it in terms of the status of this government and its shaky mandate, et cetera, and that debate will take place another time. But one thing occurred tonight that I think has more focus than that, and that is that a clear message was sent on ACCESS. We want the minister out there to talk to the people affected. We want the cuts put on hold.

I urge, I plead with the minister, if he cannot even put the cuts on hold, please meet with the people involved. If he does not trust us to arrange the meeting, he can arrange it directly with the institutions, with the students themselves, so long as he meets with those students, because I believe even this minister who tends to have a very ideological approach on educational issues—and I do not think the minister would take that as any negative comment, because I know having sat in the Legislature since 1981 that he is a person of ideological commitment. He is a small “c” Conservative, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, probably one of the most conservative people in this Legislature, one of the most right-wing people in this Legislature.

And I know he does not take that as an insult. He is one person to which there is no doubt whether the oxymoron, “Progressive Conservative,” applies. I know it does not. I do not believe the minister has the word “progressive” in his vocabulary when it comes to politics. But do you know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, he may say the same about me. He probably has. Maybe he will when he responds, about my philosophy, my outlook.

But, you know, when it comes to making decisions that affect the kind of program we are dealing with here, ideology is part of it, philosophy is part of it. The impact on people, though, is the main concern we should all have and that is why I am hoping the minister will reconsider and at least meet with the people involved.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my remarks are part of the record. As I have said before, I will try to meet with as many Manitobans in the field of education as I possibly can and most

definitely those that feel aggrieved and are impacted with decisions. It has always been my approach in government, and this is no different, but I will choose the method and the place and the time. I am sorry, I have no alternative.

So I thank the member very much for the manner in which he has tried to assist in calling for a public meeting on the issue. I take his words, and I receive them as sincerely as he speaks them, but I must tell him again, I do not tend to duck issues. I am not ducking this issue. Let us put out the report, and then let me use the method of dialoguing with anybody who wants to dialogue on this issue, of my choosing, because I will be ultimately held accountable for not only the actions but indeed how it is I meet.

And so the member does not need to prod me or plead with me or any thing of that nature. I have been a public servant just as long as he has, and I know what it means to have to communicate and to deal with the public. I am very mindful of my responsibility in that respect, and he does not have to cast my personage or indeed my method of dealing with people in any light that is complimentary to my strengths or in support of my weaknesses, because, indeed, I am a human being, and I have both. So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I thank the member for his advice.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** The hour being twelve o'clock, what is the will of the committee?

**Mr. Manness:** Keep going.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Oh, it is not twelve o'clock yet, anyway.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to look at what the impact of the changes to last year's ACCESS Programs were. Now I understand that the programs last year were cut by 15 percent. Is that right?

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there was a reduction last year in funding of around 11.2 percent in funding, and that did have an impact on intake last year of some 15 percent reduction.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am having difficulty. There is another conversation

going on here. Did we agree that the cut last year was 15 percent?

**Mr. Manness:** The dollar reduction was 11, but that had impact of 15 percent on intake.

**Ms. Friesen:** So that last year there was 15 percent fewer students who had access to the program?

**Mr. Manness:** Correct.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** The hour being 12 o'clock, what is the will of the committee?

**Mr. Manness:** Do you want us to continue?

**Some Honourable Members:** No, committee rise.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Committee rise.

## HEALTH

**Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay):** Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Health. We are on item 3.(a)(1), page 83 of the Estimates manual. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

**Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood):** Madam Chairperson, when we left at five o'clock, we were talking about home care and criteria, and I had said to the minister that I would get back to We Care and the pilot project that was going on at Seven Oaks Hospital. One of the things that the minister has said during these Estimates is that we can probably learn something if other organizations or groups can provide a better service, which, as he indicated, was why Seven Oaks Hospital had contracted with We Care to facilitate earlier discharge of patients into the community.

I am wondering if the minister could tell us, if in fact the people are being discharged into the community earlier, my question is, why is Home Care not able to facilitate that early discharge?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Chairperson, as I said earlier to the honourable member, I believe there are areas where indeed we can learn from others who are able to provide the flexibility that is necessary to appropriately run a home care program. So by

saying that, I am indeed saying and acknowledging that there are areas where we need to catch up with the rest of the world, and not only in health care in general, but in home care in particular. We are not saying that we cannot do it. We are saying that we have not to this point done so, and that is why some of the things that we discussed earlier about bringing on automation, about bringing on better co-ordination, may indeed leave us in a better position for the experience.

On the other hand, and in the meantime, I will not for philosophical reasons deny the patients in this province a better quality of care because I am tied to sort of a hidebound idea about how these services ought to be delivered, only by the public sector.

These services are paid for by the taxpayers and not directly by the consumers of the services. So, as I have said, as long as they are getting proper care and the care, if it is nursing care, if is properly regulated and proper standards are set and maintained, the client or patient, I suggest, would be the beneficiary if we move forward now, and while we are moving forward, we look at our own act and try to get it all together.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, the individuals who are being discharged from Seven Oaks Hospital in this pilot project, is there a length of time within which they would be recipients of We Care service before the Home Care service kicks in?

**Mr. McCrae:** Reports I have received indicate that the average time spent upon discharge by We Care Health Services is 72 or so hours, just enough time to have the patient stabilized at home so that the government-run Home Care program can take over.

I heard also of one case, perhaps it is more than one, but that the ability to swing into action, as it were, once the decision of ability to be discharged is made, has been as few as five hours when in the past it has been much, much more than that, which is a definite benefit and bonus to the whole health care system. It makes a hospital bed available for someone who might need it, or if not, then it makes for a more efficiently run hospital where you do

not have patients in it that are not needed to be there.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, does the minister have a copy of the evaluation or what they are evaluating in this pilot project? Does he have a copy of it that he can share with us or tell us what the criteria are that they are evaluating?

**Mr. McCrae:** No, I expect the evaluation will be reviewed firstly by Seven Oaks. It is Seven Oaks' contract, and I am sure they will share with us their findings and the criteria used for the evaluation and the outcomes as well. That would be my expectation.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, the reason I asked that question is I am concerned as to what this evaluation is going to tell the Minister of Health and/or Seven Oaks. Again, if individuals are able to go home from hospital with services from We Care Health Services in as little as five hours, my question is, why is the Home Care program not able to do that? Is one of the reasons volume, in which case this pilot project will tell us nothing because they are not dealing with the volume that the Home Care program is?

**Mr. McCrae:** Well, I appreciate the honourable member's concern is not a philosophical one. It is a practical concern that says, well, if you are doing this or if Seven Oaks is doing this, how come the Home Care program could not—a perfectly legitimate question, and one that we ought to be able to answer. If we were able to answer that, we could solve the problem for ourselves.

It is not simply a question of volume. It is a question of scheduling. Volume, as I spoke earlier, has a tendency to come in peaks and valleys, but it also remains at a fairly constant level throughout the course of a year, so that we have to be there and ready, I would think initially, to move people out of hospitals who perhaps have been there longer than they should have been there in the first place. Initially, that will call for a fair amount of co-ordination. That sounds reasonable to me.

I do not have any foregone conclusions or I have not prejudged this pilot. There is a cost issue, too, I would suggest, to look at, whether the private sector can provide equally high level of service or

higher for the same or less money. That should be something that should be of interest to anybody who wants to get the maximum for the health care dollar.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, one of the issues related to discharge planning in the Home Care program came out in the Price Waterhouse report which was commissioned by the former government, '86 or '87. It came out I guess in '87, and it indicated that inadequate hospital discharge planning practices led to inappropriate discharges to home care, lack of proper discharge preparation and potentially unsafe client situations. These practices also contribute to negative perception of the program's home-care services.

\* (2010)

I can appreciate the minister has not been minister since 1987-88, but can he tell us when these recommendations were brought forth by Price Waterhouse? I do not know the cost of the study, but I am sure it was enough. What was done to address the issue of discharge planning which was identified back in '87-88?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, the Price Waterhouse report came out in 1987, and no doubt referred to circumstances prevailing in the program previous to the time of that report. I was not here, it is clear; neither was the previous minister here. The one before that was. Maybe the question should be directed to the honourable members opposite.

I do know that over the years various initiatives have been taken in the home care area. We have continued to see unparalleled growth in the program over the last few years, certainly in the area of expenditure. I have already acknowledged that there is room for more improvement yet, and we are well on the way to making those improvements.

Now whether all the improvements will respond directly to a report that would now be seven years old and covering a period when the NDP administration was in charge of the Home Care program to the extent that the report would commend the previous government, then I join Price Waterhouse in doing that to the extent that

that report would attack or condemn the previous government. I would look at on what grounds and try to ensure that if we have not already responded to some of those concerns, we review the concerns and make further improvements as per Price Waterhouse, but also as per all the things we have been able to learn since as well.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, I just wanted to indicate to the minister what my concern is about the pilot project at Seven Oaks. Number one, I think it is disturbing that a hospital feels necessary, and I am sure they feel that they need to do this, that they feel that it is still more cost-efficient for them to pay for services upon discharge of a client into the community and that saves them money versus having someone in a hospital bed. They obviously feel that, which is why they have gone ahead with this pilot project.

What concerns me about that is we then are not doing an adequate job in the community in terms of facilitating appropriate discharge planning and providing those services in the community. I am not saying this as a criticism to staff in the region, staff in senior management or even this minister. I think this is a problem that has gone on for a number of years and is a result of many factors including a huge bureaucracy perhaps.

What concerns me about this pilot project is that it can be—I am worried it will be a self-fulfilling prophecy in that people are discharged from the hospital, they receive We Care services, then referral is made to the Home Care program knowing that the Home Care program caseloads are large, that crisis situations are many.

When case co-ordinators and resource co-ordinators know that someone is at home in the community and is safe, which means they are getting the service, sometimes then to put in their own home care service that is not done as quickly because there are so many other crisis situations out there that they can attend to.

I am worried that those people on We Care will stay on We Care longer, and not that they will not be getting good service, but that when the evaluation comes back it will say Home Care was very slow in responding. It is like a self-fulfilling

prophecy and that Home Care is seen as not responding quickly enough, and they will not because when they see these people in the community and they are safe, those cases will be left.

That is my concern, and that is why I would ask the minister what the criteria was for evaluating this pilot project. I would like to see, I suppose, as a result of this pilot, some time spent on looking at the home care system, the scheduling, the resource allocation, et cetera, to see what we can do to be more efficient as a community-based program.

**Mr. McCrae:** I appreciate the concerns raised by the honourable member, but I think that the Home Care program supervisors and officials are also listening to what the honourable member is saying, and we do not want to see our Home Care program, our government-run Home Care program do anything but improve in various areas of performance.

I think that the best assurance that we can have of what I have said is that we expect the Home Care advisory committee's recommendations and advice to be looked at extremely carefully by senior staff of the department whose responsibility it is to deliver a high-quality home care service. I do not want the honourable member to get bitten by the bug that afflicts the other party. That is all I am saying, because that affliction can be dangerous to people's health.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, just another question about the program. Again, this came from the Price Waterhouse report but had been an issue for a number of years with the Home Care program. Dual assessments, initial assessments that are conducted by both social workers and nurses—have we done away with that in this Home Care program or do we still have initial dual assessments?

**Mr. McCrae:** I am at this point unable to say whether we have completed the process of phasing out the dual assessment approach, but that is the track that we are on, and my personal view and instruction to the department is to utilize the skills and the abilities of all the members of the home care team to take in their advice or to take in their

observations. There is a sense amongst some people working in the Home Care program that their views do not count, and I have tried to assure them that their views do count and that they are part of the team and should be treated as part of the team.

\* (2020)

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, a number of years ago, the Home Care program moved to scheduling using computers, and that system had its bugs to work out. I think about two years ago they were trying to revamp the scheduling program. Has that been revamped, and is it a better, more efficient program for resource co-ordinators than it was four years ago?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, I can report that in that area we are doing better than previously. However, resource allocation is one component of a larger automated information system. So, while that area is showing progress, there is a great deal more progress to be shown in the system as a whole. That is, I think, one of the things we learned last year as we looked at various aspects of the Home Care program.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, I wanted to ask a couple of questions on the figures that are indicated in the Estimates book under Home Care Assistance. I am assuming that because we are in May, for the actual expenditures of '93-94—well, we have an estimate of expenditures indicated in the book: some \$67 million. How close is that figure to being accurate for the actual expenditures of '93-94?

**Mr. McCrae:** I do not have exact numbers, but the numbers I do have, or the estimates I have indicate a number that came in at less than the budgeted amount. So, in the Home Care system, taking into account the changes in the cleaning and laundry services and taking into account the subscribership of the program, we have come in under budget.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, for clarification then, the minister is saying that we will probably come in under the \$67 million, and the minister is nodding in the affirmative. Can the minister tell us though in the Home Care Assistance line did we not overspend last year in relation to what the



estimate of expenditures was, because according to last year's Estimates book it was some \$63 million.

**Mr. McCrae:** These numbers that we are looking at here, my staff and I, include considerations for benefits that go to those who are working in the program, and while we did come in under budget, it was not by as large an amount as I had thought a few minutes ago. When you take into account that employee benefits have been moved from some other line into this line and you take that into account with what is estimated and what is actual, we estimated \$63 million for the total under Home Care Assistance in '93-94 and we came in at about \$61 million. That is a lot of money but it was not as big as I had initially thought by way of under-expenditure.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, under the Home Care Assistance detail then, in the previous year's Estimates, there was a line that indicated grants of \$1 million which is not in the Other Expenditures list on page 57 of this year's, so that is \$1 million difference.

I guess what my question is, a number of years ago the Home Care Assistance line, the department used to overspend in that line. Either the volume was higher than what was estimated or we were not as good at estimating what the volume was going to be.

My question would be for the minister, does he feel that the \$69 million that he has estimated for this year in '94-95 is an accurate reflection, and if, in fact, you underspent last year, I am surprised that you did not indicate that there is more of an increase than some \$2.3 million, because, in effect, you are budgeting more than what you spent last year and more than what you have indicated in your throne speech or your Budget Address. So I would think you would want to take advantage of that.

\* (2030)

**Mr. McCrae:** I think budgeting takes a fair amount of skill, and, of course, my own skill in budgeting for Home Care Assistance will be tested a year from now I suggest. The trouble with our system is that you get to vote against our budget before you even know how it is going to perform.

That is the way the system works, so honourable members opposite voted against the budget, I guess, assuming that we will not come in at exactly the numbers that we have estimated. Although, I think our budgeting in this government stands up to the budgeting anywhere else in the country and certainly previous governments budgets. In Manitoba, we stand up much better than them.

In any event though, Madam Chairperson, I think what we have seen over the years is a fairly rapid growth in a program, as the consuming public and the care providers, physicians who make decisions about hospital discharges and people like that have learned of the services available in the community and have adjusted their discharge policies accordingly.

We are not finished with that process, but I think we have reached a point where we can expect that, unless there is a new surge of understanding about the ability of the system to absorb more discharges than we have seen in the past, then we might have seen a levelling off in the last year or two, when in fact the program was undersubscribed. That is a sign that we, maybe, have reached that plateau, although you would have to look and I think people in the department who assist with the budgeting process do look at trends. They do look at population demographics and those kinds of considerations in making their budget projections.

Our population continues to age and that is not going to abate, according to demographers, for some time yet. So better to err on the safe side, in my view, if you are going to err at all. I am not budgeting with the design of erring, but I am budgeting to try to make a reasonable judgment as to what the demand is going to be.

The honourable member has pointed out that in the past the budget figures have fallen short of the growth of the home care needs, the demands on the Home Care program. It may be that we are now at that levelling off. I do not know, but indications are that with the population continuing to age and with continuing efforts not to abuse our hospital system as we have done so blatantly in the past, although it has not been on purpose, it has happened, we have abused the acute care system, and as we are

able to make more earlier discharge decisions in the future we should try to budget accordingly in the Home Care budget.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, with the increase as estimated in the budget under the Home Care Assistance line, can the minister indicate, has that increase been estimated basically because of a volume increase in terms of the types and kinds of services, but with the same number of clients?

**Mr. McCrae:** Yes, we are looking at increases in numbers of clients and units of service as well. If you look through the budget and look at it as a whole, the health care budget, you will see decreases in spending in the hospitals, which tells you that we know we can find more capacity to take out of acute care in Manitoba. This is an area which is fairly sensitive, but on the other hand, what we are doing in Manitoba is being done on a phased basis and, may I suggest, with respect far more palatable and far more reflective of a sense of planning than we see in other jurisdictions in Manitoba.

I do not say that to be nasty to other jurisdictions, but I am kind of pleased that we have planned for the kinds of reforms that are going on in Manitoba.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, the number of people serviced though, according to last year's Estimates and this year's Estimates, remains approximately, in terms of the Home Care program, 24,000 individuals. So with changes to budgets and services at hospital we are servicing the same number of people, but perhaps we are serving them for a longer period of time or the units are more, but the numbers are the same. Is that correct?

**Mr. McCrae:** I think the honourable member's reading is quite accurate. What we are going to see is higher levels of care requirements, that means more units of service. It means that with earlier discharge and some people being able to be kept comfortably in their homes until well into old age before they need to be placed in long-term care, the answer to that is indeed a higher intensity of service.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, I wanted to ask that question because I imagine the minister and I will agree to disagree on terminology and semantics because he refers to expansion of the Home Care program, and I do not see it as an expansion. I see the program as there is volume increases, and the number of units we are providing is more. I see an expansion of a program is when you actually change the breadth and scope of a program and you offer more services, or offer services to a different clientele.

I would imagine we will perhaps agree to disagree on those semantics, but that is why I wanted to ask the question about the Home Care program and the types of individuals we were servicing in that program. When we get into the hospital line we will have an opportunity to examine more earlier discharges or if we have a sense of if hospital days have reduced in certain areas of medical care, et cetera.

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, I do not think there is any utility for the honourable member and me to engage in a discussion about what we mean by expansion or growth or whatever. I think the honourable member will agree with me that it is incumbent on us, having committed ourselves to a full continuum of services, that we agree on the one thing, and that is, that whether it is an expansion or whatever you want to call it, there is a need for us to keep up with the demands that we will create and that an aging population will also create. I do not know if I disagree with the honourable member or not.

If the honourable member wants to keep me from trying to take credit for something, that is all right, that is quite understandable, and I can accept that. The only thing I ask credit for is that we are taking a phased approach and a planned approach to health care renewal. I mean, we can quibble about whether there is a little more this year for a particular kind of service or a little less. The point is, you are seeing that shift that is envisioned in the Quality Health for Manitobans: The Action Plan. That shift is probably more apparent in this budget and more well provided for in budgetary terms than I might have been able to argue in the past.

\* (2040)

Of course, honourable members opposite might have argued that the opposite was happening in the past. They are not quite as able to do that this year because we are able to show increases in the community in various areas, not just in the Home Care area of the budget. We are able to show by way of budget commitment increases in the community and corresponding decreases in the acute care sector.

I am advised that even though the program has experienced tremendous growth since its inception, the changing environment resulting from the new realizations that come about with health care renewal, that changing environment has led to the development of several initiatives to enable Manitoba Health to meet the emerging community health care needs.

If the honourable member does not mind, I will just take a minute to touch on them again, and maybe where I think I am being repetitive, I will be very brief. We talked about self-managed care. That is going to be an expansion and a corresponding movement of funds away from the established program, but we are going to expand self-managed care, and I think I have the honourable member's unqualified approval for that particular move.

The Home Care Branch is also participating with the Mental Health Division in the establishment of a pilot program for intensive case management of older persons with mental health problems. This pilot will be Winnipeg-based, but will complement and co-ordinate the existing psychogeriatric services resources both at the institutional and community levels.

Then there is the expansion. This is an expansion, Madam Chairperson, and I do not think there is any need for a semantic discussion about it—the expansion of the adult day club spaces. The Home Care Branch jointly with the Long Term Care Branch, is involved in a province-wide expansion of the adult day club spaces and sponsors. This expansion will involve a 50 percent increase in the number of spaces per week

throughout both urban and rural Manitoba from the present.

I want the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) to hear this because this is important, because it is indeed an expansion by any definition when you take the number of day club spaces from 1,262 to 2,418 in one year. That, with all due respect, is an amazing expansion. Rural areas will see an increase from 616 to 1,533 spaces per week. Additional program sponsors will also be required. Such expansion will address the need for increased respite options for caregivers.

We have interim community living spaces. A proposal has been developed through the health reform initiative to establish up to 12 spaces within an existing housing facility. Such a resource will enable disabled individuals with high-care needs who are ready for community living, but where no existing group care housing options are available, to be discharged from either hospitals or nursing homes. While in this interim facility, appropriate alternate community living plans would be developed—and on and on, Madam Chairperson.

I know the honourable members have other things to discuss, but the papers I have in my hand are just filled with expansion plans for our Continuing Care Programs. That is not semantics; that, too, is reality.

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Chairperson, I am quite taken aback by that show of support from the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). With respect to the last bit of information exchanged between the minister and the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), I found it most useful. I am not going to re-cover territory. I agree with most of the sentiments expressed by the member for Crescentwood, and indeed, I suspect I would probably go much further and cause the minister to, if he does not agree to disagree with the member for Crescentwood, I am certain that he would agree to disagree quite vehemently with me on some of these issues because I would probably take a little stronger stand.

Having said that, I would just like to expedite the operations of this committee and not continue rehashing the same ground, although I do have

quite similar concerns about the We Care operation, and one of my criticisms of the lack of expansion of the Home Care would have been to have put in place a lot of programming prior to the actual devolution from the acute care system. But, having said that, I have some specific questions I wanted to ask.

The first is, do we have any calculation of the amount of revenues that has come into the department from the public with respect to the fees that are paid for the ostomy equipment?

**Mr. McCrae:** We have not compiled those numbers in order to make them available today. I understand there have been some revenue enhancements as a result of that move, but I do not have that here tonight.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I wonder if perhaps it could be brought forward to another meeting, the next time we meet or subsequent time that we meet, if that is possible. Also, would it be possible to calculate somehow in quantitative terms the effect of the removal of the \$50-or-less item, the impact that might have had on patients?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, other than in revenue terms, I suppose it would be like saying to the honourable member, what would it be like for you to have to pay \$50, or what would it be like for your neighbour? If you are below the poverty line, I can see that being a problem. If it is a different situation, the problem reduces according to your income, so any time you make a charge for something there is an imposition. There is no question about that, every time you charge somebody for any service and any time there is an increase in that charge.

It is quite an imposition, for example, to tax the people. The people do not have a whole lot of say in it other than at election time. You raise their taxes by millions and hundreds of millions of dollars in a few years' time. That is an imposition on people, and they resent it. I do not know quite how to answer the honourable member's question, unless I can put it in some kind of numerical terms.

I can understand, though, the lower your income, the more any increase or imposition will hurt you. That was exactly the issue that I took up

with the Ostomy Association; very shortly after taking office, it was that very issue. The Ostomy Association people visited with me in my office. They said, they agree with the policy; however, though they agree with the policy, and they think that people should pay, they said they knew of a handful of people in Manitoba who might be hurt by such a move. It would be more than inconvenience; it would go a little over the line into perhaps some level of hardship.

I said, well, that was never our intention. So I would ask the Ostomy Association and senior members of the Department of Health to work out some whereby those who might be in that position could find some relief, and that is exactly what we have done.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, we are going to have to disagree on this one. I will just give two examples, because I do not want to belabour the point. These are not ostomates necessarily that I am dealing with—[interjection] It is fortunate I have a cold.

\* (2050)

There is an example in my own constituency of a constituent who was impacted on three separate occasions as a result of this particular charge, and to the credit of the government and the minister, I wrote to the minister, and I subsequently got a response that he would be taken care of, which I appreciated.

At the same time there is another individual whom I know also the member for Crescentwood has contacted and I have contacted, who has been impacted, whose parent was impacted two or three separate—they are in a position where they can pay, but they were being nickelled and dimed by the cost effect of this woman's father's illness, and it was going on and on and on.

And one could not necessarily make the claim to the minister on a hardship case, on a specific hardship case, but the two points I want to make are, firstly, one should not have to go cap in hand to the minister asking for an exception, as was the case in my own constituent, and the second point was the question of the woman whose father was ill, who had all of the accumulated expenses.

Eventually it does add up and eventually it does hurt; it hurt their financial situation. They felt that they were treated quite unfairly. And that is just two examples that I wish to cite to the minister's attention.

**Mr. McCrae:** I think the honourable member wants to disagree with me quite a bit, but I do not know that he has a point here to disagree on, because the only supplies we are talking about are the ostomy supplies and the low-cost equipment items. [interjection] All right, so it is on the low-cost equipment item that he is making his case for hardship.

That is something that—like the rest of the programming, prior to the '70s these things were not provided by government. These things were not the responsibility nor were they provided by government. You got into programming, and this was during times when growth of revenues was twice, three, four times what the growth in revenues has been in the last few years, and growth in the program has been—well, as I have said, it has gone from zero to nearly \$70 million in 20 years. That is very significant. Certainly in the last six years the spending on the Home Care program has increased by some 93 percent.

So the low-cost equipment items and the ostomy supplies are the items we are talking about. The honourable member would have, I believe, the world at large think that every bandage, every incontinent pad, all of those kinds of things, were not being covered by the program, and that is not the case. So we have to be very clear about it. I do say, it is always regrettable when government has to pull back from support for something that it previously had been able to support, but I remind the honourable member that these kinds of things came out in times when revenues were increasing at two-digit levels. Yet spending on health care by government in those days was not growing to that extent. Now, when revenues are flat basically, over the last few years, we have outstripped revenue in terms of spending on health care.

I guess I need to remind the honourable member that no government has shown a commitment to health care spending like the present government

of Manitoba. The present government of Manitoba now spends 34 percent of total government spending on the health care budget. Now that is up about 2 to 3 percent from what it was a scant six years ago. Previous to that, health care was not the priority of the government. The previous government did not view health care as a priority; this government does.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I have two questions to ask the minister in this regard. The first question is, will individuals who feel aggrieved in terms of the Home Care Equipment program have access to the Home Care appeal process? That is the first question.

The second question is about the same woman whom I referenced, whose father was having difficulty with the Home Care Equipment and they had to pay over and over again. She was also buying supplies from a retail store, formula for her father who was suffering from cancer. She could obtain those wholesale basically from the hospital much, much cheaper because of volume buying, but, of course, she does not have access to the hospital volume buying.

Has there been any consideration given to an expansion of the Home Care Equipment program to provide this type of service or this type of resource to individuals who are convalescing at home, and taking a burden off the health care system by being at home, but at the same time are paying retail prices for supplies they could get basically wholesale at the institution—not supplies, feeding formula, et cetera, for cancer-related illnesses?

**Mr. McCrae:** The honourable member makes one suggestion that I think has some merit. That is where equipment issues become hardship issues, that lack of equipment because of lack of ability to pay for it will have the effect of working against somebody's care plan and perhaps having them end up back in hospital or in long-term care or something like that or even on welfare. Those are issues we would have to look at. We are not going to turn people away. If they want to make a point to our advisory committee or our appeal panel

through the appeal mechanism, we are not going to turn them away and not listen to them.

It is hard for me to say today whether it will result in a change of policy, but certainly our hearts and our minds are wide open. We are trying to provide care to people. We are very committed to providing care to people. We want to make sure that we can keep doing it and not go broke in the process so that we do not have a health care system, which is what some people in this province are advocating. When they advocate, leave things the way they are, they are advocating the destruction of our health care system.

I wanted to point something out to my honourable friend. I do not know if I have it with me. No, I gave it to his Leader. I gave it to the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer). I guess nobody else has it.

**An Honourable Member:** What is that?

**Mr. McCrae:** I am referring to an editorial that was in the Brandon Sun on Saturday.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I read it.

**Mr. McCrae:** The honourable member for Kildonan tells me that he has read it.

What the editorial calls for is for the New Democrats to say something about health care as to what they would do as an alternative to what we are doing in Manitoba today, which is that phased approach to health care renewal that I have referred to. Do they approve of that approach? If they do, they have a funny way of showing it. Do they approve of the hack-and-slash method used in most other jurisdictions in Canada, or is there some other magical response to all of the problems that we have in health care which we would continue to have if we did not take action?

I say that just as a gentle sort of reminder to my honourable friend the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), because he wants to disagree on the point about low-cost equipment. He wants to disagree and add on to expenditure with regard to specialty or therapeutic food provisions. He wants to disagree with the government's policy on various other things that would be new if we were to bring them in.

I say, if the honourable member feels so strongly about it, why were those things not brought in during those high-revenue growth days of the NDP in Manitoba? When the honourable member makes these kinds of suggestions and recommendations, while he disagrees with the present approach but wants to add more and more, I say, why did he not do it when there was money flowing into the province and being borrowed in great big gobs? That is what is different between then and now. I say to the member, what is the response of the honourable member to the suggestion made in the Brandon Sun editorial that says it is not good enough just to criticize, especially when your friends in other provinces are taking the slash and burn and hack and slash method to health renewal or health reform, then you are really not offering anything by just criticism all the time.

\* (2100)

I would very much like to provide these things. If I had a choice, I would be providing them. I do not have that choice. We have to make very hard decisions every year in the provision of health services, and when you consider the way the health system in Manitoba has expanded and grown in the last number of years, certainly the last six, before we put an end to the massive hacking and slashing that was going on in Manitoba previous to our coming in and bringing in a phased approach to health care renewal, I say to the honourable member, what is his alternative? I mean your whole alternative to health care is to reinsure low-cost equipment. There is more than that that I am asking for in terms of an alternative to what we are doing in health care in Manitoba.

I have maybe spoken a little too long for a response, but maybe the honourable member will take 10 or 15 minutes and explain his party's platform when it comes to health care.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I take it from the minister's response, the answer to my question was no.

**Mr. McCrae:** No, it was yes.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I asked two questions. I asked about the appeal process, Home Care Equipment,

and, secondly, I asked about the question of the formulary issue and consideration about retail, wholesale, sale of that product, since the individual is now doing it at home and would be forced to do it in the hospital.

Maybe I will pose the question again so the minister understands. The individual's father is dying of cancer. She has taken him out of the hospital and put him at home and is looking after him at home. She is providing all the nursing care, effectively, to him. She is feeding him with a formulary that is a pabulum-like substance that he can digest. She unfortunately has to pay high-volume costs at the retail place to obtain this formulary.

Secondly, she brushes his teeth using special swabs that you can only obtain from the hospital. Unfortunately, she cannot obtain them, and if you do obtain them—she gets them only on loan and she cannot get it. The issue is, since she is doing this at home, can any consideration be given either to the supply of the formulary or the supply of the swabs and other material to her to take some of the burden of the cost off the family since in fact they are doing at home what in many cases individuals would do at the hospital? It is, in my mind, sort of a retail-wholesale question but—

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, my family has experience with this very issue, and when it came to keeping our dad home, he wanted to be there. We did not really get into whether—I remember we had to pay for the oxygen; at that time we had to pay certain charges relating to oxygen for my dad. There were other supplies, but Home Care was there for that.

The point is, I do not know, under the circumstances today the honourable member was referring to, whether this was the family who wanted the father to be home as opposed to the hospital, whether planning for this, the care plan had the input of the physician. I do not know all of the details, but I would be glad to go over them again and to review them again and look at the issue the case raises, which is what I think the honourable member wants me to do.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I will draft a letter to the minister with specifics on this because I did not realize it might be a factor. I wanted to know what the general policy was, but I can wait until the minister is in receipt of my letter. That would suffice.

The other question I think you answered was with respect to the appeal process for Home Care Equipment, and the minister indicated that that would be looked at in terms of the appeal process. That is what I took from your response.

**Mr. McCrae:** So, really, I think the answers were yes and yes when you come right down to it. When you strip away all the rhetoric on both sides of the House, I think the answer was yes to both questions.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I will agree, although I might add, Madam Chairperson, that I kept my rhetoric to a bare minimum. The minister would have to agree with that.

**Mr. McCrae:** I will agree that, for the honourable member, he kept his rhetoric to a minimum. This is very, very unusual.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I wanted to move on to the Continuing Care program with some general questions in that area, and I wonder—I posed some questions to the minister earlier with respect to the maximum-minimum payments in personal care homes, and I can wait for that information. I am wondering if the minister has information and data to me on the average monthly caseloads for the Continuing Care program in terms of admissions, waiting lists for personal care homes and the like.

**Mr. McCrae:** Personal care?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes.

**Mr. McCrae:** In respect to personal care in Manitoba, I will give the honourable member figures from 1991-92 through to the first nine months of '93-94, which is the latest numbers we have available.

In 1991-92, admissions to personal care in Winnipeg throughout the course of that year, 1,204, and rural, 1,070, for a total of 2,274. That is

admissions. Discharges in that year: Winnipeg, 1,174; rural, 1,020—for a total of 2,194.

Moving to 1992-93, admissions: Winnipeg, 1,329; rural 1,080—for a total of 2,409. Discharges in 1992-93: Winnipeg, 1,307; rural, 1,029—for a total of 2,336.

For '93-94, April to December, admissions: Winnipeg, 1,471; rural, 920—for a total of 2,391. Discharges for that same period: Winnipeg, 1,290; rural, 945—for a total of 2,235.

What I see is that if this trend continues a fairly significant increase in admissions certainly in Winnipeg in 1993-94.

\* (2110)

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, can the minister give me figures as to those panelled for placement in personal care homes over the corresponding period of time? [interjection]

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. This section of Committee of Supply is still dealing with the question raised by the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

**Mr. McCrae:** The New Democrats should keep quiet over there when we are in session here.

Here is the number I want the honourable member to remember as I talk about people panelled for long-term care placement in '93-94. I want him to remember that in 1992-93 there were 2,875 people assessed for PCH placement. That is where we were in '92-93; that corresponding figure in 1993-94 would be 2,504, which is quite a significant decrease in panelled persons. In the Winnipeg region, panelled for personal care home and in hospital, 767; in the community, 568—for a total of 1,135. In the rural regions, in hospital, 602; in the community, 567—for a total of 1,169. So the provincial total: in hospital, 1,369; in the community, 1,135—for the total that I mentioned earlier of 2,504. So that is reflected in the fact that 60 personal care spaces were opened at Concordia Hospital, 120 personal care spaces at the Kildonan personal care home and 120 at River East. There were 20—[interjection]

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. This section of Committee of Supply is still in session, and the

honourable Minister of Health to finish his response.

**Mr. McCrae:** In short, Madam Chairperson, we have effective April 30, 1994, since May of 1988, a net of 514 additional personal care home beds in the province of Manitoba, which is reflected in the earlier numbers that I gave only in part because there has been the same kind of increase in the number of people placed because of that capacity that we have built into the system in the last few years.

### Report

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Deputy Chairperson of Committees):** Madam Chairperson, in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 to consider the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) moved that the question now be put. The motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently two members requested that a formal vote be taken.

### Formal Vote

**Madam Chairperson:** A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

*Both sections in Chamber for formal vote.*

\* (2130)

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 considering the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, a motion was moved by the honourable member for Point Douglas. The motion reads as follows:

THAT the question now be put.

The motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently two members requested that a formal vote be taken. The question before the committee is on the motion of the honourable member for Point Douglas.

*A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

Yeas 20, Nays 29.

**Madam Chairperson:** The motion is accordingly defeated.



The two sections of the Committees of Supply will now continue with consideration of departmental Estimates.

Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan, the honourable member for Crescentwood, the Minister of Health has requested, if it is agreeable to the committee, a two- or three-minute recess while the other section is moving into 255. [agreed]

*The committee recessed at 11:33 p.m.*

#### After Recess

*The committee resumed at 11:39 p.m.*

#### HEALTH (continued)

**Madam Chairperson:** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for that information. I wonder if he might also give us the number of units of home care tenant services and home support R.N.s and LPNs that correspond to those breakdowns that he has given in terms of the other continuing care assistance.

\* (2140)

#### Report

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Deputy Chairperson of Committees):** Madam Chairperson, in a section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 to consider the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training a motion was moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). The motion reads:

THAT this committee censure the Minister of Education and Training for failure to protect the interests of disadvantaged youth by cutting ACCESS Program funding while continuing to provide Workforce 2000 grants to businesses for questionable projects despite obvious program abuse in a program where hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars are paid in private training grants to businesses which are not being held publicly accountable.

Madam Chairperson, this motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently two members requested a formal vote on this matter be taken.

#### Formal Vote

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

*Both sections in Chamber for formal vote.*

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 considering the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, a motion was moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). The motion reads:

THAT this committee censure the Minister of Education and Training for failing to protect the interests of disadvantaged students by cutting ACCESS Program funding while continuing to provide Workforce 2000 grants to businesses for questionable projects despite obvious program abuses in a program where hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars are paid in private training grants to businesses which are not being held publicly accountable.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently, two members requested that a formal vote on this matter be taken. The question before the committee is on the motion of the honourable member for Wolseley.

*A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

Yeas 27, Nays 26.

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. The motion is accordingly carried.

The two sections of the Committee of Supply will now continue with consideration of the departmental Estimates.

#### HEALTH (continued)

\* (2230)

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, in 1994-95, there were a very large number of units of services provided to Manitobans under our Home Care program. There were 2,554,000 home care attendant services. There were 955,000 home support worker units of services. There were 58,705 LPN units of service. There were 129,538 registered nurse units of service.

**Mr. Chomiak:** To the minister, is that for '93-94, or is that projection for '94-95? I am sorry, I missed that.

**Mr. McCrae:** I am sorry, that is projected for '94-95.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I am wondering if the minister could outline for me the information concerning the length of time in terms of placement in a personal care home. Does the minister have statistics on that particular figure?

**Mr. McCrae:** If I understand the honourable member correctly, or if I heard him correctly—he is asking for how long you wait to get into personal care? There is no average because of all of the various circumstances. We can say that, today, as a general statement, you do not wait as long as you used to, but you might find somebody who did wait for a long time compared with somebody else.

It is very hard because of the way the panelling system works, the way the prioritizing system works, the various policies of the various personal care homes, the choice of personal care home that you might make. All those things make it very, very difficult to give a number, and an average would be misleading because that average would have quite long waits and some very, very short waits.

\* (2240)

I do not know how to answer the honourable member's question because I know the honourable member will probably find someone who has a short wait, if he is looking, or he might find somebody who waits for a long time. That is the long and the short of it, if I can put it that way.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Well, the minister, by indicating that the list is down from previous years, basically answered my question.

My next question is—and I am certain these figures will be down as well. Can the minister give me the figures of the actual number of patients awaiting placement while occupying acute care beds in each hospital in the city of Winnipeg?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, as of March 31, 1994, the number of people in acute care awaiting long-term, that is, personal care placement, at Concordia Hospital was 11, at Health Sciences Centre 7, Grace 28, Misericordia 6, St. Boniface 31, Victoria 15, Seven Oaks 24.

**Mr. Chomiak:** The staff complement in the Long Term Care Branch is cited at 15.16. Is this the group and the individuals who look after the per-diem rates, the enforcement of the guidelines, the administration, et cetera? Is this the sum total of individuals involved in the whole operation basically of Long Term Care; that is, the 15.16 staff years located on page 59?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, the 15.16 equivalent full-time staff years listed on page 59, again, is head office staff, as opposed to people who are involved in the direct administration of panelling and waiting lists.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Again, I assume that those people—of course, that would make sense—who assist in the panelling, et cetera, would be located in 5.(b).

**Mr. McCrae:** That is correct, Madam Chairperson.

**Mr. Chomiak:** There has been a fair amount of discussion, and the minister has a task force reviewing the whole question of the standards and the guidelines for personal care homes. Can the minister table the guidelines and/or the standards that have been established by the department for personal care homes?

**Mr. McCrae:** The information the honourable member seeks is bound in a very, very thick, thick document. We will take his question under advisement.

**Mr. Chomiak:** That is fair. I understand it is fairly complicated.

I guess the issue that I really want to get to the heart of is what I mentioned in my opening remarks, and that is basically the phenomena in

personal care homes where the acuity and level of care has increased and the commensurate allocation of resources in terms of staff has not necessarily kept up with the issue of the kinds of patients, given the demographic make up of the patients and the acuity of care.

I am just wondering how the department is adjusting to that particular issue, considering that there has been movement from acute-care beds into long-term care beds. The question is how has the commensurate resources shifted because certainly on dollar value it does not appear to have shifted, but maybe I am not understanding it totally.

**Mr. McCrae:** I think the honourable member may indeed have come to the conclusion—without the work having been done yet, he may have come to the same conclusion that we may yet come to as a result of our review. I do not know that yet, but the staffing guidelines that exist, I am advised, have indeed been adhered to, but within—we talk about Levels III and IV.

We have staff that would look after a Level III and IV patient or resident mix. However, as a percentage of the total population of a personal care home, the IIIs and IVs now occupy a larger percentage. So in light of that, I think the honourable member is suggesting we ought to be looking at staffing guidelines and maybe looking at adjusting staffing guidelines because of that phenomenon, as he has called it, the fact that we have more cognitively impaired individuals under care in personal care situations.

It is because of these things that the member mentions and because of issues raised by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) and others that the review we referred to earlier in this review of Estimates is underway, and we will be addressing the issues raised by all of the people I have mentioned.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, equally, or as well a factor that has also I think been raised in the same regard is the whole question of security systems, and the minister is aware of that. I presume that will also be looked at by the task force.

\* (2250)

Are there standards of security that have been upgraded in the last year, that are in the process of being upgraded at certain facilities? What is the process if the facility wants to put in place a more secure or a safer environment? Is there something available from the department in order to allow a personal care home, for example, to upgrade—if they have a lot of cognitively impaired individuals, for example—their system in order to protect those individuals? Is there some kind of special provision that is in place now to deal with that?

**Mr. McCrae:** When new residences are being constructed, the latest in security systems are approved for those newly constructed facilities. When centres apply to the department for funding assistance to retrofit and to bring their security systems up to modern standards, those applications are always approved. I guess that, when we build new personal care centres, the designs include the up-to-date security systems. We try to remember that personal care—well, they are called old folks' homes by some people or personal care centres, but they are homes. There is a really important balance to be drawn here. We have to make sure that our people are safe and that every measure is taken to ensure that safety while at the same time trying to deliver a quality of life that brings some comfort to people.

If you look at some of the residences of more recent construction, you will see that for cognitively impaired people they have pathways and those kinds of things because some of these people are quite physically able to ambulate and get themselves around, but we do not want them to walk too far away unsupervised or without any help. So we have to try to draw that balance, remembering these are not jails we are putting people into. These are homes.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, my colleague from the constituency of Kildonan has asked some appropriate questions on the task force that is looking at personal care homes, et cetera, and some of the questions related to waiting lists. I am wondering if the minister could give us an update,

today's status, of the application of Bill 22 as it applies to personal care homes.

**Mr. McCrae:** The latest that I have is basically where we were last time. I think the department will be reviewing all proposals that come forward, including those which basically say we cannot comply. Bill 22 is what the honourable member said in her question, but we did leave that issue relatively flexible for personal cares, for hospitals, for everybody, as to how they might arrive at the savings that Bill 22, if used, would bring. We are not insisting on Bill 22, on its application.

Every personal care home will have its unique circumstances and perhaps unique opportunities for savings. Perhaps some have been paring down unnecessary expenditures in previous years and can make that case to the department, and thereby the department would look at that situation a little differently from perhaps a personal care centre that had not been making the same amount of efforts in past years.

Basically, where we are at, at this time—I am sure if the last few weeks' events are repeated, my honourable friends will know just as soon as I will as to the developments in that area.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, with Continuing Care and the application of Bill 22—and I am pleased to see that the minister is prepared to be more flexible with hospitals and personal care homes in terms of how they come up with a 2 percent savings and that it does not necessarily have to be in the area of salary savings. I am wondering in regard to the application of Bill 22 as it affects hospitals which are discharging individuals who might be in receipt of home care, if the minister has given any thought to that impact.

I ask the question because it came to my attention in rural Manitoba, it was in the southern part of the province, that hospitals were ready to discharge patients sometimes on Thursdays or on a Friday morning but felt that they could not because there was no Home Care staff on some of those Fridays because of Bill 22, so therefore the individual stayed in hospital till Monday or Tuesday.

Has he had an opportunity to look into that, or has there been any thought to being more flexible in terms of closing government offices on the Fridays? I understand—I do not know if this is rumour or speculation—that possibly the Premier had made a comment the other day that they might be willing to look at the flexibility of keeping some offices open all days of the week, given certain concerns from one of the established groups in this province, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce. Does the minister have any comments on that?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, the home care co-ordinators will be—the department is reviewing that kind of suggestion for home care on Fridays, but I point out to the honourable member that home care co-ordinators do not work Saturdays. [interjection] Well, that is another point, is it not?

\* (2300)

The honourable member says, and hospitals do not discharge. Well, some do. I understand one hospital was accused recently of not discharging on weekends and that was not true, because they do discharge on weekends. Here is where we had a problem with home care prior to Filmon Fridays ever becoming a part of the landscape in Manitoba because they do not work Saturdays. Well, as I understand the We Care service working with Seven Oaks, they do work Saturdays. They work Sundays and whenever days they are required. That is a problem when you are dealing with staff who—how is there a nice way to put “unionized staff?” I do not know a nice way to say that without bringing into the debate some controversy, but we want to have flexibility. We talked about that earlier.

Filmon Fridays, in my view, can be Filmon Tuesdays if managers in the programs can make adjustments to their scheduling in such a way that not everybody has to be away on Tuesday necessarily. So the suggestion the honourable member makes is a good one. I just wonder how we can deal with Saturdays and Sundays if we do not open up our minds to other options and possibilities.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, it should not be that difficult to deal with Saturdays and Sundays in expanding the service because we do it in other programs within the minister's department and those staff belong to the very same unions. We provide early discharge programs through public health nurses Saturdays and Sundays and antenatal home care on Saturdays and Sundays, so rather than looking at a reduction of provision of service on certain days, we could be looking at an expansion.

So I have to defend the union on this one, because they certainly, I think, were reasonable and supportive when we expanded the antenatal home care program, as well as the public health program.

I would ask the minister then, is there a move to look at having case co-ordinators and resource co-ordinators work on Saturdays and Sundays? Is that an option that has been looked at?

**Mr. McCrae:** It is indeed, Madam Chairperson. That is part of the effort we are making to try to make the government-run Home Care program more responsive to the needs of the patient, not unlike private operators who make it their business to be responsive to those who are paying the bills. I say those who are paying the bills, because the private health care operations, for the most part, operate outside the government-run system. However, I think the Seven Oaks project can show us some possibilities that maybe our own thinking, our own mindset with respect to the operation of a government-run home care operation, has restrictions in.

Maybe I am not fair to blame it on collective agreements. Maybe it is the system that we operate in, and we should not be laying this at the feet of collective agreements. But the fact is, we all should learn to be a little more flexible, and we all should learn to put the patient first and concentrate on that and the patient's family and friends and those who look to our programs to provide them with appropriate services, services appropriate to the need that exists. You cannot make the need fit into what we are prepared to deliver. We should deliver what we need to deliver to meet the need.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for that information. I have a couple of questions on Support Services to Seniors in terms of an explanation of a number of the programs which I do not know what they do. I do not know whether the staff here can answer those questions. I know the staff is here, somewhere in the Chamber, and I want to ask this before the evening is over. I also want to ask, are there departmental statistics on the number of clients who are receiving home care who suffer from the HIV virus? Do we keep statistics on that?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, we would have to do a case-by-case study in order to obtain that. You see, we would not be able to tell. We can check through the Life Saving Drug Program perhaps, or Pharmacare, or other ways, but using that information we would have to trace back the case and check out whether home care was part of the treatment plan. So it is difficult and I do not know today how many, if any, HIV people are receiving home care services.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, I certainly do not need to know that information if it is that difficult to compile, but the reason I asked the question was because of the request for funding from the Kali Shiva organization who, as the minister knows, provide services to individuals and their families in the community.

I believe that this organization, which is primarily run by volunteers, seems to do a lot of good community work for very low cost. That is why I asked the minister if he knew how many people were being serviced through the Home Care program. This seems to be a good example of an organization that is cost-efficient, providing a lot of services for few dollars.

I know the minister had indicated in a letter to my colleague from Osborne that he felt unable to make a commitment to the organization for funding for this year, and I am wondering if he or his department are going to be looking at community-based organizations such as Kali Shiva to get a sense of if in fact they are cost-effective and if we should be promoting these kinds of organizations for providing services to

people so they can remain in the community for a longer period of time as opposed to being in hospital beds.

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, I remember meeting with representatives of Kali Shiva and being impressed by the depth of their commitment, their motivation in wanting to help out people at a difficult time in their lives.

It was with regret that I was unable to provide through the department funding for the Kali Shiva, but there again, I am not—as far as I am concerned, these matters are never over as long as we have problems that are still unresolved, so that we will be interested as we look to the next budget year as to whether there have been any changes in circumstances for Kali Shiva or for the government so we will look forward to perhaps having staff of the department keep up to date on the operations and activities of the Kali Shiva.

I think of that organization and I think of Support Services to Seniors and wonder if there are not some program criteria there that might somehow work for both kinds of organizations, and that is something we ought to explore together. So we are prepared to do all those things and leave the door open for further discussions with Kali Shiva.

\* (2310)

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, I want to ask some questions about some of these organizations for Services to Seniors. I had a list of some—I guess basically what I wanted to know is, if I read through this list, if any of these organizations provide any type of a home maintenance kind of service similar to what we have in the north end of Winnipeg. Maybe that is the easiest way, if I go through that. Most of these organizations on the list all received funding in '93-94 as well. Are there any organizations who are brand new—I am talking about in the city of Winnipeg—who for the first year are receiving funding through this program?

**Mr. McCrae:** In 1993-94 there were 33 Support Services to Seniors organizations in Winnipeg. In 1993-94, we added three new ones and expanded two others, to make a total actually of 38

altogether. We are hoping to establish four more new ones in 1994-95 in the city of Winnipeg.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, I know this may be tedious. I just want to go through a few of these that I have circled in order—and if the minister could briefly outline in a sentence or two the nature of the approved grant. The first one is the Bethel Mennonite Care Services Inc. of Winnipeg.

**Mr. McCrae:** Bethel Mennonite Care Services is a Support Services to Seniors organization set up at Bethel Place on Stafford. They provide basic sorts of services like transportation for people, like perhaps providing grocery shopping services or escort services, those kinds of things, to improve the quality of life of the residents there.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, the next one, on the same page, is the Seniors Home Help Project Inc., Winnipeg, about halfway down.

**Mr. McCrae:** This Support Services to Seniors group, Madam Chairperson, assists seniors living in three buildings which are within approximately a block or closer of a First Mennonite church. I guess there is a community of interest involved here, but they provide home maintenance for the people who live in those three buildings, shopping, escort, transportation, again, and a translation service as well.

**Ms. Gray:** I believe the minister also said congregate meals, if the Hansard did not pick that up.

The next one on the next page is Seniors Outreach Services of Bren-Win Inc.

**Mr. McCrae:** The honourable member will no doubt be familiar with the Rural Municipality of Brenda and the Rural Municipality of Winchester. Bren-Win, that is what this one is about. It provides similar services as we last spoke about in the Deloraine-Waskada area.

**Ms. Gray:** The last one I was interested in was on the same page, the Manitoba Housing Authority Inc.-TRC. It was a grant of \$100,700.

**Mr. McCrae:** This money is provided to Manitoba Housing Incorporated to employ four tenant resource workers to provide identical sorts of services, as we have already discussed, to

seniors living in 10 public-owned buildings in Winnipeg, all over Winnipeg.

\* (2320)

**Ms. Gray:** That was the series of questions that I had on those projects. Most of the other projects, particularly the ones in rural Manitoba, it is quite obvious that a lot of those provide those similar kinds of supports to seniors, and they were a little more explanatory. So I think the minister for that information.

While we are on the subject of long-term care—and I know I am jumping around here, and I do not have my notes with me, but I do not know if the minister recalls a meeting or a letter of inquiry from an organization, a group of individuals who want to start a business in respite care. I cannot recall the name of them, but basically they were trying to get information about how they would go about this.

I know that there is no such thing in the province of Manitoba in terms of an organization, a business or for-profit organization, that actually provides respite care, that respite care is usually provided through beds that have been designated in personal care homes and the per-diem rate is attached to that, but this group was interested in any kind of information they could find out about such a project, and they did not seem to be getting much help through the bureaucracy. Either they were not asking the right people, or they were asking the wrong questions.

Can the minister give us any information this evening about the whole issue of respite care? What if an organization wants to provide a service in the area of respite care that is a little bit different and has not been tried before? What would be their best route in terms of who they should talk to or how they should go about at least looking at the feasibility of it?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chair, if I am not mistaken, the organization is Generations Care. The staff of the department have recollections of discussions with that particular organization.

One of the problems we have had as we have developed all kinds of new programming over the

years is this is an area which we have not gotten into in terms of funding. That presents problems for someone wanting to get started by partnering with the government. We have not done that. We have expanded in any number of other areas and started up other areas still, and this is not one the Health department has gotten involved in.

I understand the Department of Family Services Residential Care people may have some insights here. As far as actual partnering or funding arrangements, I am not aware of any possibilities at the moment.

As we look at respite care and the possibilities there—and my understanding of it is that there are times when we maybe place people in personal care when we do not necessarily always need to do that, or for other levels of service when maybe a respite situation might fill the gap that exists. I understand that, yet we have not yet been able to see our way clear to make funding available for that type of programming.

Again, not unlike the previous topic when we were talking about Kali Shiva, we will keep an eye on circumstances and conditions.

**Ms. Gray:** Madam Chairperson, I do not think it was funding that the organization wanted, or this group of individuals. I think it was more a sanction or a licence.

To make it easier, is there a particular individual, either in this department or in Family Services that perhaps this group should be talking to, again to see if they can get further information?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chair, I believe the honourable member is correct. The organization was not looking for funding but was looking for some kind of a sanction to go ahead. They can have further discussions if they want. As I understand it, this is not a regulated area anyway.

My understanding, subject to correction if I am wrong, is that you do not need a licence for this. There are no standards of care in existence that I know of for this particular kind of care. If someone wants to get into business, they need a business licence or whatever you require under provincial or municipal taxation and business licence laws,

but beyond that we do not require a licence of them, and we do not provide inspection at this point. We will have to monitor this to see if it does become an industry. If it does, then we will have to look to see to what extent we need to get involved.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I just have a few more questions in this area. When an organization applies for support to seniors assistance, I am sure there is a regular form they fill out and put together with some instructions.

I am just wondering if the minister next time we meet can table for us just copies of those forms. I could phone the department I guess and get it, but since we are at this point, would it be—

\* (2330)

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Chairperson, we will bring that material to work tomorrow.

**Mr. Chomiak:** One of the areas we may have not talked about is the short-term emergency project which was a project last year funded around \$609,000 and again this year \$609,000. What is the status of that project?

**Mr. McCrae:** I will give the honourable member a little bit of detail on the STEP—Short Term Emergency Program. The program is a demonstration project. It is sponsored by the Home Care Branch and it is funded by the Health Services Development Fund, which is Lotteries or gambling money which is used to develop these demonstration projects. The goal is to prevent admission to hospital and promote early discharge by creating alternative forms of community care and developing protocols and care models which will allow for more effective management of primary chronic care patients within the community.

I will give the honourable member a few examples from hospitals. At Concordia Hospital, the goal of the Length of Stay Reduction project is to reduce length of stay for patients with selected conditions by providing rehabilitation and other resources which will facilitate discharge home. The primary target groups for the project are patients admitted following a cardiovascular, accident, hip fracture or other falls and myocardial

infarction. The anticipated length of the project is one year.

At Grace General Hospital, the Grace has designed a STEP project to examine the management of psychiatric emergencies. The goals of the project are to gather data which will identify patterns of utilization and characteristics of patients presenting to the emergency department with psychiatric complaints, and to design an intervention based on the data that will improve the management of these patients and connect them to community services.

At the Health Sciences Centre, the goal of the Prevention of Admission to Hospital Project—all these hospitals have their own acronyms for their programs. The first one was at Concordia, the Concordia Length of Stay Reduction is called CLOSR, and at Health Sciences, the Prevention of Admission to Hospital Project, that is PAHP. PAHP is to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions by ensuring that medically stable clients who require some care in order to be discharged will receive that care immediately. This guaranteed home care will be provided to anyone within the city of Winnipeg.

At Seven Oaks, if I dare talk about Seven Oaks again today, the first phase of the Discharge Planning Project is a research study of patients admitted from the emergency department to surgery, medicine and geriatrics with specific emphasis on the criteria for their admission, the discharge planning and the resulting length of stay to identify factors that influence or impede earlier discharge. Based on the results of the study, Phase 2 will be the development and implementation of services and protocols which will reduce admission and/or length of stay for patients presenting to the emergency department. The project is expected to continue for some time.

Madam Chairperson, just in passing, this program, as honourable members know—they have raised issues related to emergency rooms and pressure on the emergency rooms. Pressure on emergency rooms is sometimes the result of many factors. Sometimes it is because all the beds are full in the hospital. Sometimes it is because people



do not seek alternative measures for problems, and sometimes it is because we do not have projects like the kind I am describing. I think that these—the whole goal is not to keep people out of hospital. It is to keep people who are not needed to be in the hospital out of hospital. That is what this is about.

At the St. Boniface General Hospital, the heart failure management program is targeted at people presenting to the emergency department with congestive heart failure as the primary diagnosis and other CHF-assessed patients referred to the heart failure clinic. The goal of the project is to demonstrate that the shift in the management of patients presenting with CHF from inpatient-based to community-based care can be successfully accomplished while providing the equivalent or even superior outcomes for the patient.

At the Victoria General Hospital, the South Winnipeg Integrated Geriatric Program, otherwise known as SWING, is a collaboration with the Victoria Hospital, Riverview Health Centre and the Winnipeg Region Home Care program. The program is primarily designed to serve the frail elderly person living at home and a potentially high user of the Victoria Hospital Emergency Department. Two of the goals of the program are to identify and intervene in evolving geriatric crises of the frail elderly population dwelling in the community in order to improve their health status and to improve the responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and co-ordination of existing community services.

There will also be a STEP at Brandon General Hospital. The impact will be on emergency rooms, and, of course, it will reduce admissions. As we know, emergency rooms have been the subject of some comment of late. However, over the last 50 years, I dare say, emergency rooms have been areas of pressure from time to time. That is not new, but it is something that we must always be vigilant about, try to make sure that our emergency rooms are run very smoothly and well so that when emergency cases present where there is no alternative available but those services, they darn well are needed and should be there. So, even

though emergency rooms have over the years often been the subject of comment and criticism because frankly some people with not-so-serious problems do end up waiting, I suppose it is appropriate that those who are in most need wait the least amount of time.

\* (2340)

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, under the Long Term Care appropriation, under Expected Results, it says that 150 budgets will be processed, drug standard visits will be undertaken, personal care home drug audits would be undertaken, year-end audits at personal care homes will be undertaken and adult day care audits will be carried out.

How does the branch enforce the standards and ensure that standards are being monitored or being maintained? Is it done strictly by a paper audit or is there some other—because there is no mention in here of visits to homes to review standards, et cetera? I am just wondering how that is done.

**Mr. McCrae:** Yes, I should not get too far out ahead of that review that we are conducting of personal care, but I am constrained to say a couple of things, maybe to put to rest some perceptions that might exist. I do not think the honourable member has these perceptions, but they do exist elsewhere.

For example, personal care homes in Manitoba are the subject of inspections. They are the subject of standards inspections. They are the subject of visits at certain times. For example, you get a new administrator or perhaps a new director of nursing who might want some input from the department, those are times when it is appropriate for a visit. There are surprise or unannounced inspections that happen on long weekends. They happen in the night shift. They happen in the day shift.

I had been led to believe by some that all inspections are carefully—notice given so that you can have the Moscow tour and so on. It is not quite like that I am advised. That might be the perception on the part of some people if they did not happen to see all the things that went on. So those are things that do go on. Some of these things are on a regular basis, some are on an announced

basis. If you want to do a very large inspection and review, where you want to have discussions with the staff and department heads and so on, you obviously give some notice for a thing like that but all these other kinds of things happen, too.

**Mr. Chomiak:** In addition to these audits that are mentioned in here, there are a whole number of these visits that take place. They are just not acknowledged in this particular part of the Estimates. That is all I am trying to determine.

**Mr. McCrae:** Yes, Madam Chairperson, what is printed on page 58 is not all inclusive of the inspection activities, audit, review and monitoring activities of the Department of Health in the annual operation of personal care homes. It is sort of the same as not having a police officer on every corner. I mean, a week after an inspection something might go awry and there would be need for a return visit, or something might happen that might lead one to an incorrect conclusion that inspections had not been happening. A variety of things can happen in the pursuit of safety and standards and observance of standards, but, on the other hand, we want to keep that to an absolute minimum.

I am speaking now in my professional capacity as the Minister of Health, and the honourable member's health seems to be declining on us as the minutes tick away. I am concerned about the honourable member. Maybe it is just the way he sounds; maybe he is feeling just fine. I am not sure, but it might be time for the member for Crescentwood to give the honourable member for Kildonan a break.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Well, I thank the minister for that concern. In fact, the member for Crescentwood and I were just signalling. I had indicated to the

vice-chair that we are going to go through some of these votes immediately.

**Madam Chairperson:** 3.(a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$272,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$104,500—pass.

(b) Home Care (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,264,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$4,421,200—pass; (3) Home Care Assistance \$69,603,600—pass; (4) External Agencies \$1,293,600—pass; (5) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$609,600—pass.

(c) Long Term Care (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$730,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$112,100—pass.

(d) Gerontology (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$228,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$102,500—pass; (3) External Agencies \$2,898,500—pass.

Resolution 21.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$80,422,200 for Health, Continuing Care Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995.

What is the will of the committee?

**An Honourable Member:** Twelve o'clock.

**Madam Chairperson:** Call it twelve o'clock?

The hour being after 10 p.m., this committee is adjourned.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay):** The hour being after 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

# **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Monday, May 16, 1994**

## **CONTENTS**

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **Committee of Supply**

**Education and Training**

**1742**

**Health**

**1776**