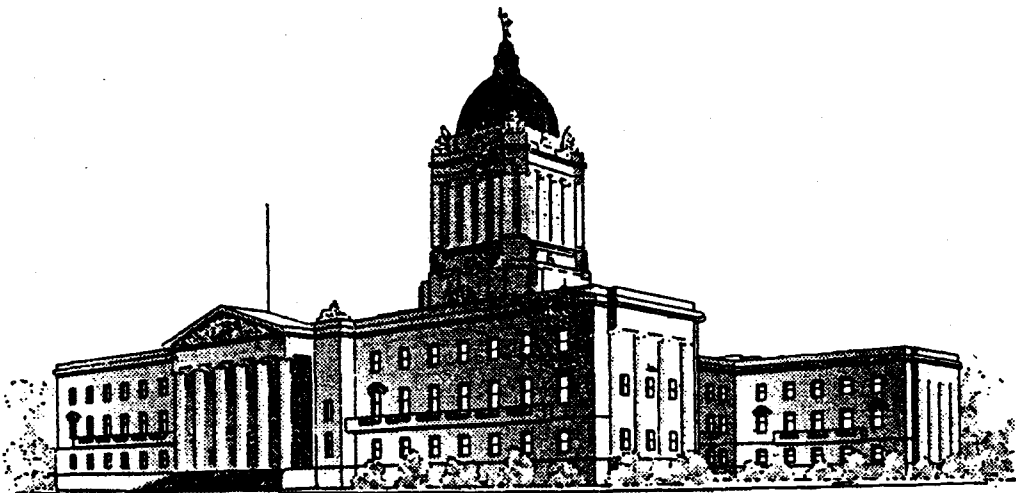




Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
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	Rupert's Island	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

Tuesday, May 17, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Breach of Privilege—Committee of Supply

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would rise on a matter of privilege.

I stand today to put on the record and seek the advice of the Privileges and Elections Committee in particular on an issue that occurred last night inside the committee room.

According to Beauchesne's, in order to have a matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the complaint of breach of privilege must conclude with a motion providing the House with an opportunity to take some action, and I will at the end of my remarks be making such a motion. The question of privilege must be brought to the attention of the House at the first possible opportunity. Last night it occurred; this is the first opportunity, in fact, that I will have in order to raise this particular issue.

Yesterday, in committee, the official opposition moved a motion of closure, a form of a motion of closure, and that concerns me greatly. I look to Beauchesne's Citation No. 1, Mr. Speaker, and I ask that the New Democrats take this just as seriously as I do. Beauchesne's Citation No. 1 reads: "The principles of Canadian parliamentary law are: To protect a minority and restrain the improvidence or tyranny of a majority; to secure the transaction of public business in an orderly manner; to enable every Member to express opinions within limits necessary to preserve decorum and prevent an unnecessary waste of time; to give abundant opportunity for the consideration of every measure, and to prevent any legislative action being taken upon sudden impulse."

I could go on to Citation 3, which in part says: "More tentative are such traditional features as respect for the rights of the minority, which precludes a Government from using to excess the extensive powers that it has to limit debate . . ."

Last night, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask even members of the New Democratic Party to reflect in terms of what it is that they did. If government moved a motion of closure inside this Chamber, the official opposition would be standing up, and they would be condemning the government for moving such a motion. The New Democrats know full well that is, in fact, what they would do. I would be supporting the New Democratic Party if they jumped up in opposition to the government moving a motion of closure. The Liberal Party will be consistent inside this Chamber and will fight closure, whether it is moved by government or whether it is moved by the official opposition. One has to be putting that into a proper perspective when we talk in terms of the official opposition.

* (1335)

The official opposition's role, Mr. Speaker, is to enhance, to encourage, to provide the debate, that there is no place—and I went through Beauchesne's and the rules to find out where it might say that the opposition—or it is encouraging opposition parties to limit debate on an important issue. To call the question is to, in fact, imply closure. The NDP House leader knows full well that is the case.

I could go to Beauchesne's Citation 519: "Closure is a method of procedure which brings debate to a conclusion and enables the House to secure a decision upon the subject under discussion."

Last night, the New Democratic Party moved a motion which did not, Mr. Speaker, allow me to be able to, on behalf of the Liberal Party, make it clear in terms of where we wanted to be able to be on a

particular vote on an issue. Manitobans have a right to know in terms of where the Liberal Party is at on certain positions or all positions, and I had attempted to ask a couple of questions. Unfortunately, when it came time for me to indicate to the committee in terms of where it is that we felt the government was going wrong and to talk specifically on the motion, the NDP prevented me from being able to say that because they moved that the question now be put.

As I say, what I take most exception to is that if it would have been the government, the NDP would have been with us in opposition, condemning the government for moving a motion of closure.

I am going to ask the government House leader to be with us in condemning an opposition party, the official opposition party, for moving a motion of closure. I do not know if there is any other opposition party across Canada that has moved a motion of closure on an Estimates or a government bill. I think that, in itself, warrants this Chamber in terms of looking into it, and at the very least, Mr. Speaker, an apology from the New Democratic Party for not standing up for Manitobans and allowing debate to occur.

So I would move, seconded by the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards)

THAT the motion moved by a member of the official opposition in Committee of Supply calling for the question to be put is a breach of privilege and should be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, a matter of privilege is a serious matter and ought to rarely come up in this House. We have had many matters of privilege that have dealt with serious matters related to parliamentary procedure, but this has to be one of the weakest matters of privilege I have ever seen brought into this House.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only not a matter of privilege in the general sense, it is not even close to a matter of privilege. In our rules, for the information of the Liberals who may not be aware of House procedures, closure is listed in terms of

our rules, Rule 37. There is also a section in Beauchesne that refers specifically under 519 to closure.

The previous question, a motion to put the previous question, has nothing to do with closure. That is dealt with in 521, 522 though to 528 of Beauchesne, and dealt with in a separate section in terms of our rules.

The Liberals, Mr. Speaker, what I find amazing yesterday is we found a situation where a motion was moved. The government had spoken to the motion. We had spoken. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) had also spoken, although I realize he was having some difficulty in determining his position. We felt that it might be advisable for the Liberals, for the three who were present in the House at that point in time, to have that ability to decide their position, and we called for the previous question.

I would note, Mr. Speaker, for the information of the member for Inkster, that we are an opposition party. We are all actually in a situation where none of us controls it. We are not the government, yet. We do not have the ability to enforce our will, and, in fact, a vote was taken that ended up with the government siding with the Liberals to continue debate.

In fact, what happened was, we went back into the committee and the member for Inkster, having finally decided his position, put it on the record for five minutes, and we proceeded to have the vote. So the dispute is over whether the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), in his own mind, should have had the ability to place that on the record for five minutes.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is clearly not only not a matter of privilege. This matter of privilege is actually out of order because he is questioning a decision that was already taken by the House yesterday. It is also out of order because the Committee of Supply has not reported to this House at this present time. In fact, it is so far out of order, I consider it an embarrassment, and I think it is probably more indicative of the fact that the Liberals still do not get it when it comes to the functioning of this House. I really wonder when

we are going to see the Liberal Party get its act together.

This is not a matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker, and I would urge you to rule it completely out of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to thank both members for their remarks on this matter. Indeed, I will take this matter under advisement, and I will come back to the House with a ruling.

* (1340)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Thompson General Hospital Patient Care

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of T. Nelcosky, B. Zielke, M. Bairos and others requesting the Legislative Assembly to request the government of Manitoba to consider reviewing the impact of reductions in patient care at the Thompson General Hospital with a view towards restoring current levels of patient care and, further, to ask the provincial government to implement real health care reform, based on full participation of patients, health care providers and the public, respect for the principles of medicare and an understanding of the particular needs of northern Manitoba.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Mr. Leonard Evans (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Second Report of the Committee on Public Accounts.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Second Report.

Your committee met on Thursday, May 5 and Monday, May 16, 1994, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the Provincial Auditor's Report for the year ended March 31, 1993, and Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the Public Accounts for the year ended March 31, 1993.

At those meetings, your committee agreed by unanimous consent to also consider the Provincial Auditor's Report for the year ended March 31, 1992, and Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the Public Accounts for the year ended March 31, 1992.

Your committee had previously met on Thursday, March 4, 1993, and Thursday, March 18, 1993, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the aforementioned 1992 reports.

Your committee received all information desired by any member from the Minister of Finance, staff from the Department of Finance and Ms. Carol Bellringer, Provincial Auditor. Information was provided with respect to the receipts, expenditures and other matters pertaining to the business of the province.

Your committee has considered the Report of the Provincial Auditor for the year ended March 31, 1992, and Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1992, and has adopted the same as presented.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the financial statements as of March 31, 1993 and 1992, for Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd., together with the Auditor's Report.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report,

1992-93, for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship and the Annual Report for the Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain, 1992-93.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table Supplementary Information for the Manitoba Department of Environment.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for Estimates for the Department of Family Services.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 300—An Act to amend an Act to continue Brandon University Foundation

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that leave be given to introduce Bill 300, An Act to amend an Act to continue Brandon University Foundation; Loi modifiant la Loi prorogant la Fondation de l'Université de Brandon, and that the same now be received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today Her Excellency Sandra Fuentes-Berain, the Ambassador of Mexico.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

* (1345)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Youth Court Backlog

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we have been raising a number of questions to the government about the backlog in the juvenile justice system. The minister has denied there has been a problem.

One of the areas that we believe is contributing to the backlog is the huge numbers of cases that probation officers are having dealing with predisposition reports, the PDRs. We have been informed that in one district alone in the city of Winnipeg, there is presently 173 cases pending for PDRs to be conducted on youths before the justice system, and 59 of those are presently in custody.

I would like to know from the minister, how great a difficulty is the justice system having in dealing with the backlog on the basis of predisposition reports? What impact is that having on the waiting period of time which is well documented in the community for kids awaiting trial?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the House before, we are always trying to do better in the courts. We are always trying to improve the length of time it takes, but as the honourable member knows, in bringing cases forward before the court, yes, there are certain things. There has to be representation for the accused, as well as the Crown cases have to be prepared.

So I will say to him again, as I said last week, we have been able to make an impact in the youth violence court to reduce a backlog or a time to have a case come to court from seven months to five months. We continually attempt to work to reduce any backlog, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell the member, as well, that in any effort we make to reduce a backlog, we do so systemically. We look at all parts and all functions, and I am working very closely with the chief judge and members of my department to reduce the backlog further.

Mr. Doer: We are further informed that probation staff are being reassigned to deal with the predisposition reports, and supervision will have to be suspended. In other words, kids placed on probation are no longer going to get supervision from probation officers as a disposition from the court, because the probation staff are now trying to deal with the backlog of predisposition reports.

I would like to ask the minister, if she is indeed taking a systemic review, what impact will this have on supervision of youth who are disposed of in the court, under probation, given the fact that probation supervision has about an 80 percent success rate, and to take away that supervision and to move it somewhere else, will it have a negative impact on the youth justice system in Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member that the whole issue of probation in the area of youth, as he specifically wants to speak about, is a very important part. We are looking in the whole area of Corrections—youth Corrections and the Community Corrections area to make sure that the probation and that the follow-up for young people is as strong a follow-up as it can be.

I have been working with the Corrections department to look at ensuring that we have staff to enable that follow-up to be successful and to assist the young person, because we recognize that young people do have to be reintegrated into the community, that young people do have the goal of returning to communities, and we want them, in fact, to become participating citizens.

* (1350)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I will read from this memo: If we carry this backlog over to the summer holiday and have a seven-day layoff period, supervision will have to be suspended.

That is in one of her own probation districts in the city of Winnipeg dealing with a huge backlog of cases before the court.

I would ask the minister to find out what is really going on in her department, find out what is really going on with youth before the courts and probation, and how can we have a program dealing with supervision of kids that are on probation suspended while we are trying to deal with the backlog in the courts, Mr. Speaker, in terms of having a systemic approach to this problem?

Surely, by taking flat resources that the government has provided over the last two years, by moving from one resource, supervision, to another resource, court reports, Mr. Speaker, are we not just causing greater difficulty for kids in

supervision in the community, and does this not work against consequences and work against supervision in our community?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, let me deal with two parts to the question. The first is the member is speaking about a backlog in the courts, and I have explained to him that we have been working very diligently to reduce a backlog, that we are now in the range of five months for young people.

I will remind him that appearance in court is part of a due process of law. Cases have to be prepared, and young people will not be appearing, as a consequence, to be sentenced on the very next day, but as the member knows, there certainly is an appearance in court, and that is a consequence which does occur immediately. The member should not attempt to suggest that this does not occur, because it does.

Mr. Speaker, the second area that the member has raised—and I would like to take the opportunity to respond to him because he has attempted to mix two areas together. I would like to say to him we are looking at the issue of the time to process through the court, and we are also looking at probation support for young people who receive a sentence in probation.

I have explained to him how diligently we have been working to organize in the area of Corrections to provide that follow-up, to ensure that young people have that follow-up, because we recognize that they have the need to reintegrate into the community.

Just two very quick other points, Mr. Speaker, and that is, we know that when the court backlog was examined by the Supreme Court in the Askov case, they pointed to Manitoba—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

ACCESS Programs Meeting Request

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Training.

The minister has indicated to this House and to students that the cuts that his government has made

to the ACCESS programs in this province were made on the basis of fairness, but when the ACCESS program was initiated by the New Democratic Party, it was recognized that there is a systemic unfairness that exists in our education system. There was a recognition that there are many inherent barriers, including financial barriers, which prevent Manitobans from accessing higher education. For an example, single parents have to do their upgrading, do their studying and have to raise their families, and now, they are expected to work part time.

I would like to ask the minister if he thinks that it is fair to poor students to once again face these barriers in their pursuit of education, and will the minister meet with the ACCESS students to explain this so-called fairness?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, last night in committee, there was quite a debate with respect to ACCESS. At that time I indicated, and I will reiterate again at this time, that this government is in strong support of the program. As a matter of fact, over seven budgets now, we have put additional resources in for the most part, certainly over the first number of years, accepting the federal offloading for the very same reasons as put forward by the member for Point Douglas.

We understand the benefits of ACCESS programs. We understand how it is that opportunity is presented to those individuals in our society who may not have had the opportunities to be formally trained in some of the course offerings.

So, Mr. Speaker, we understand it, and we have made commitments. The changes that are included in this year's budget provide for greater numbers of intake, and yet it is fair on the basis that it expects, requires, some indebtedness of those people, given the fact that they will have some certainty of employment upon graduation.

* (1355)

Funding Reduction Justification

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, many people do not agree with the

Minister of Education. I would like to table some letters indicating this.

Recent developments in the area of aboriginal self-government have us moving forward rapidly towards the dismantling of the federal Department of Indian Affairs.

Why is the provincial Conservative government taking such a regressive and backward move in decreasing the potential for aboriginal students to access higher education? Does the minister not realize that these students are the future leaders in the operation of aboriginal self-government?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it is because we fully realize that fact that we have made the commitments over the years that we have.

As I pointed out last night in debate, this program has been in existence roughly for 10 or 11 years, and, Mr. Speaker, there is not one government program indeed that should not have some scrutiny presented to it, some evaluation to determine the effectiveness. As indicated by members last night across the way, what they are calling upon is purely this, that more money be directed into a program and indeed no changes be made.

I say changes have to be made from time to time in programs to allow greater fairness. As I said yesterday on the record, there are some who are in that program, and it calls into question—not all, Mr. Speaker, not even the vast majority, but there are some reasons that criteria should be changed, and they were put onto the record last night.

Mr. Hickes: Mr. Speaker, it is pretty scary, because I think the minister really believes what he is saying.

My final question is to the same minister.

Can the Minister of Education define his definition of fairness to ACCESS students such as single parents who are midway through their program and will be unable to graduate because of the added strain of finding part-time work while they go to school and raise a family? Is that fairness?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, it should be pointed out that when individuals are accepted into the program, indeed when individuals come within the student financial loans program, it is understood that government policy can change from year to year. That is made known to every applicant at the time of acceptance for whatever support is in place.

Mr. Speaker, it is within the mandate of the government to change policy after careful review, after careful consideration, after careful analysis. All of those factors have been brought to bear with respect to this year's decision.

Retail Sales Tax Information Letter

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, yesterday and today, over 34,000 businesses in Manitoba are receiving their regular monthly retail sales tax forms.

The only thing that is different this month is that included in that normal mailing was a letter signed by the Minister of Finance, which I want to table. That letter does not give any information about changes in the system. In fact, nowhere in that letter does it mention any information about filling out the forms. Instead, this letter represents a public relations piece of work by the Minister of Finance, and I just want to quote in part, because you will recognize the words: Our fiscally responsible efforts are paying dividends, and we are not the only ones to say so. In fact, the Dominion Bond Rating Service cited—blah, blah, blah. I am confident that we are on the right track towards a bright economic future—[interjection] And Mr. Speaker—and concludes with a fact sheet. I believe this is clearly outlined in the attached fact sheets on our recent budget. Signed, Eric Stefanson.

Mr. Speaker, is this the kind of blatant politicization of civil service normal mailings that Manitobans can expect in this pre-election period? Is this going to be in the MTS billings and the Hydro billings—no asking for information, no giving of information, straight public relations

propaganda from a desperate government in a desperate time.

* (1400)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am amazed by the type of question, the tone of question coming from the Leader of the second opposition party, who can look no further than his own track record in terms of distribution and mailing records of some 80,000 pieces of literature.

Anybody who looks at the document that the Leader of the second opposition party, of the Liberal Party, has tabled, it is an introductory letter to a series of changes that have taken place as a result of our budget.

Points of Order

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, everything that has been sent out, and I take responsibility for it, what the minister has said, everything that has been sent out has asked for information, every single—

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

* * *

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I do believe the Minister of Finance was indicating the fact that the Liberal Leader had single-handedly blown the LAMC budget by mailing out 80,000 letters across the province at random.

Mr. Speaker: What is your point of order? You do not have a point of order, that is for sure.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Finance, to finish with his response.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance does have the floor.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, just to conclude, I do not know what it is that the Leader of the Liberal Party is concerned about in terms of Manitobans finding out what was in the 1994-95 budget. The fact sheet outlines all of the initiatives that affect business here in Manitoba, something that has

been done on many occasions, and from my perspective is information that business people in Manitoba should know full well.

That is all part and parcel of what was distributed to Manitobans from a budget that is being very well received across this province by Manitobans throughout our entire province. The only people who did not support it are the people in this Chamber, the Leader of the Liberal Party, and he will live to regret that.

Retail Sales Tax Information Letter

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): The member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) says you cannot say one thing and do another, and he should consider that in light of the closure motion his party brought last night.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the First Minister—I want to ask him how he reconciles sanctioning this letter going out with the normal mailing, given his comment on Friday, May 3, 1985, to the then-minister responsible for MTS in which he said to Mr. Mackling at that time, and I quote: "Indeed it is a political matter, and this is a desperate Minister and a desperate government looking for re-election. That's the politics of the matter."

That was the Honourable Gary Filmon saying that to Mr. Mackling in 1985. What has changed, Mr. Speaker? Why is this government not prepared to live like it said in 1985?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, really, the hypocrisy that is dripping from this member's mouth is unbelievable, when you consider that he sent out 80,000 mailing pieces into every constituency that the Liberals did not hold but have a hope, they believe, of winning in the next election—at the expense of the taxpayer of Manitoba, with his picture on it, and he is complaining about somebody using government mailings for partisan purposes.

The hypocrisy is unbelievable. He will live to regret that he ever brought this up, as everybody in the province knows what hypocrisy comes from his mouth.

Mr. Edwards: The Premier knows all about hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker.

What are the rules for politicization of civil service mailings that this government is holding itself to, because in 1985, when the Honourable Al Mackling at that time sent out information about CRTC's attempts to regulate MTS, it, in fact, did contain some information, and he condemned it. Now, nine years later, also leading up to an election, this First Minister puts out this, not one iota of requesting information or giving information.

What are the rules by which this government is holding itself to as they send out hundreds of thousands of pieces of mail every month from their various departments?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, this kind of information has gone out to businesses after budgets every year. This is not a new matter. It is not a new matter. All it is is a new issue for the Leader of the Liberal Party in opposition, trying to gain some attention for himself.

It is a nonsense issue, and the Leader of the Liberal Party has sent out 80,000 pieces at public expense for his re-election purposes. He has absolutely no business to raise this in the Legislature. It is nonsense.

ACCESS Programs Meeting Request

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in the Committee of Supply, there was an unprecedented vote in this House that resulted in the passage of a motion censuring the Minister of Education for cutting ACCESS, while at the same time giving grants to corporations such as IBM, Kentucky Fried Chicken and others.

It is unprecedented in this House, and it is appropriate that it came in terms of the ACCESS programs. Many of the students from the Winnipeg Education Centre are here today. I spoke to them earlier. They are saying, as are people in other locations, that students will be forced to drop out if these cuts continue.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education if he will do the right thing, if he will listen to the

vote yesterday in favour of the motion that censured him and his government for cutting ACCESS. Will he now do the decent thing, Mr. Speaker, and put those cuts on hold and meet with the students who are going to be dramatically affected by those cuts?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated last night, I am prepared to table as quickly as possible the internal review, an evaluation and assessment that was done in respect to the program that pointed to some directions of change that the government might consider.

Upon doing that, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to meet with individual ACCESS students to the extent that I have time to do so.

But let me point out, when the member talks about these changes, as indicated yesterday in Estimates, there will be an opportunity now for an additional 60 people to be part of that very worthy program.

Current Student Status

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, the concern is that we may have an ACCESS program in name only, and there are students right now whose very future is being affected by this government.

Will the minister at least do the decent thing and ensure that those students who are currently in the program are not impacted by the latest change, that they are not forced out of the program by this government's actions?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I am really hoping that the impacts are minimal. I am hoping nobody is forced out of the program, but in fairness to all who receive some level of support from the public purse, there is an expectation, and there has to be a realization, that when people come into these programs, that government has, at times, changed policy, that budgetary restraints from time to time, budgetary matters, ultimately have the final call from year to year with respect to a policy and a program.

Mr. Speaker, this was to be pointed out to every student that is accepting a loan and/or any student who has the provincial purse behind them in support of the program. So I am hoping and I am expecting that the impact will be minimal, and I am hoping that other arrangements can be made, again, in the sake of fairness.

Funding

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, there is an irony that so many of the students in the program are aboriginal, because their trust is being betrayed again.

I would like to ask the minister, just in fairness to the students, when will the minister realize that there is funding available in his own department? The money that went to St. John's-Ravenscourt, the money that went to IBM, the money that went to Kentucky Fried Chicken, why does he not reallocate that money and ensure a future for the students in the ACCESS program?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I realize that the member for Thompson dislikes all dimensions of our society who create wealth.

I fully understand that, but I think it is important to realize again, and I say this for the second or third time, that individuals who are receiving support in programs up, to some extent, to the limit, in some cases over four years, of \$130,000, and public support, in some cases in the certificate programs to the level of \$60,000, that there be some expectation that upon graduation they have some indebtedness and indeed be treated no differently than every other citizen of the province who supports, through borrowing of money, a portion of the cost of their post-secondary education.

* (1410)

ACCESS Programs Loan Cap

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education claims that under his new rules, there will be more than 60 students a year in this program, but he has no idea, under his rules,

how many of those students who are in the program now will have to drop out.

I want to ask the minister to tell the House what his plans are for the many ACCESS students who have families, whose programs are longer than the normal university year and who, because of the total cap of \$20,000 on Canada student loans, are likely to hit their ceiling a year or more before completing their degrees, or will he tell us what his plans are for students in medicine and dentistry for whom the annual cap on loans does not come close to meeting their program costs? How are these students going to complete their programs?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated last night, we brought in the program that tries to treat everybody on an equitable basis.

Those are decisions that are going to have to be made by the individuals, taking into account their specific situations. That is no different than many other people in our society having to choose a time as to what the most important priorities are with respect to their discretionary budgetary matters.

Selection Criteria

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell the House how he could claim yesterday that one of his major difficulties with the ACCESS program was the basis of selection—he said there were no criteria—when, in fact, every student must meet the admission requirements of their institution, and every student has two exhaustive interviews with two different committees on which this minister has direct representation in his department.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): All I indicated was that there were some inconsistencies by way of survey that have shown up, Mr. Speaker, and that will be reflected in the report once it is tabled.

Meeting Request

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister, for the sake of all the students in this program, to first of all use some common sense, table the evaluation report he has

done, meet with the students so that he can understand the diversity of their conditions in this program, talk to the graduates of the program, go back to the communities from which these students come and to which many of them have returned, and go back again to the beginning of this ACCESS program.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I have done most of those things as requested by the member, although I have not met with all of the individual ACCESS students, the 700 and some who are in the program today.

What the member is basically asking is for us to not only maintain the level of funding, but indeed still reach out to a larger number of people; in essence, ask for more funding. Even though we might like to do it, the fact is we cannot. So what we have tried to do within the very limited amount of resources that are available, we have tried to effect a degree of sharing so that more people can find their way into this worthy program.

Berens River Fishing Boundaries

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

As the minister knows, northern fishermen are facing very difficult times due to continued low prices and a decision of this government to cut the fisherman freight subsidy program.

Given that the minister has had representation for some time now from the fishermen in Berens River requesting changes to their fishing boundary, has the minister made a decision on this matter?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the concerns that have been brought forward by the people that he is talking about. We have ongoing discussion at the present time. A decision has not been made at the present time.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, the decision could be very beneficial for both the fishermen of Berens

River, and it is an idea that is not opposed by the Gimli fishermen.

Will the minister make such a decision on an urgent basis?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, we are weighing the pros and cons of it. It is not that simple a decision to just take at the stroke of a pen and change some of the requirements that are out there.

We are looking at the impact it will have, and we are trying to do this in a fair and sensible way. Once we have made a decision on that, we will inform them.

Berens River Fishermen Meeting Request

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, given that these fishermen still have outstanding claims for past damages to their equipment, will the minister agree to meet with the fishermen of Berens River to hear the concerns?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, related to the outstanding claims that the member is making reference to, I think that meeting would probably be better taking place with the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), who is responsible for the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board.

If the group is going to forward a request to myself specifically on the issues that the member has raised, my door has always been open in terms of meeting with concerned groups and interest groups. I will continue to do that.

Mental Health Care Sexual Abuse Counselling

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, in the government's own health reform document, on page 43, it indicates that a spectrum of mental health resources will be developed to provide services to individuals as close to home as possible and to prevent institutionalization. In a government memo from the assistant deputy minister of mental health, the memo indicates that one of the areas that there is an increasing demand

in is for counselling services for adult survivors of sexual abuse.

Can the minister tell this House if services to sexual abuse survivors is, in fact, part of the new reform in mental health, and will those services be provided?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The honourable member does well today to point out the fact that the reform of mental health delivery is a priority for this government. As we will discuss later today when we get into detailed examination of the Estimates of the mental health delivery of services, the honourable member will get more detailed responses. But, certainly, as we move away from complete emphasis on institutional care and into a wide range of community services, I am sure the issue raised by the honourable member will indeed be addressed.

I do not have a profile today to share with the member—at this time today, at least—about how many people who suffer from mental illness have as a background a history of abuse of the kind referred to by the honourable member, but we will talk about this in more detail later this afternoon.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, in this same government memo, which I am prepared to table, not only does the Department of Health indicate that there is an increasing need for services, particularly in rural Manitoba, the memo goes on to say that mental health will not be providing any counselling services.

I would ask the minister, can he tell us, particularly for rural Manitoba, what kinds of counselling services will be available for these individuals who are adult survivors of sexual abuse—and we know that the numbers are increasing, possibly one in 10.

As I see this as important for mental health reform, will he ensure that services are provided for these individuals?

Mr. McCrae: Regardless of what the honourable member has in her hand, I, too, see a link between difficulties people face when they grow up and problems experienced when they were younger. I would be quite happy to explore the matter further

with the department and with the input of the honourable member.

Certainly, I hope the reference she makes does not exclude all assistance, because you have to remember that a lot of service delivery, counselling, referral, is being turned over to self-help organizations, as well. To what extent they are involved in this, we can discuss later this afternoon, as well.

Diagnosis Process

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health tell us why you must have a diagnosis of a mental illness and be labelled to have a diagnosis before any kind of counselling services through the mental health system will be provided?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I do not know that that is a necessary precondition to someone accessing certain kinds of care from certain care providers. Certainly, I do not think you walk into one of the new self-help operations that we are setting up in the province, and they ask to see your certificate of diagnosis for a particular disorder.

If that is the case, I will be making inquiries to find out why that has to be that way, because I do not know, frankly, why you have to be diagnosed in certain ways if you have problems. We have people there to help, and we want to make sure people get the help they need.

* (1420)

Transcona-Springfield School Division Professional Development Days

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, this government brought in Bills 22 and 16 which allows school divisions to eliminate professional development days as a cost-saving measure. This is not happening.

Can the Minister of Education confirm what teachers in the Transcona-Springfield School Division are telling me, that they are being replaced by substitute teachers when they are attending in-servicing on the new provincial math curriculum?

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe the rules state that the member should ascertain and not require confirmation by any minister with respect to a question. I would ask for your ruling, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would ask the honourable member for Radisson—it is quite correct. We should ascertain the accuracy of our facts. Kindly rephrase your question, please.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, I would ask if the minister is aware then that this is happening and explain to the House why this is happening—

Point of Order

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, at the risk of prolonging the exercise, I believe questions of awareness are also out of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have already dealt with that issue.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, it has been clearly established in practice in Question Period the last number of years in the House, that questions of awareness are in order.

The member has brought information to this House and is trying to determine whether the minister knows what is going on in that particular area. That is in order.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable government House leader does not have a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Radisson, I do not believe the honourable minister heard your question. Do you want to just put your question again, please?

Ms. Cerilli: My question for the minister is, is the minister aware and can he explain why school divisions are, in fact, hiring substitute teachers to go to the classroom, while regular teachers are being in-serviced in curriculum, Mr. Speaker, that

this provincial government is introducing, specifically in the math curriculum area?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): I just reiterate, Mr. Speaker, what the member's colleague the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) said. The answer is no. I am not aware of this issue.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, the minister perhaps can tell the House and explain how there is a cost saving in having two teachers employed or paid, while the regular classroom teacher is being in-serviced, when Bills 22 and 16 were supposed to be a cost-saving measure?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, it seems like the member is posing her questions in the wrong forum. She should probably be posing those questions at the next meeting of the local school board, because they probably have the answer to that question.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, the question is, if this government is going to support teachers being trained in professional development and if they are going to allow teachers the time to be in-serviced in new curriculum, that is the issue, and it is this government that is reducing funding to school divisions and setting up this chaos in the school divisions, so that all of these situations are being created.

Will the government stop trying to get something for nothing in our school system, and will they ensure that the long-term preparedness of teachers is going to take place? Will they ensure that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. You have put your question.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, this is not a new issue. Bill 22 came in exactly almost a year ago. It was dealt with then. The impact that potentially would apply to school divisions was recognized at that point.

But one thing the bill did not do, it did not dictate that any teacher had to take off a professional development day. As a matter of fact, what the bill also did not dictate was that any school division had to take away professional

development days. It was an option. It was not obligatory legislation. It provided an opportunity for school divisions to try and deal with their budgetary matters. Members recognized that a year ago.

I find it strange that the member would come a year after the fact and ask a question about a bill that has been passed by this Legislature a year ago.

Health Care System Surgery Cancellations

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from a letter that I have received from my constituent, and I am prepared to provide a copy of this to the Minister of Health.

She writes: "My husband, who is a cancer patient, waited from February until the end of April to see his doctor in Winnipeg. This was after 2 cancellations of previous appointments. At that time the doctor said surgery was necessary and his orders were to go home and wait for a call. He received a call on May 4 indicating he was to report to the Concordia hospital on May 6. After driving to Winnipeg to the Concordia Hospital (a distance of 450 km) he was told 'Sorry all surgery except out patients is cancelled because of a shortage of beds.' . . . 'there is not enough nursing staff to care for the patients'. My husband was told to return home"—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Health whether this is acceptable service for serious cancer surgery patients coming from rural Manitoba, travelling 450 kilometres in this particular case. If not, what action is he going to take to ensure this does not happen again?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to respond or comment on what other people have done or said. If the honourable member wants me to look further into this matter, I would be pleased to do so.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, I talked to the constituent this morning. She said this letter has been sent to the Minister of Health and the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

I want to indicate that the surgery did take place, even after they were told the next time coming in that they would have to go home, but a doctor told them that he would go ahead with the surgery and that he would not send them home again.

I want to ask the minister whether he will investigate what happened in this particular case, and ensure, when I give him a copy of this letter, that he is taking steps to alleviate the nursing shortage to ensure that these kinds of waits, which are unconscionable, will be stopped, that this will not happen again.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I would be very happy, as I said, to follow this matter up further.

I believe that we should also ask for the support of the honourable member and his colleagues when we try to restructure our hospital system, so that we can provide surgical procedures on the day we say we are going to provide them, so that we can admit you on the day we say we are going to admit you, so that we can discharge you in an orderly and reasonable fashion, and as we move to attempt to make improvements in the health care system, so that the kind of problems the honourable members brings to this House today, so that those kinds of things can be minimized, we ask for support from honourable members opposite. We do not ask for their constant carping and criticism as we attempt to make improvements.

For example, improvements to the Seven Oaks Hospital—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Honourable minister, take your bench, sir. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans); Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), for Thursday, May 19, 1994, at 10 a.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli); Thompson (Mr. Ashton) for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), for Tuesday, May 24, 1994, at 10 a.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), for Thursday, May 26, 1994, for 10 a.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans); Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), for Tuesday, May 31, 1994, for 10 a.m.

Motions agreed to.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Osborne (Ms. McCormick) for St. James (Mr. Edwards).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay); the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) for the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Speaker: The honourable government House leader, what are your intentions, sir?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that Mr. Speaker do now

leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 4.(b) on page 41 of the Estimates book.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would just like to begin the proceedings today by handing out information that I referred to yesterday; firstly, Private Vocational Schools Administration, Registration Information for 1993-94, and also Private Vocational School Administration, Private Vocational School Demographics.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): At the end of last time, I was asking the minister what had been the impact of the 11 percent cut to ACCESS Programs last year, and I believe he was saying that there had been a 15 percent reduction in enrollments.

I am wondering how the minister got from that to estimating that his 20 percent cut this time will lead to additional enrollments. Is there any basic evidence other than the leap of faith that the minister is asking us to make?

Mr. Manness: I should report the reasons are a combination of two. Firstly, there is a large

number of graduates this year, larger than last—176, I think, compared to 106 last year. So that is going to open up a significant number of replacements, not only for those positions, but also I guess coming in. Starting new programming allows for a significant new intake, now that some of the courses are finished their period of time, whether that is two years or four years.

Also, the reason with respect to the student loan. Whereas last year the impact directly hit and curtailed individuals coming in, this year with the student loan process, we are of the view that because there is no hard restriction to the number coming in, there will be more people able to access because of the fact now they have the availability of a student loan.

Ms. Friesen: I am not sure I follow the logic there. If last year, when the government first moved to student loan, there was a reduction in enrollments, and if this year, there is a further requirement for student loans and there is going to be an increase in enrollment, could the minister perhaps explain what the leap is there?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the reduction last year of 15 percent was a combination of many events, not the least of which was partially due to the reduction in funding. Also, there were carry-over effects, lag effects from decisions made years previous. That all culminated last year such that the total number in the program was down at a lower level.

Using that as a base then allows us to say with relative certainty, given the fact that we are starting a number of new programs which have intake at the highest—of course, as we know there is some attrition through the years of the program. So it is a combination then of large intakes next year plus the fact that individuals who will be approached and given an opportunity to be in the program will not be artificially held back by intake restrictions that were in place last year. Now the only reason that they might not be able to come in is if indeed they have not achieved the criteria under the student loan.

* (1440)

I am saying, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that many more will be able to meet that level, and consequently, the expectation is that year over year, the enrollment numbers will be higher.

Ms. Friesen: What were these decisions of which we saw the lag effect last year?

Mr. Manness: Well, for example, the elimination of the civil technology program that was made several years ago, and now, obviously, the final program came to a close last year, and the electrical electronics area—those decisions were made previous to last year. The lag effect, of course, has finally worked through the system as of last year.

Ms. Friesen: I am assuming those are both community college programs.

Could the minister tell us how many students were involved in each? How much do those two decisions account for the reduction of 15 percent?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member can see the briefing books. That is with respect to this year's information. We do not have all the other information from a year ago. We do not have that with us.

Ms. Friesen: The minister can obviously see that the context of his decisions and the basis of his decisions today certainly reflect upon the kinds of decisions that have been made in the past. Would he undertake to table those numbers at a later date?

Mr. Manness: We are pretty sure they were tabled last year, but we will try and resurrect those numbers and present them.

Ms. Friesen: The question which I asked in the House today—now the minister has his staff with him. Perhaps we might have a different kind of discussion. The minister says there will be room for 60 more students. Essentially what I was asking was, how does he know what the retention rate is going to be under the new loan program?

Could he tell us, in the absence of the tabled report which we have not seen, did the tabled report—or the untabled report—did the evaluation report look at this? Has the minister looked at it? How did it enter into his decisions about the program? How does it fit with his prediction, I

assume his hope, that there will be 60 more students in this program?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is a theoretical number. We sense that the programs have opportunity to hold that many additional. They are new and they will experience a lower attrition rate because indeed more numbers of students are reaching the end and are graduating.

That is how I have some comfort around the expectation of enrollment and how I have some comfort around the expectation that the attrition rate or the dropout rate will be reduced, as compared to several years ago.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, does the minister have any studies which look at the impact of the movement to loans on attrition rates in other programs, non-ACCESS Programs or other provinces? Where is the evidence for the theoretical argument that the minister has that the loans will essentially not affect attrition rates?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you have two variables working and whether they work opposite to each other or in sympathy with each other, it is hard to say. I sense that there are more people today accessing this program and others, that there is a greater body of opportunity. Indeed, I would sense there was even, over time, a greater willingness to make important decisions, discretionary decisions, within limited funding that many households go through in support of maintaining one's place in a program. That is happening elsewhere.

I cannot indicate for one moment that when tuitions are going up in the nonstatus programs at our universities, when tuitions are increasing, and I cannot pretend that when individuals who at one time through summer work who may have been finding employment at \$12 an hour or \$14 an hour and today are dropping back to \$8 an hour, I cannot sit here and pretend it is any easier to find one's way into post-secondary education, and I do not. That is the reality of time.

I cannot hide from the fact that today or just last week somebody told me the graduating engineers from the University of Manitoba today are able to go into the public and call forward a wage between

\$24,000 and \$26,000, exactly \$10,000 less than five years ago. I cannot hide from that reality.

Ms. Friesen: Well, you helped create it.

Mr. Manness: Well, no—I helped create it. I have heard everything now. Now we are responsible for the fact that 10,000-

Ms. Friesen: What do you think the Free Trade Agreement is all about? What do you think global economy is all about?

Mr. Manness: Global economies are. So the member then says, free trade. So it is a Free Trade Agreement issue from the member for Wolseley. So that is what it is all about. Well, then there is no use discussing, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. If this is a Free Trade Agreement argument, then obviously we cannot.

Ms. Friesen: In the absence of any of the minister's evaluation reports, which he has not yet given to us, the only recent report that I have on ACCESS is that which was presented to the Roblin commission. In that report on page 7, it does say that the early signs of the impact of the reductions indicate that—and I am quoting—the lack of resources is becoming a factor in early withdrawal of program students.

Is this report wrong? Does the minister have other information? If he does, will he table it?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we can agree to table the information we have on retention. We will endeavour to do that for tomorrow.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, does that information contradict the report that was given to the Roblin commission? Is lack of resources a factor in early withdrawal of program students? Was that becoming intensified last year when the first students were required to go to loans?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have nothing statistical or scientific, and we have not even any anecdotal information that would suggest that there is a trend there at all.

* (1450)

Ms. Friesen: Before the minister instituted his policy of all students going to loans, did he investigate how many students already in the

program had loans? Did he investigate what the level of that loan burden was, and at which level in the program students were when they had those loans?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member gradually keeps drawing information out of the report to me—

An Honourable Member: It would be much simpler to table it.

Mr. Manness: Well, it would. I can hardly wait to do so, I can assure the member.

I would indicate to the member that out of the survey done by Mr. Hikel's outfit, Peat Marwick, out of 186 students that were surveyed—and, again, remember we said that the global number was around 744—25 percent of the 186 applied for loans, 132 were accepted, for an average of \$2,353 per student.

What was also revealing was there was no award for 54, or 30 percent of these ACCESS applicants because they did not meet one or more of the above eligibility requirements. If that survey means anything—and, of course, you cannot extend it to the total population base, although I would say it is a healthy number surveyed—it would indicate 30 percent of ACCESS students have sufficient means and require no loan, and that indeed, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the member wants to know, that is one of the main points of rationale behind the policy change.

Ms. Friesen: Were those 186 who were surveyed, was that a random survey, hence a scientific survey, or were those the same first-year students that the minister told me about last night, the ones who had already been selected on a different basis?

Mr. Manness: I did not hear the question, but, again, I want to indicate this was not 30 percent of the sample; this represented 30 percent of the total. The 186 students I talked about were not a sample; they were the total number who applied for Canada Student Loans. Thirty percent of those were not eligible, which says that there is a whole other large number who did not apply for Canada Student Loans at all, which calls into question indeed their own ability to satisfy some costs associated with their education.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think what it calls into evidence is the fact that they would be connected with bands, bands which have education funds and that can then afford to contribute some support towards the students. It does not necessarily reflect the students' condition at all. What it does is reflect that the basis of selection for these programs has become quite different than it was at the beginning and that those without band affiliation in fact have a very, very difficult time in getting into these programs at all now in ways which were not contemplated 10 years ago.

Of the 30 percent that the minister is talking about who did not get loans, does he have evidence to show that these are people who did not need loans or are they in fact people who were not eligible for different reasons? Are they, for example, not eligible because they might have a house? Are they not eligible because under the new Canada Student Loans they might have a car worth more than \$2,000? Are they not eligible because they might in the past have had a spouse or a family member who has declared bankruptcy or who might have defaulted on a loan, not the fault of the student but of somebody in their family? Are any of those reasons included in that 30 percent?

* (1500)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the rules of eligibility were the same that are in place for every citizen of this country, no different, and they include: must be a Manitoba resident, (b) must be a Canadian citizen or a landed immigrant, (c) must be enrolled in a recognized post-secondary institution, (d) must be a full-time student, (e) must not be in default on a prior Canada Student Loan and (f) must have an assessed need which justifies a loan. The very same criteria that is in place for every other citizen of this land.

Ms. Friesen: The issue with the ACCESS Programs is that many of the students are not starting from an equal position. The minister has talked a great deal about equity and equitability and equality in this program, but many of the students must be in longer programs. That is the point I was trying to get across to the minister on

two occasions now in Question Period, that they are going to be in programs for a longer period of time, their debt load is going to mount at a faster rate because of the regulations of Canada Student Loans, both under the old regulations and under the new regulations, and, in fact, they will hit that ceiling before they have their degree.

How does the minister anticipate that these students are going to, without a degree, get the job which he is so convinced they will get, and how are they going to be able to repay those loans?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, because we believe that, that is why only the first tranche, the Canada Student Loan is repayable. The Manitoba student loan is nonrepayable.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is a cap on the amount of Canada Student Loan that any student can have access to under the first degree program or a second or third degree program. Students with families, students who have longer programs, students who are in programs where there is no opportunity for summer work are not in an equal position with the majority of students in the institutions in which they are attending.

So I am asking the minister again—he said that Canada Student Loans are the only ones they will have to repay, but there is a cap on the amount that students can get under Canada Student Loans, and if you have a family and if you are in long programs then it is quite possible that many of these students are going to be a year short of a degree and, in fact, have reached the cap, the maximum that they will be eligible for in Canada Student Loan.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member is probably well aware that Canada is considering changing the caps and may very well increase them, and, again, these caps on the Canada Student Loan portion certainly do not apply to the Manitoba student loan portion.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister must take the responsibility for transferring all these students to a total loan program. When he did that he must have known what the Canada—[interjection]

Then I will rephrase that. The minister must take responsibility for transferring these students to Canada Student Loans programs. When he did that he must have understood that there were caps on the total amount and indeed on the annual amount available to any student under Canada Student Loans. The cap at the moment is in the region of \$20,000 for a first degree, \$30,000 for the second degree and this is cumulative, and up to \$40,000 for three degrees.

Students with families reach that \$20,000 maximum before they have completed the degree. They then have no degree, a heavy loan, are much less likely to get a job, much less likely to be able to repay it. Surely the minister had considered this when he made this program.

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, '93-94, the borrowing limits, 520 weeks, \$20,000 if a four to five-year degree; \$30,000 if a five to six-year degree; and indeed \$40,000 if over six years; \$15,000 all other programs. But for '94-95 it is unknown because the federal government has not addressed that issue in the newly tabled Canada Student Loan Act. It is our expectation, listening to the arguments put forward by Mr. Axworthy, one would think that the federal government is talking about increasing these caps, and I would have to think that will happen. That obviously represented some basis and had some impact on the decision.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is no evidence in the bill before Parliament now, Bill C-28, which was tabled in Parliament two weeks ago, which has not been passed, has not been debated, the regulations have not been formed, and there is no indication in that bill that there is to be any change in the caps. Surely the minister understood this when he made that direction to change this program, and so that in the absence of that, the minister has moved all of these students into this program. He would have to assume, without any mention in Bill C-28 that any changes were going to occur, that the existing caps would remain.

If he did not assure himself of that, why did he enter so quickly into this program? Some

provinces have remained outside of it because, as they said, it is too fast to get on stream for this coming year. This minister has plunged right into this program. He does not know what the caps are. He does not know how it is going to affect students. Where is the planning?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are all over the map now. We are actually into the next section, Student Financial Assistance, and I could indicate to the member, most of the provinces have entered into the agreement. A few NDP provinces are waiting one more year, but the reality is everybody is going to be part of this program in short order.

Ms. Friesen: No, the issue is precisely its impact upon ACCESS students. The difference between ACCESS students and other students are many, and I wish the minister had taken the time to meet with students, so that he would understand the diversity of condition, the diversity of programs and the differences between these students and other students in Manitoba. If he had taken that trouble, he would at least have learned some of these issues.

Now the question is, ACCESS students, in some cases but not all, are in longer programs than other students, so that as their weeks mount up, the maximum number of weeks which they are allowed on a Canada Student Loan come for them much more quickly than they do for students who are in a 32-week program. In addition, they do not have the summer period to find and earn money in the way that other students do. So they are doubly penalized. The maximum cap approaches at a much faster rate than other students, and they do not have the summer income.

So could the minister explain to me how he anticipated this change in program that he must have known was in place in January or February of this year when he began to set up this budget. How did he anticipate that this change would affect the students in the ACCESS Programs?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is all on the record. I sensed once we looked at the total indebtedness at this point of two—roughly on average, on average, and you can only make policy

on the basis of broad averages, and trying to look at the limits, trying to determine within the limits of the variation around that average whether or not you have a policy that is workable. We looked at the very low indebtedness, around \$2,300 a student. We are mindful of the caps. We are also mindful that every individual in support of their post-secondary education—it is not a free good.

I know the member for Wolseley wants it to be a free good. I know her philosophy behind that, but the reality is today's society cannot provide for that, and so the maximum at 52 weeks at \$165 that anybody can borrow in a year is \$8,580. Indeed, many of these programs are, of course, shorter than 50 weeks, and I am saying to her that it is the expectation and the requirement of everybody who is trying to improve their educational opportunities to try wherever possible to supplement their income.

That is a given, and we sense that the combination of those factors makes this policy change in keeping, in keeping, with fairness and, indeed, with a greater opportunity for more students to attend.

Ms. Friesen: I am appalled at the absence of the minister's knowledge of this program. I am appalled by his absence of understanding of the students who are in this program and the absolute minimal understanding he seems to have of the impact of the Canada Student Loan program here.

The second part of the question that I asked him in the House today dealt with the annual caps on students, and he has again indicated here, now that he has his staff here, that he knows that it is up to \$8,000. Is he aware that for a dentistry student or for a medical student that the cost, the absolute basic cost for a single student is in the region of \$11,000 to \$12,000? How does he anticipate that any student on the Student Loan program without family supports is going to make it into those dentistry and medical programs which have been amongst the most successful of the programs?

Mr. Manness: That is why—and again, I will say this for the record—we provide a nonrepayable loan of another \$110 plus study assistance of \$40 per person for those who qualify.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, will the minister then tell me what the total of that would be? You add another \$140 a week. Does that bring them up to the \$12,000?

Mr. Manness: That brings it up to \$16,380.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, does the minister realize how many of those students are people with families? How many of the medical students who have been through are married and have families? How many of the dentistry students have been in that situation? Has the minister investigated that? Does he know what the relationship is between the \$16,000 and the poverty line in Winnipeg for a family of four?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member and I are going to have to agree to disagree. I mean, she wants education to be a free good, and I am sorry, it is not a free good.

Ms. Friesen: I would say to the minister, who seems intent on reading my mind, what I ask for is a common-sense approach. Go back and look at who the students are. Look at the contributions they have made to the community. Look at where they are working. Talk to the graduates. Talk to the communities they have been in. Look at the students who are close to graduation. Look at the students who are just coming into the program. There are many diverse conditions here.

There are many other solutions than the ones the minister is proposing, but he is not prepared to talk to those people, and he is not prepared to listen to the communities. I think he has a set plan in his mind based on his particular ideology that I think is essentially gutting these programs which have made a huge difference to many communities and families in Manitoba.

So what I am asking him to do is to do his homework, to do his research, to plan and to do it in conjunction with the people who are affected. That seems to me a common-sense solution. He still has the opportunity to do it. The Canada Student Loan program is not even through Parliament. There is the opportunity now to say, stop, let us take another look at it and let us have a public discussion.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it seems we are having a public discussion right now. This is exactly what this was meant to do. This is a democratically elected government. It has the power of the people behind it. It is entrusted with making decisions, and it is, of course, required through accountability procedures to make discussions like this public, and it is doing that.

The member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) is doing a very good job of putting penetrating questions germane to the subject. So this is the public process. We have been criticized in the past, governments here, there and everywhere, have been criticized in the past for not having done analysis, not having done research, not having done an effective review of programs so that you could make some knowledge-based decisions and make change. The government has done all that.

* (1510)

I know the member does not like the policy changed. The member wants to maintain the status quo, and I can understand why the member does. She has been very close to the programs, and she believes that the program—[interjection] Well, the member says she understands. Well, there are a lot of things that I understand, too, within education, but today, the fiscal reality does not allow the support of it. [interjection] Well, then if it costs more, then I ask why the federal government does not rush in and do its share of support. [interjection] Well, this is an ongoing request, and I say to the member, we are put in the position to make these decisions. They are uncomfortable at the best of times. I wish we did not have to change the world, but the fact is, the world is changing around us, and there have to be changes. Furthermore, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I really think that we have followed the textbook as far as making a policy change in this case.

Now the member does not agree with the change. I acknowledge that, and she, of course, would do something differently. She would do it differently, but the fact is, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are going to table the report. I will certainly receive representation, as I do, from any student or aggrieved party, and I will try and

explain the best I can why it is the government has had to make this decision.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister is right; I have been close to this program. I have taught many ACCESS students. The very first speech I made in this House, which is generally a nonpartisan speech, one of the things I singled out in Manitoba as one of Manitoba's miracles were the ways in which ACCESS students have made a difference to the universities and to their communities and to Manitoba. Yes, I do feel very strongly about this program, and I feel very strongly about the process by which the minister and his predecessor in fact have cut this program over two years.

I feel very strongly about the federal cuts, too, as I am sure the minister does. Certainly Manitoba has had to face great difficulties there, with the absence of that northern agreement and the minister's political partners in Ottawa who decided to cut it in a unilateral basis.

So yes, the province has faced many difficulties, but that does not excuse the fact that the minister has based this on a policy, on an evaluation, which he has not released and which we have asked for over and over. The minister says, this is a public process, but it is a very unequal public process. I have no evidence. I have no documentation. The last item I have is, in fact, the evidence which was presented to the Roblin review by people who work in the program. The minister contradicts it. I have no evidence on which to base my evaluation of his contradiction, so it is a very unfair and unequal process. It is not the kind of public discussion and public process which could have taken place on this issue. It could have done.

So again, I would like to ask the minister to table that report. Let us all look at it. Let us all participate on an equal basis with the government and with the minister in discussing what changes he believes are necessary to this program.

Secondly, perhaps the minister would table his most recent letter to the federal government, the new federal government, asking for the reinstatement of their portion of ACCESS

Programs. When was that done? Could the minister table it?

I would also like, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to ask the minister if he did any evaluation of the alternatives for ACCESS students. What happens when these students do reach their ceiling cap, whether it is on an annual basis or on a total basis? They go to welfare.

In the most recent report that was published on ACCESS, that which went to the Roblin review, it states that a 1979 management committee of government study on program cost and efficiency concluded that in terms of transfer payments saved and taxes paid, program graduates pay back in seven years not only the cost of their own education but the cost of dropouts, as well. The ripple effect of consumer spending from increased earnings remains uncalculated, but is estimated to be considerable. An additional benefit to the local community is the fact that local people tend to spend more money locally.

Now that was 1979. Did the minister, as part of his evaluation, look at the impact of the loss of people who are not going into ACCESS Programs or who must drop out because they have their loan ceiling limits or who are not eligible, through no fault of their own—perhaps from a family member, perhaps from a bankruptcy of a family member in the past—are not eligible for student loans? They are going to go onto social assistance.

What is the cost of that to the Province of Manitoba, and what could have been the cost saving if these people had been kept in the program, graduated, got the jobs which the minister is so sure that they do get, and begun to repay the cost of the programs?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, I point out to the member, when she accuses me of saying that I am certain that there will be employment at the end, that is the statement being made by so many of the proponents of the program.

So I have attached myself to that statement, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. So when the member says, the minister seems to be so sure, so confident—I am using now the very words provided by those

people who are close to the program, so if I am not right, then they are not right, because I have attached myself to that statement.

When the member says, what analysis has been done, economic analysis of the contribution given a graduate, well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, how do we argue with that? What do I do? Do I shift all the resources in maintaining this program? Do I shift them from other areas of post-secondary education to then more greatly restrict the same potential payback by the graduates in those programs?

An Honourable Member: IBM.

Mr. Manness: I see. So this is purely then a philosophical training issue. [interjection] I see.

Well, I guess that is where we have to agree to disagree. We, as a government, are trying to be fair to all of our citizenry who are involved in training and receiving post-secondary education. This is part of that whole element of fairness.

I mean, we have restricted funding to universities. The member knows. She is going to want to spend considerable time there. We have reduced funding in some other employment enhancement programs and it is because of the fiscal imperative. We have tried to make arrangements and policy changes that, yes, have called upon some to assume some debt load where virtually they had none before.

That is what we have tried to do, because the member can try and paint this picture in isolation as being hard-hearted purely within one area. It is so easy to make that point. There has to be balance across all of the training programs. There has to be balance across all of the post-secondary education programs and yet there have to be priorities. The priorities this time went to community college funding. That is where the priority went within the envelope of education.

That, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, has been well documented. The member can go on and on ad nauseam if she wishes, but the reality is, this policy has been well thought out. It will be acceptable to the vast majority of Manitobans, and furthermore it will provide opportunities for other students who qualify legitimately for the ACCESS Program.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, yes, there obviously are philosophical and ideological differences between us. The minister claims that he has no more money and that he would have to take it from elsewhere. Yes, he would have to take it from elsewhere.

We do have a number of suggestions. We could start with Kentucky Fried Chicken, IBM, Pepsi-Cola, Beatrice Foods, Boeing Canada, Centra Gas, Arnold Bros. Transport, Canada Classique, Canada West Shoe Manufacturing, Canadian Sportswear, Cargill 49,000 and Carnation Foods. There are many corporate training grants which could have paid for this program.

It is not perhaps even simply an issue of a different ideological basis. Those grants would have paid for the continuation and completion of many of the students who are in the program now. They would also, for any person, it seems to me, with any common sense, make sense in terms of the economic future of Manitoba.

These programs train people from the inner city. They provide, as this particular report to—the Roblin review argues that they provide important role models in communities where there has been no one going to university or to college. So that sense of breaking the vicious cycle of underemployment, underdevelopment in the inner cities and in the poorer communities of Manitoba is a very important one for the future of Manitoba.

Look at the front page of *The Globe and Mail* today. In what terms is Manitoba being spoken of but its high child poverty rates. We top the list in child poverty in Manitoba. These are the kinds of programs which help people and communities to move out of that vicious cycle.

When we look at the future of Manitoba over the next 10 years, the future is in the growing aboriginal population. From whatever context the minister wants to look at it, whether it is in the provision of labour, whether it is in the provision of community services, whether it is in the youthfulness of the population that is there compared to the nonaboriginal population, the future of Manitoba has to lie in the educational

prosperity of that community. This is the one of the programs which did that so successfully. Yet, it seems to me, the minister and this government has extraordinarily misplaced priorities when it can defend the granting of corporate training grants to corporations which already have well-developed corporate training.

* (1520)

There is no question that IBM is very committed to corporate training; it would do it whether this government contributed to it or not. But \$50,000 went to IBM for corporate training, and that money did not go into improving the future of Manitoba's inner-city people or aboriginal communities.

Mr. Manness: The member in her impassioned plea, of course, strikes out against wealth-creating industries. She has no regard for them; she senses that they do not have a place. Ultimately, they contribute also to the well-being of our province.

But far beyond that, when governments move into budgetary times, let me tell you that this government is keenly aware of the demographics and the trends within our province. If the member wants to begin to look at the total commitment made with respect to those demographics over all of the departments of government, she would be overwhelmed and astounded.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we understood and were supporters and still continue to be supporters of the program as it was originally conceived, as it was brought forward, as it was fostered and as it has developed. We are supporters. But I will not allow the member to say, because the program has worked well to this point in time and is working increasingly better year after year that changes cannot be made. That I will not accept.

She will say, well, you made decisions to change, but you will not share with us the rationale in which you made them. I have given the member insight into a number of the points.

In one month, hopefully, I will be able to table a complete and final report that will lay out all the rationale in one document. But certainly the member cannot argue with the government's right

to make these changes No. 1, to the process in which we have made them, as far as taking into account evaluations and assessment.

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

The member is perturbed, because, of course, we have made them without sharing with her at this point of time—because we are not able to do so—the information base that we used to help us make those decisions. But she cannot lay at our feet the fact that we do not care or do not understand or do not see the merging trends of the demographics in our province, because that is nonsense, that is hogwash.

I do not have to sit here and take that. We understand it; we live it from a day to day. But she makes a plea that this program in itself is inviolate, it cannot be changed. I say to her, when a program is working better and resources are needed still in other areas that are as high priorities as this, and some higher, and particularly in the areas of health, then we can do some of the fine tuning and in confidence know this program will survive, and it will still continue to provide the objectives and the goals that were set out in its original concept.

So I sit here and say to the member, I think she is overstating her case and her criticism, but nevertheless, that is her right to do so.

Ms. Friesen: The minister says that I am opposed to any change. I do not know where he has got that idea from? In fact, I challenge him to find that anywhere. What I have said on the record is that all university programs, all educational programs in fact in the public sector, are reviewed on a regular basis. But those reviews are conducted publicly, and the results are published and are available.

What is happening here is a review and evaluation where the material and the report has been sitting on the minister's desk. He has made some very dramatic changes in a program which has been successful, and he is doing it in ways that I think adversely affect, and in many ways unnecessarily adversely affect, the students of this province.

I want to read into the record some of the questions and comments that students have provided us with. Perhaps the minister would perhaps take these down, and he will be able to provide us with some written responses to these.

The first student comments that the government continuously speaks of fairness, but is it fair to pull funding in the middle of a four-year program? The minister keeps referring to fairness, but how are two-parent families with low income supposed to find an education? Does the minister know the meaning of fairness?

The second student says, why will the minister not make public the report on ACCESS which he keeps referring to? A third student says, I have full funding as a treaty Indian student, but if cuts continue to take place at the Winnipeg Education Centre, I will not have a place to go no matter how much funding I have. That is an issue I have not raised here, the changes in administrative cuts, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, but indeed I will be coming back to that.

A fourth student says that last year when you were Finance minister you told me that society would support me. Neither of the welfare departments will pay me to go to school for four years, and I am not eligible for a loan. I am not eligible for a loan. If I can get that through the minister's head, I think I will perhaps have had some success here. How do I finish the final two and a half years without ACCESS funds?

Mr. Manness, another student: I have already accumulated \$16,000 in debt with Canada Student Loans in order to supplement my income that I receive from the ACCESS Programs. So they already have loans. I have prior university. Under your new program I will only be eligible for one more loan, which will not pay for the two years that I have left to receive my degree. I will be left without a degree and owing a large debt. Instead of a dream of self-sufficiency for me and my two children, I will be in much worse circumstances.

That, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, is a very important point. These students who did have a dream are not being left in the same condition. They are being left in worse conditions. Their

situation has deteriorated as a result of this minister's decision.

I will be in much worse circumstances than I started with. Please reconsider your decision. Another student writes, how can the minister justify cutting ACCESS funding when the loans currently received by students, some with families and some single parents, do not even cover tuition? This has been demonstrated over and over with students already struggling to survive.

I will add, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, that I know from my own experience that students at the Winnipeg Education Centre certainly are resorting to food banks on a regular basis.

Another student writes, many students in long-term programs such as medicine and dentistry have been the subject of considerable investment thus far. Professionals of these fields are in high demand in rural and inner-city areas. Does the minister feel that withdrawing support at this time is fiscally responsible? Over the eight years necessary to complete the program, is the minister suggesting that a debt of \$64,000 and more be incurred by these students? I would indicate to the minister that many of these students are in fact in middle age, that they are not the sequential students that perhaps people so commonly think of as students. How many years are left to repay?

A further student adds, what is the definition of indebtedness by this government? Winnipeg Education Centre graduates graduate with loans, on average, between \$10,000 and \$20,000. These are funded ACCESS students. Would this not meet the expectations of the minister as explained by his own words, satisfy some costs with their education? How can the minister justify cutting students who without this program will not be able to continue their education?

Social assistance benefits will apply to these students provided they quit their programs. They may then apply to re-enter the program following six months of receiving social assistance benefits, hereby lengthening the years of receiving social assistance. For a student with one year left in his or her degree, this means two years of social

assistance instead of one year to the degree, quite the saving, the student adds.

A further student: How can the minister keep saying that these cuts are based on fairness to the rest of university students when the ACCESS students are from disadvantaged groups to begin with and do not start out at the same level as other students? I would be interested to see if the minister's report in fact acknowledges that. Most, if not all, ACCESS students do carry student loans. What will happen to those students who are not eligible for student loans for one reason or another?

The minister claims that the proposed cuts allow more students to attend university. What about the students who will have to quit? Do they not deserve access to university as well? Does the minister have documents to show where each student signed, acknowledging that the government may cut the funding at any time? I was under the impression that I would be provided funding for a minimum of four years and a maximum of seven years, and these are indeed the conditions under which students did enter the ACCESS Programs.

How do you expect citizens to trust your government when you so easily break commitments that adversely affect Manitoba's unemployment concerns and concerns for welfare dependency? Are you not throwing the taxpayer money invested in my education over the past two years down the drain? Student loans are inadequate, and that is particularly true for people with families. Has Mr. Manness considered that we have already incurred debt and that we are middle-aged students with families? Taking on more debt is a disincentive? Am I to pay for my last loan payment as I apply for my Old Age Pension? Am I to go on to the welfare system since I am now overqualified for low-wage work and underqualified for the field I am training in? How do you back your research when no one has asked me what the quality of my life is?

* (1530)

Further, the student adds: Do you have any idea how we would get into the Winnipeg education

program, which is a part of ACCESS? That was something which I was addressing in the Question Period as well, the minister's concern about selectivity when he in fact has his own direct representation on that selection process.

Most Winnipeg Education Centre students have children. How can we possibly live off student loans?

I am sure, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, if the minister would agree to meet with the students and to meet with the communities from which they come that he will find many more questions like that which speak directly to the very specific impact that this change has had on families in Manitoba.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I thank the member for reading that information into the record. She was incorrect in a number of her assertions.

First of all, I want her to know and, again, for the record, that academic programs and the overall intake levels have been maintained for '94-95. Furthermore, as I have indicated several times, we expect the level of total programming, the number of students in the total program, to increase. I should also indicate, it has not been the policy of the government to guarantee the level of financial support to ACCESS students beyond one budgetary year. Nobody can guarantee that. Student financial support is subject to change upon provision of notice. Every student has lived under those rules since the Canada Student Loan came into being. Provision of notice of change.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

The member should also know, and probably knows better than I, since '88-89, \$72.2 million has been spent on ACCESS. I do not know whether members opposite realize how many dollars \$72 million is. It is an incredible amount of money, and yet this government has supported that expenditure for many of the very same reasons put on the record by the member, because we support the program, always have.

I think it is so unfair when this government has stood in the breach of federal governments and

their withdrawal and found more money year after year after year that when the changes that are made, given that this program no longer requires the level of fostering it may have 10 or 12 years ago, the members opposite jump all over and say: No, this program is sacred in every respect and it should not be changed. All they can talk about is cut, cut, cut.

The member says, review it publicly. I have stated for the record all of the rationale for the change, and the members can play to whomever it is they think they are trying to impress, but the reality is, the government believes in the program, the government has supported the program through seven budget years and will continue to do so, and I underline this, within its budgetary capability to do so. It is reflected today with respect to the changes, and I am mindful and I am expecting that the total number of individuals who will be gaining access to the program will increase.

The member says, you have not taken into account the very needs of the people who are in the program. We have a general policy in place, but we also have in place an appeal mechanism. For those individuals who have very extreme conditions associated with their particular set of circumstances, some which have been read into the record by the member, obviously, that appeal process is put into place to take those circumstances into account in an attempt to try and render a fair decision. That has always been in place. Nothing has changed.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the general policy is the general policy. The appeal process, which, I sense, will deal with some of the issues as brought forward by the member, is also in place, and nothing that I have indicated today by way of general policy will prevent that process from being followed.

Ms. Friesen: On the minister's last point, the appeal process will need to be to the Canada Student Loans program because that is where the basic problem will lie in the caps. What guarantees is the minister going to give us on the appeal process for the Canada Student Loans? He says, no

guarantees, and that is the problem. So that is item 1.

I would also like to remind the minister that when I first asked him the question, over a week ago in the House, about the grandfathering of students who are already in the program, and essentially the kind of contract which he believed he had entered into with students in this program, he said, we did grandfather the rights last year when we went from a bursary program to a straight loan program. We did grandfather the rights of those students to whom we had made commitments. That is the general approach this government has taken with respect to all policy changes.

The minister understood, as many of the students did, that that had been the general approach of the students. It was only when he went back to his department or his office and found out that, in fact, in this case, he had made a very different kind of decision. I commended the minister on his original understanding, but that has not been the effect of the program.

I wanted to ask the minister about some other aspects of the ACCESS Program, particularly those dealing with administrative costs, because last year, last night rather, he argued that there were going to be substantial savings made in administrative costs, that this 20 percent cut reflected only—and the small proportion of it was reflected in the cuts to students, but the larger portion of it was reflected in cuts to the administration.

Am I recalling the minister's statement correctly?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot quite recall where the emphasis was, but certainly in general breakout we would think there would be a half-a-million-dollar savings in administrative costs associated for the most part over—again, the lag affects savings over decisions that have been changed over—policy changes over the last number of years and one and a half million dollars with respect to, now, the new loan requirement.

Ms. Friesen: So of the 20 percent cut on this line in ACCESS Programs, what proportion of this

year's cut is applicable to administrative costs? Twenty-five percent?

Mr. Manness: Twenty-five percent.

Ms. Friesen: Twenty-five percent. Okay. Would the minister then perhaps give me an indication of where those cuts are coming? For example, do you have a list of what the administrative costs in each program were last year and what the administrative cost will be this year, because every administrative cost also implies reductions in some aspect of the institutions? Which institutions are being cut?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, at this point we have budgeted for these reductions in administration. The \$117,000 in the ENGAP program; \$120,000 in the colleges and particularly the Red River Community College Civil Tech and Electrical programs, and again that was the final phase-out of those programs; completion of the northern Bachelor of Nursing, \$239,000; and a phase-out of the Government of Northwest Territories agreement of \$46,000. Those are administrative savings.

* (1540)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, so there have been no administrative cuts to the medical programs, to the special premedical programs, or to the Winnipeg Education Centre.

Mr. Manness: The answer is no.

Ms. Friesen: What are the implications of that \$239,000 cut to the Northern Nursing Program?

Mr. Manness: Well, it is a wind-down scenario, a wind-down year, as the Swampy Cree Tribal Council has pulled out of the general agreement with the University of Manitoba. How it is reconstituted, what form it comes back, it is hard to say at this point.

Ms. Friesen: Has the minister entered into discussions with the Swampy Cree Tribal Council on that program? Does the minister have concerns about the continuation of a northern nursing program in some form?

Mr. Manness: This is all tied up, I believe, by the Department of Health, of course, which is right now reviewing the whole policy of nursing education in this province. It is no use overtraining

in a global sense, in a macro sense, a number of professionals when there is no guarantee of work. So that is what has to be done first, and I understand the Department of Health is taking the lead.

I am very, very well aware of the tremendous contribution that the Northern Nursing Program has provided, and certainly Keewatin Community College is also in contact with me and the University of Manitoba with respect to seeing this maintained, but right now we require a macro review to determine the basic nursing needs in our province.

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister saying, then, that there is an oversupply of nurses in Manitoba?

Mr. Manness: Well, I am saying there is an oversupply of general-duty registered nurses. That must be the case because many are leaving the province to secure income elsewhere.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister explain why his own publication, *A Report on High Demand Occupations in Manitoba*, lists nurse specialists, registered nurses as one of the high-demand occupations in Manitoba: continuing demand for registered nurse specialists and intensive care and neonatal care in hospitals and for community health nurses.

Does the minister not have an indication or a sense that community health nursing delivered in the North, by people trained in the North who will remain in northern communities, is something which would benefit this province and be a very important way of spending excess dollars?

Mr. Manness: A very important consideration with respect to the whole area of native economic development and potential. I fully accept the statement of the member, and that is why, once we as a government fully understand the total needs and the localities in which the greater needs are, then we, hopefully, will set up training strategies accordingly.

But let me say, when the member reads, as she just did, advertisements or from wherever she is reading, she used the words specialized nurses. My remarks were, generally, in the high-demand

association; my general remark was "general duty." The member, of course, has read specialized. There is a big difference between general duty and specialized. So the member, of course, understands that fully, and why is she not so honest to say so? I said "general duty," as I said, where there was an oversupply. I did not say there was an oversupply in specialized. There is demand in specialized areas. So let the record speak very clearly then, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is exactly why I read the whole thing, because it is specialized, and it is different from what the minister wanted to put on the record. Community health nursing, it seems to me, is an obvious demand in northern Manitoba. We have had a Northern Nursing Program, a Bachelor of Nursing program, the most likely students to be moved into community health nursing who have the opportunity—if they were given the opportunity to train in that. We have an established need; the minister has recognized it. It is in his own publications, and yet he is cancelling a program where students might have begun to move into that. I am asking him about the needs of northern Manitoba, the ACCESS Program and the way in which it had met some of those needs, and did he have a concern for the continuation of some kind of northern nursing program delivered at the community basis?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, because of the specialized need in the North, I cannot foresee that there will not be a program somewhere. But right now we have a Northern Nursing Program, ACCESS, delivered in Thompson. We have a Northern Nursing Program, R.N. program, in The Pas, and we have several programs in southern Manitoba. There has to be some rationale brought to all of these programs. That has to be done, and it will be done. But, at the end of the day, there may not be two programs in the North, but certainly I fully expect there will be one because of the very specialized need that the member talks about. So I think we speak in chorus here with respect to this issue.

Ms. Friesen: That is why I was asking what the minister had done in his discussions with the

Swampy Cree Tribal Council, and he essentially referred it back to the Department of Health. So my concern is for the planning for the North and for ACCESS Programs, and I would like to get an indication from the minister today on what he sees in the future. What is the process of that plan? When will we know, and who will be doing it, and what kinds of discussions are taking place?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I indicated earlier, the Department of Health will take the lead on this, and once it has established where the supply of trained nurses should be to meet the demands that are out there, then strategy associated with training will subsequently follow. That is the process.

Ms. Friesen: I want to go back with the minister to his difficulties with the selection process, and I suggested in the House that this seemed to be, last night, one of the minister's difficulties with this problem. He, I think, was challenging me to say that I could not anywhere find the selection process for the ACCESS Programs. And it is true; I did not know until I did some investigation this morning that the minister actually had a direct representation on these interview committees. That was a surprise to me. Of course, having found that out, it made the minister's response even more surprising.

But I did go back and look at the representation made to the Roblin review and it does talk there—there are two full paragraphs which deal with selection. It says, and I am reading from this now:

“The selection process is designed to identify from among those applicants who have been judged eligible from the standpoint of need”—so that is the first criteria—“those who have the motivation and ability to succeed given the program supports available. No one who can succeed without the special supports may be selected. No one who will fail in spite of the supports should be selected. This, of course, frequently demands that selection committees have to make difficult judgments, for there is no objective formula for determining which applicants will be assured successes. In fact, the

process is set up precisely to avoid the probability of falling into formulaic approaches. Instead, there is a heavy dependence on a system which resembles the legal jury system with a maximum exposure between selection jurors and applicants, and where it works best in insistence on consensus among jurors rather than on a dependence, on a point system or majority rule.

* (1550)

The system is not perfect, and it is sometimes quirky, but over the years has proven itself amazingly effective. As I understand it, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, for the majority of programs there is a very exhaustive selection process, which begins with informing communities about the opportunities for students in this program, and that is a very important stage, because you are not just informing those people who do get into the program this year, but you are bringing some hope and some expectation to a much broader range of people in the community. As you keep going back to those communities year after year, and as graduates begin to emerge from Berens River and from Grand Rapids and from all the many communities in northern Manitoba, the anticipation that college and university is a possibility becomes established in people's way of looking at their future. So that selection process in the first case, I think, is a very important one and has broader implications beyond the individuals eventually selected.

Everybody must meet the requirements of the institution itself, as all students do, but beyond that ACCESS students are interviewed very thoroughly by two separate committees in most cases—I believe in the case of the Winnipeg Education Centre it has gone to one committee now—but two separate committees who reach different judgments. I believe the minister has representation on the composition of those committees. The committees then come to a consensus decision, and the candidates are ordered by rank.

Now I am curious as to where the minister's concerns are with this selection process. Of course, in the past, a selection process has been very broad

because the issue of need has been a different one than it is now when students must bring their own funding and must be eligible either for loans or for band funding or for private funding. So we are now selecting from a much narrower range of students. It is still broad, but it is certainly narrower than it was, and the range of students who can have expectations of going to college and university will be narrower, and those who are the poorest are not those who are now applying or considering themselves eligible for this program. So the basis of selection has changed somewhat. So I want to ask the minister where his difficulties are with this selection process. It is one, I think, that many institutions would love to follow.

In Europe, for example, it is selection by interview which is the basis for acceptance into university whereby one can look at a variety of other criteria than simply marks on a paper or grade level achieved, but the ability to debate, to discuss, to be articulate; all of those kinds of things can be considered as indicators of success. In fact, most studies do show that one of the best indicators of success for any student in university and college for further education is the ability to work in groups, the ability to learn from other students, and the ability to be articulate in a group. Those are the kinds of things that these selection committees are evaluating. So I am curious as to the difficulties the minister is having with this.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), who, of course, I think is a wonderful social engineer, and who understands the present practice and process of selection better than probably anybody in this room, indicates that we are present. Yes, we can be present, but very rarely are we present at all of the selection meetings that go on.

Now, the member talks about the criteria. I would ask her, although I cannot ask her, but I guess rhetorically I would ask, is everybody treated objectively? Are there some subjective weightings that are taking place in areas of academic need, financial need, social and personal need? How many people are rejected through this subjective weighting? I do not have the count, but I say many. When the member thinks that

everybody is happy, everybody maybe is happy that has come in, but many are not coming in and they do not understand why. They do not understand why, when their academic achievements in many cases are much higher than those that come in, why it is that they do not have an opportunity as part of the ACCESS Program because there is no objectivity around the exercise. The value and the weightings? I do not know what the value of the weighting around these areas is.

So then on what possible basis is one selected over another? [interjection] Of course, you do not have a clue. The government does not have a clue, and I dare say the members who are doing the selecting do not have a clue either, but the people who are being rejected are also wanting to know why, on what basis are they selecting.

So this whole question has been called in by way of the review. Today, when it is a free good, do you not think that indeed we are held accountable, those of us who are in government? We are answerable to all those who not only are a part of the program, but who are somehow screened out. Do you not think that we have a right to ask some of the same questions around criteria and whether there is consistency between institutions? The member, does she know what happens at all the institutions, or is she speaking for the university?—because there are many institutions, I understand, who are doing this screening.

So Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is called into question. The question is objectivity and consistency of the application of criteria around those who achieve entry status and those who are rejected.

Ms. Friesen: I wonder if the minister would check his records on the statement that his representatives have not been commonly—I forget the word he used, I do not want to misinterpret what he said—but have not been commonly present at these interviews.

It is my understanding that this year the department did not participate in the interviews, by choice, perhaps because they were busy, perhaps because they were reorganizing, perhaps because there was a new minister. I do not know what the

reason was, but it is my understanding that in the past the minister's representatives in fact have taken a part in this.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, some years ago before some of the reductions and the reorganization of the department, there were interviews where indeed there was staff present at times. I did not say there was not screening.

Ms. Friesen: It seems to me for the minister to have the opportunity, and to have taken it in the past to be part of this screening process, to now say that there is no consistency is very difficult for me to understand. He had the opportunity to take place. He has had—what is it now—six years of these opportunities to look at the putting in place of consistency, if he believes it is inconsistent, and, yes, of course, interviews are subjective.

The statement which I read said there is no objective formula, but it is one that is not perfect, but it has had a high degree of success and been quite effective. There are other programs for every student, medicine, for example. Medicine depends very heavily upon interviews. So does law. So the objective criteria that the minister is looking for, I think, is something that may be possible in certain programs for everybody. But interviews are widely used through industry, if we want to use the area that he is familiar with. Are they consistent?

I think the issue has been that the minister has been part of this, and that the people who have been selected have been successful. For the minister, yesterday, to use this as one of his major difficulties with the program I find very puzzling. Again, perhaps the problem is that we do not have access to the same information which the minister does. We could have saved a great deal of trouble if we had had an open process here, if the evaluation had been done in a public manner, if there had been discussion in the communities and discussion with the graduates and open discussion with the people who are part of this program and that we could all have shared the same information. We could all have looked for solutions to what is a difficult situation, and I recognize that the withdrawal of that federal money made it very difficult for the province. But

the government reacted in one way, and that was to cut.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member forgets the time frames. The reduction hit us in '89. We increased the level of funding, the provincial support, for three budgets after that before the necessity and the reality of the funding caused us to have to begin to reduce some level of funding. The member inconveniently fails to point that out.

* (1600)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, even though I am not necessarily the critic for the ACCESS area, because I cover K-12, our critic, unfortunately, is in the health care Estimates currently and that is the reason why I felt it was appropriate for me still to be able to address this particular issue, because it is in fact a very important issue. It is not an issue that is new. I know that we have had presentations through rallies and so forth in the past in the Legislature with respect to this particular program where we have been fairly clear in support of the ACCESS Program.

I looked at the budget line last night and listened to the concerns that were expressed from the New Democrats and the response from the minister with respect to consulting, the whole drafting of this report, and a presentation which, the minister says, he will present to us hopefully in the month of June. But I looked at the specific numbers. He indicated that in '93-94, 744 students were participating in this particular program. In '94-95, 832 are anticipated to participate. Then you look at the actual costs from last year of \$9.926 million to the decrease to \$7.903 million.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you have, it is very obvious, a very high demand for this particular program. And there is going to be fewer dollars for those individuals that are currently wanting to continue their education within this particular program. The member from Wolseley cited a number of questions that were put forward. All of them, no doubt, are from the hearts of the individuals that wrote it onto the piece of paper and passed it on.

We would like to believe that the government had, in fact, talked to some of the students well in advance before making a decision of this nature. The only indication that the minister has given us, between this afternoon and last night, was that the government did not make an uninformed decision, that this was a decision that was based on a document, a so-called draft document, in which the minister is not prepared to share with members of the Chamber nor with the individuals that are relying on this particular program in order to be able to elevate them to a situation in which, in some cases, they would not have to rely on social assistance, or to be able to further their education, and under normal circumstances, would not be able to do that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am interested in knowing quite specifically, because when I walked outside of the Chamber a number of the students were there, and one in particular asked me if I was aware through last night of the minister indicating that he did meet with students that were recipients of the ACCESS Program. I would ask the minister specifically if, in fact, he has met with any students, prior to making this decision, to consult in terms of the actual real impact.

Mr. Manness: In consultation terms, no.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am wondering if the minister could indicate why he would not feel obligated to meet with, at the very least, the students, the recipients of this program, before making such a drastic cut.

Mr. Manness: Because, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I had somebody to do it for me. I had Mr. Hikel, who did the review, meet in focus groups with ACCESS students.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to pick up on that and ask the minister if he can give us some sort of an indication of the make-up of these focus groups and what they were charged with.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that will be documented in the report. Who the individuals were, I have no way of knowing. I do not know the methodology that Mr. Hikel invoked to select. I do

not know how it is he came about and whom it is he met with.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister, and I think we have to understand this, makes a major decision on a budgetary line, and he bases it on a draft report in which he has absolutely no idea in terms of how the process for consultation was in fact used, the methodology.

I would ask the minister specifically, the only background or the only information that he is actually using then is the word of one individual who says, yes, I have consulted, but has not told him how he has consulted. Is this what he is basing his whole decision on, just one individual who says that he had focus groups, but the minister has no idea in terms of the make-up of the focus group, if it included students?

I would argue that, if it did not include students and some of the teachers, some of the graduates, some of the industry representatives that employ these individuals, the Minister of Education has done a great disservice to all those involved in the whole program of ACCESS, and should even reconsider sitting down with Mr. Hickes and starting to get some of these answers to questions in terms of methodology before he starts to endorse a report that he does not even understand in terms of how the report came about.

Mr. Manness: What abject nonsense. What do you mean I do not understand the report? What a fool the member is to make that statement.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, normally I would let it go by, the comment of a fool, but coming from a fool, knowing that is, in fact, unparliamentary—I will withdraw my comment by calling him a fool, and request that the Minister of Education do likewise.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I am going to put it to you this way. The honourable member is incorrect. It is not in the book as unparliamentary, but it can become very contentious and cause debate which I find can become unruly at times, so I would ask the

honourable members to refrain from using that type of word and that language. The honourable minister to continue.

* * *

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member shows a total lack of understanding. Indeed, he has been listening to the discussion, and he tries to make out the point that now I have not even read the report and that I have not been consulted. I knew exactly how the report was derived.

Mr. Lamoureux: Then tell us.

Mr. Manness: I say to the member when he asked the question, well, who were the students who were part of the focus group? I do not know who the students were. I do know that Mr. Hikel approached aboriginal leaders. I know Mr. Hikel approached directors of programs with institutions. I know Mr. Hikel asked directors of institutions to assemble information and also to assemble a grouping of ACCESS students and to inquire as to how the programs were working. That is the methodology I know. Then I know the results that Mr. Hikel has put to paper, at least the recommendations.

So for the member to try and indicate or try to come out of nowhere after having been basically asleep for the last two hours and suggest that I have not read the report or that there was no rationality behind the decision made, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is a spurious statement on his part and is false. I say to him that he too may be in sympathy with the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) and may want to be critical of the decision. That is fair game.

* (1610)

It is not fair for him to suggest that no thought process has gone behind this decision because, as I have said on several occasions, this is a sensitive area. It is an area of programming this government has supported.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when we came to government in 1988-89, we put \$10.8 million in the program. In 1989-90 our cost, because we assumed the federal offloading, went to \$12

million that the provincial government put into the program. In '90-91 we still were at the level of \$10.3 million; '91-92 we increased it to over \$11 million. In '92-93 we were still slightly below \$11 million.

I know the only way these people will listen to the fact that you make a commitment depends on how many dollars. That is all they care about, how many dollars are there. They will not talk about anything else unless it has a dollar sign in front of it. They do not care whether the program delivers graduates necessarily. I am not talking about this program. It is a general statement.

They do not care how successful or effective a program is in government. All they care about is dollars. That is their measure as to whether or not a program is developing. Yet, not once did we get support from the opposition parties. They voted against every time we increased our level of funding in the area of ACCESS. They voted against us. Did they ever give government support then? None.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I become kind of emotional when this member for Inkster, this interloper comes in and says we do not know what we are doing or indeed that we are destroying the program because we have reduced the level of funding. Nonsense. We believe in this program, not with words, but by actions, by actions over the course of seven budgets. The member says, well, you have not done your studies.

There is no program in government that I have been closer to where we have looked at the impacts of what the decisions may be and indeed paid a healthy dollar to try and find out the impacts on students, indeed, the eligibility criteria and indeed to try and find out how it was that we could make this program better and reach out to more people. All of that was done and the policy announcement in support of what we thought would be the best changes have been made.

Of course, it is very easy, very easy for somebody to pick up the Estimates booklet and see a \$2-million reduction and go on the attack. As I have said on several other occasions, any individual, and I am sorry I cannot use the

adjective, anybody can do that. That is easy politics, easy, easy, but it contributes nothing to the well-being of society.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister wants to talk about easy politics. Well, it is easy politics to make a decision and say, I have good grounds to base that decision on, but I am not prepared to share the information. [interjection] Well, he says, now; he says, I am prepared to share.

We are in the Estimates today. The minister has information. The minister has based his decision on a draft copy. I have not had any response from the minister, nor has the NDP, with response to sharing some of that information in a concrete way. Why does the minister not, if he wants to not take the easy way out, why does he not table the documents that he used to base his decision on, if in fact he wants to have a debate on the facts that he has accumulated?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister mentioned, he says, well, look, focus groups. In my first question when I had asked him he said, well, we had a focus group. I asked him in terms of, well, who makes up the focus group? I do not know who made up the focus group, and I am sure Hansard will indicate that.

Now he says, well, do I want the names of the students? Well, it would be nice to get some sort of assurance from the Minister of Education of the individuals, not necessarily the individuals as much as the participation of the focus group, who were the participants? He tells me right now that they are in fact ACCESS students.

I think it is a legitimate question if it was the focus groups that were in fact used in order to make the decision that ultimately ended up in a draft, and which we will, sometime in the not too distant future, have a copy of it after we have passed the Education Estimates. Then the Minister of Education will be able to stand up in Question Period and say, look, I was right; see, here is all the evidence indicating it, as opposed to being able to provide much more dialogue inside the committee of Estimates, where we can actually ask more specific questions based on the information that

the minister has been given, so we can call him into question in terms of some of the calls that he has made.

But, no, the Minister of Education is taking the easy way out. It is not the opposition parties that are taking the easy way out. It is legitimate to be able to ask the question in terms of why we cannot have the same sort of material that the minister continues to quote from every so often, the selected information that he chooses to quote from in order to try to justify the decision.

But I wanted to go on to another aspect of a question on this, and that is, again, the minister himself has not met with any of the students. I would ask him if he has met with any of the stakeholders, if you like, instructors, some of the potential employers, to discuss the impact of this particular program.

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, two points.

I am going to challenge the member, as they say, to put his money where his mouth is. I do not have the authority anymore, I am no longer the House leader, but I am betting I convince my House leader to let us suspend Education Estimates right now, to begin again when I table the ACCESS report at this point. I challenge the member then. If he is willing to do that, we will leave Estimates of Education right now, and we will come back to it when this information is tabled.

As sure as I am standing here, that member will not have the courage to take up the challenge. Do you know why? Because he is asking the very same questions as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) asked last night; he is copying exactly the same rhyme and the same line of questioning, because he thinks he has finally got a hot issue here.

He did not have the wherewithal to ask that question last night, but the member for Thompson did. So he is asking the very same questions again, because he wants to get on the record. He wants to get associated with this issue fast. He feels the NDP are stealing it from him, and he is going to look like a blunderer, and that is why he is putting this question.

But more importantly than that, because he is saying that I do not have the courage to face the members with the full information, let us suspend Education Estimates right now, or at least this whole section, and we will continue when I table the report.

Mr. Lamoureux: Number one, I do take some exception to the response in terms of the line of questioning I have asked. I will closely go over Hansard and find out if in fact the minister said anything at all about focus groups last night. I do not believe he did. I do not believe that the minister said anything. The minister was trying to impute motives on my behalf in terms of the questions that I was asking. He did not mention once last night anything about focus groups.

Because there was a limited amount of time last night, and I did not get the opportunity to ask questions, he says, well, we could have gone past midnight. As a former House leader, the minister knows full well that there are agreements that are in place and so forth that should be respected.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will gladly accept the first challenge. I hope that the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) is not going to back out of the challenge. I will support us adjourning right now the Education Estimates, and we will come back once the minister has tabled the report. I hope that the NDP will support this, so then we can carry on the whole discussion on Education. I can say that, as the House leader for the Liberal Party, it will in fact occur. We are not going to stop it from occurring. I will ask that the NDP not stop it from occurring. I suggest that we accept the challenge of the Minister of Education. We stop the Education Estimates, and we come back after the Minister of Education has tabled the report.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to remind all honourable members that we would have to get the authority of the House to move that request because you would have to have leave of the House to change the order of the Estimates.

If the honourable members want to bring that forward to the House leader after this committee has risen—at this point we are dealing with

ACCESS Programs. We do not have the opportunity to go to the House at this time.

* (1620)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am wondering if we can then get—because I want to take the minister on on this particular issue. I would like a commitment from the committee members that are currently here that we will, after five o'clock, postpone the Education Estimates until the minister has tabled the report. I anticipate that we will get the support for that. I want to make sure that, if individuals that are here that are not prepared to live up to that and talk to their respective House leaders, it is going to be the party, whether it is government or the New Democrats, that are failing to want to talk about the ACCESS issue after the report has been tabled.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The committee can put whatever request they want on the record, but it is the House that makes the decisions. We cannot even make recommendations to the House as a committee. The final instructions will come from the House as we sit tomorrow and the decisions that we sit tomorrow.

The member for Dauphin had a point that he wanted to bring on it.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Not a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Was it on the same issue?

Mr. Plohman: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It is on the same issue that we are discussing.

Mr. Plohman: It is on the same issue.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have been extremely patient in terms of waiting for the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) to be able to finish her line of questioning. I was not finished my questioning.

In fact, I was going to ask the Chair if it would be within the rules to move a motion that would see that this committee endorse the postponement

of Education until the minister has tabled the report.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to inform the member that the motion would have to be writing, and it would have to be signed by a seconder—no, it does not have to be seconded. Then the motion would be debatable.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am going to take my time in saying this motion, because I want to be very clear in terms of what it is that we are saying, and that is:

THAT this committee postpone the Education Estimates as suggested by the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) until the—

Point of Order

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, on a point of order, I do not think we have to listen to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) dictate a memo to himself.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I did not hear that.

Mr. Plohman: I think what we should do is get on with the business of the consideration of the Estimates. We can, by agreement, have the motion once the member has composed it dealing with the ACCESS line. We are not going to support wholesale hiatus in the Estimates of Education. We are prepared to leave the ACCESS line open, move in through all of the rest of it, and leave this ACCESS line open until June until the report has been tabled.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, before I attempt to re-read the motion, the only concern that I would have with that specific area is that, if the Minister of Education does not table the report in the next few days, we could end up spending a great deal of time. In fact, we could virtually spend 120 hours on Education, which I personally would not have any complaints in terms of dealing with.

That is the reason why I think it would be an appropriate thing to do exactly what the Minister

of Education suggested that we do as a committee, if in fact we are committed to dealing with the ACCESS Program and what is happening in the ACCESS Program in a much more fair way.

So I was moving that this committee postpone the Education Estimates, as suggested by the Minister of Education, until the minister tables the ACCESS report.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Can I get a copy of your motion?

Mr. Lamoureux: You bet.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I would like to inform the honourable member that his motion is out of order because it is telling the committee what to do, and it has to recommend to the House.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would then move

I recommend to the House that this committee postpone the Education Estimates, as suggested by the Minister of Education, until the minister tables the ACCESS report.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for Inkster

THAT this committee recommend to the House that this committee postpone the Education Estimates, as suggested by the Minister of Education, until the minister tables the ACCESS report.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Mr. Plohman: I just want to inform the committee that what this does is leave open the consideration of the Estimates possibly for months. We want to deal with the schools, the public school question and funding, universities. There are many important areas to be discussed.

The Minister of Education is not compelled in that way, if this ridiculous motion were to pass, to even finish his Estimates. I do not know what will happen in concurrence, but the House will have taken the decision not to consider the spending Estimates of the Department of Education. I do not even think that it would be allowed in our rules, never mind something that is desirable, because in

fact there are pressing questions dealing with funding to the public schools in Manitoba, to various school divisions that we want brought before this committee. We are not prepared to leave it until the whim of the minister to come back with a report that he may or may not table. The member for Inkster is unbelievably naive if he thinks the minister is just going to come back with this report for the convenience of the member for Inkster. It is absolutely ridiculous to consider this.

So on that basis, as much as we want that report, if there were a way to have just this one line held open for further discussion later on, that would be something that I think would be possible. We certainly want to deal with all of the other Estimates. We are not prepared just to leave the rest of it in abeyance, just so the member for Inkster can get his critic in for the post-secondary education, who is in the Health Estimates right now, and he has found a way to get her into the committee, perhaps not to have a conflict. I know it is difficult when you only have seven members and you have to try and double up on all these issues. At the same time, it is not fair for the rest of the House to be put on hold, and all these educational Estimates being put on hold for months potentially.

The member is really trying to be too smart by half on this, trying to get the minister to call his bluff, and they are playing little games here, and we are not really dealing with the issues here. Let us get on with the discussion dealing with ACCESS Programs, and once we finish that, let us move ahead, or else the other thing, as I said, hold the ACCESS line. If the member wants to propose that, then let us hold the ACCESS line until we get the report, and let us get on with the consideration of the Education Estimates.

* (1630)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to inform the member for Dauphin that in fact he need not worry, if in fact he understood the rules of the Chamber in terms of how the Estimates procedures work. If you put off the Department of Education, there is a finite number of hours no doubt in the Estimates debate. The

moment you pass all the departments or the 240 hours expire, then and only then do you move into the concurrence. In concurrence there is no time limit, so that if in fact a political party had the conviction to be able to stand up for what it is that it is talking about, then in fact you could, if all else, if the Minister of Education does not live up to any sort of implication that he would have for us the tabled report, and most importantly, ensure that the whole issue and debate of ACCESS is in fact proceeded ahead with.

If we have in our hands a copy of the report, then we are better able to indicate to the minister why it is that this is in fact a poor decision. If we go ahead and we pass the Education Estimates, the member for Dauphin knows full well, then all we can do is just leave it for Question Period and possibly concurrence, and given the past record of this Legislature in previous Legislatures, and the NDP's refusal to participate in any significant way in concurrence, that there would not be a debate on this whole report in which the minister has indicated that he has made his decisions on.

I believe that the Minister of Education put a challenge, and Hansard will make it very clear that he would be in favour of seeing Education being stopped right now. That is what he said. [interjection] That is right. You know something, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Dauphin is right. It might not get them any additional dollars, but at least we will be able to hold the Minister of Education accountable for the actions that he is taking. When the member for Dauphin yelled—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, order. I would like to inform the honourable member that the mike is shut off, he is talking to himself.

Now, the honourable member for Inkster to continue.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the member for Dauphin would read the motion, read the rules, he will find that there is nothing wrong with passing this motion. The only way that it could not come before this committee is if the government itself made a concentrated effort to filibuster the Estimates process, which would not

allow the Department of Education to come up. Otherwise, it is the two opposition parties that will determine when the departments primarily come up.

The motion, to the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), is to ensure that we get the report on ACCESS in the Estimates. [interjection] Well, the member for Dauphin says the motion will override. Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not believe that the member for Dauphin really understands in terms of the rules.

The resolution speaks for itself. It accepts what it is that the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) has put on the table in terms of an offer. I would like to see the government follow through on what it is that the Minister of Education has put forward. I would be disappointed if, in fact, the member for Dauphin's argument to his caucus colleagues was to prevail, because I believe that whatever the member for Dauphin or the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) talks about with respect to ACCESS, I do not believe, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that it is going to change the mind of the Minister of Education.

What we need, we need to get some facts. The minister tells us that he has the facts. Well, I would like to see the facts. I think that it would be a better argument for both the NDP and the Liberals to bring forward if, in fact, we have the document, the document that played the most significant role in the Minister of Education making the decision that he had made. So either way, I trust that this particular motion will in fact pass.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I regret that I was unable to be in the committee when this particular matter first arose, and given the debate, I am not quite sure of where it came from, where it is leading to, but I have a suggestion for the move of the motion.

I think the motion is well intended, although I think it is not written in a manner that is, first of all, necessarily in order per se, because the House leaders deal in terms of the order of Estimates; it is actually the government and the official opposition in terms of the particular roles. I appreciate that is perhaps why the motion is here because the Liberal

House leader does not have any direct say, although we have done it through consensus in the past, and I believe that is the best way of proceeding with that order in terms of Estimates.

It seems to me that one way of dealing with this would be to deal with this particular issue, the ACCESS issue, this line item, at a later time, and deal with other issues in terms of education. I agree that we need that report. We stated that last night. It was one of the reasons we moved the resolution. We are against the ACCESS cuts, and we feel it is absolutely ridiculous that the cuts have been made when the report has not even been tabled.

But, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not see why we would postpone the entire Department of Education for the report dealing with ACCESS. It seems to me that we have a lot of concerns also in the area of Workforce 2000, in terms of the private school/public school funding questions, a lot of which do relate to ACCESS as well. It is a question of priorities of the government.

I am wondering if the member who moved this particular motion might be prepared to accept an amendment—I can move it officially if he wants—but accept an amendment perhaps by withdrawing or accepting this as a friendly amendment that we would add to the word discussion “of line 16.4(b).”

So what would happen, we would proceed in other items in education and this line would be held open. I believe that would meet the intent of the resolution. It would allow us to deal with many other issues in education. I am still not sure if it is particularly in order, quite frankly, but I would be prepared, I am sure our colleagues here from the New Democratic Party would be prepared, to support such a motion that would deal specifically with ACCESS. And 16.4(b) by the way, for the information of members, is the specific line item on ACCESS.

What we are saying is let us not deal with ACCESS in terms of passing this particular line item until after we have received the report the minister says will be coming within the 90-day time frame.

So would the Liberal member be willing to accept that, the member for Inkster?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would be prepared to look at something of that nature if the Minister of Education would be prepared to, but I do not believe that the Minister of Education would in fact be prepared to.

That is the reason why, if, for example, we follow the recommendation that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) brings forward, here is the potential problem that it leaves. After we have gone through Monday evening, for example, or a couple more sittings, we could be into 40-50 hours of Education, and then all of a sudden all of the lines have passed except for the ACCESS and the ministerial salary. Then we would have to go on to another department without passing that, and if in fact the Minister of Education was prepared to accept that, then I do not have any problem. That would be wonderful, because, sure, we are the ones that fought the hardest to get Education at the top of the Order Paper on the Estimates.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (1640)

Mr. Lamoureux: Oh, yes, oh, yes. I can assure you of that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. You know, if in fact this amendment or suggested amendment that the member for Thompson is bringing forward, the Minister of Education would be prepared to accept, that would be wonderful. But I believe that we have got the Minister of Education on the spot here. If this is played out properly he will be obligated to bring forward a report, or we could be in here for a long time. I think, as the member for Thompson said quite well last night, that the members, the individual students that are the recipients of the ACCESS Program deserve better.

I agree with what the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohma), the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) were saying last night, and the member for Wolseley was picking up on it again today, that we have to take into consideration the facts that the Minister of Education had. I believe that will allow us to be able to have a better debate, and no,

ultimately it might not mean that there is going to be additional dollars that are going, but at least many of the questions that the member for Wolseley put today from the students will be able to be better answered through follow-up on questions, because then we have a report in hand. I do not believe, personally, that it is not an appropriate thing to want. [interjection]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Dauphin, if he did not hear what the Minister of Education said, I would suggest that he wait for Hansard to be printed and then he can read what was said. As long as there is co-operation between the two opposition parties, I believe that this in fact can happen.

Mr. Ashton: I just want to indicate to the members of this committee that one of the reasons the timing of Estimates for the Department of Education was as it was, was because of an accommodation that members made in terms of timing, which is common. It is done by consensus. I realize perhaps Liberal members may have had some difficulty with that, but that is why it was done. You know, I do not understand the argument here because the Liberals want to now postpone the entire Department of Education, but at the same time they are saying they want it at the top of the list. You cannot have it both ways even if you are a Liberal, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

I do not understand what the problem here is. In fact, I am sure some of the members of the public, I know many of the ACCESS students must be wondering how the heck we got into this procedural wrangle, because what is more important is that we spend time discussing the issue and not the procedural wrangling.

I will, therefore, move an amendment to the motion put forward by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I move an amendment to add after the word Estimates "discussion of line 16-4(b)."

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I am going to take the amendment under advisement for a few minutes. We can continue to debate the original motion.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in closing debate—sure, I would be more than happy to close debate, but I am not going to force the

debate to come to an end like the New Democrats did last night.

In reference to what could potentially be an amendment to the amendment, I do not personally have any problem, and I do not believe any of my caucus colleagues would have any problem with the idea of putting the ACCESS, but we do have the one concern with respect to it, and I have already mentioned that. We, at least I would be recommending that we vote in favour of that particular motion or a motion similar to that. I know that the member for Thompson is redrafting his subamendment and the moment that that is done, I will be better able to comment on it.

Mr. Ashton: If your concern is with what the minister said or did not say in the particular motion, I can also move a further amendment which would delete that as well, if that is the only concern. Otherwise, the amendment that I am suggesting is really to be very specific in the focus, which is in keeping with the intent. Perhaps if I can move that as a further subamendment.

Point of Order

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Would that be a subamendment to the amendment to the motion? I just want to get that clarified in my mind.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: At this time I am still ruling on the first amendment.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, could you give me a copy of my first amendment back? I believe I could probably redraft that and save you from having to rule on two separate subamendments.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The reason I have got some concerns to inform the honourable member, I have a number of concerns with the amendment because what that amendment is asking us to do is go forward to the House to get the resolutions to bring back to this committee, when this committee can deal with your amendment within committee by leave of this committee.

Mr. Ashton: Just to further explain, the reason I had moved this particular amendment to the member for Inkster's motion—because there is a difference. In this case, if this motion were to pass, what it would be is a recommendation of the House that this item be scheduled, as we did with I, T and T with the Minister's Salary; we scheduled it for a time after a series of Estimates, we specified a particular day. So that would be the effect of this. We would, once the ACCESS motion was brought in place, then this would be rescheduled along with the other items. Within this committee we can postpone passing that particular matter. We do not have the same ability as the House does to schedule the exact timing of that matter coming back. Normally we might hold that, say, to the end of Education Estimates. We might in actual fact finish the Education Estimates well in advance of that report being available. We might go into this particular item after several weeks. I believe that was in keeping.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Could I offer a solution to the honourable members? I am just offering some advice and possibly I could take this under advisement at this time, and if the honourable members wanted to discuss with their House leaders, because that is where the decision will be made, in the House, and unanimous consent to whatever the resolution of this problem that we are having today is, will require unanimous consent of the House, as the honourable members are aware.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would go one step further, because my concern moving the amendment was if there is a motion on the floor, then we have to deal with that particular motion, and if discussions do not continue, we are back to square one.

I am wondering if the Liberal House leader may wish to withdraw that motion. I will withdraw my amendment. He can reintroduce it, as I can with the suggested amendment, tomorrow, once we resume sitting, if there is no successful conclusion of discussions, but at least give some opportunity to resolve this matter without eating up any further time in the committee.

So I am prepared to withdraw my amendment, and I would suggest perhaps the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) withdraw it temporarily until we have discussions.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to remind the honourable member for Thompson his amendment is not before the committee at this time because I have not ruled on it.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it seems like we are back to the main motion now because the member for Inkster refuses to withdraw. I still think this is a matter that should be dealt with by House leaders, and in support of the statement made by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Let us be mindful of the challenge I issued to the committee. I said that I am prepared to suspend all of Education Estimates, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and hold them in abeyance until the report is tabled. That is the offer I made to the committee.

* (1650)

This is a very, very important issue. I can sense from members of both opposition parties around this table that they do not want to engage in any other significant review of other line-by-line Estimates until we have dealt exhaustively with ACCESS. It seems to be a major stumbling block, and in that sense, in fairness to that process and their very great concern, and, indeed, wishing to have access to that information so they could even do a better job of analyzing and criticizing the government policy, I sense then that the offer I made was very fair. Let us suspend Education Estimates until the time we table that report and begin from there. That was the offer I made. It was not conditional on other trade-offs, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. It was totally an unconditional offer with respect purely to putting into abeyance all the Estimates of Education from here on.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), on the main motion.

Mr. Ashton: Well, on the main motion and perhaps on other matters as well. I tried, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. It is obvious that this is not going to end up being discussed by House leaders, so perhaps if I can put my amendment back on the

table, combined with the other suggestion, because I believe what is happening here is sort of beside the point. We want to have the report to discuss ACCESS. We do not have to delay everything else to do that. We do not know when the minister plans on bringing the report in. It could be up to three months. [interjection] Within four weeks. We do not know so I will—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. We just finally found the rule here, and I would like to inform the committee of exactly what the rule is. It is on page 42 at (6.3): "Once the sequence for Estimates consideration is established in accordance with sub-rule (6.1) that sequence may be changed by substantive motion with required notice given, or by unanimous consent."

So that is the only way, and the motion before us is only to recommend to the House.

Mr. Ashton: That is exactly what I had mentioned earlier. This committee cannot set Estimates, but it can recommend. Now if we are going to recommend, I think the logical thing to do here is—definitely we can deal with ACCESS in conjunction with the report. We have been saying that since we started on the ACCESS line. We have said it in the House. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we do not need to get any brinkmanship here over the whole of Estimates for the Department of Education or other issues, and that is why we move an amendment to add after the word Estimates "discussion of line 16.4(b)" and delete the words "as suggested by the Minister of Education."

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I think I got it.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton),

To add after the word "Estimates" "discussion of line 16.4(b)" and delete the words "as suggested by the Minister of Education."

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I accept the ruling of the amendment, the motion is in order, although that is not what I said. I said I would certainly be prepared to suspend all of the Education Estimates until the report is tabled.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I serve notice to the committee that the government members would have to vote against the subamendment because—[interjection] No, no. The sincerity is there. That was the offer. I mean, that was the offer to members opposite and, indeed, it was on that basis in that the member for Inkster took the challenge. Some would say, took the bait, but nevertheless this is an important issue. We are going to try and have the report ready as soon as possible. I do not think it will take three months, but it may certainly take more than a month before we can publish it.

And yet, this certainly is an opportunity, I think. We will rush it along as quickly as we can and whatever hours are left in Estimates at the time, we will consider the rest of Education starting on the ACCESS line. Failing that, I am sorry, we will have to oppose the subamendment and proceed as we are.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, I think clearly that both the Liberals and the minister are playing some political games here rather than dealing with the issue. If they are really interested in postponing ACCESS until the evaluation is tabled, the report that we are waiting for, then the amendment that he has moved to the motion is precisely what we should be doing.

We can get on with the other important issues and yet, at the same time, save the ACCESS debate for when we have the information that we have been asking for from the minister. He refuses to table it now. He could table a draft. If he is sincere—he has based decisions on it, so it must be fairly final. It had to have the recommendations in that report or the minister would not have been able to make decisions based on that. The fact is, if he is sincere to this committee about having the report before us so we can debate this issue with the report before us and if the Liberals are sincere in doing that, they will support this amendment to this motion.

We want also to get onto the other pressing issues facing Manitobans in Education and the minister knows that. That is why I am saying that if he is serious about this and sincere about it, then he

should accept the amendment because he knows there are many other important issues. The cuts in funding to public schools—well, there is an increase to the private schools which the Liberals clearly do not want to deal with because they are on record as supporting private schools, and they do not want to have that debated at this particular time. They have their other critic, who is split between health and post-secondary education in another committee.

We are endeavouring to accommodate that but now the member for Inkster sees a way out, and so he proposes this little game before this committee. I do not think it is fair for the committee to be wasting this kind of time. I think that we should vote on this motion dealing with the ACCESS line only and let us get on with all of the other issues that we have to deal with in Education that we feel are critical to Manitoba.

We want to deal. Well, what is happening to the Lord Selkirk School Division? The Liberal Leader raised the issue of Lord Selkirk the other day, trying to bail himself out of the fiasco that he dug himself in with regard to the industrial development there.

If he is sincere about dealing with the Lord Selkirk School Division, then when are we going to deal with it? In two months? When the minister has a whim to decide to table this so we can get on with it? We are not going to wait for those issues. We want to have those debated now and the member for Inkster should recognize those are important issues that have to be dealt with now.

We have the solution here. It is reasonable. Both parties should support this so we can get on with it. We should ask the minister to support it now.

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

Mr. Lamoureux: Just to indicate to the member, because I would like to see the question, we would be supportive of this. This in fact would be the ideal scenario, but if this does not work, if in fact this does not pass, the only other way to assure that we can continue the discussion on the program of ACCESS is to be able to go to the original motion but, hopefully, this motion will pass.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The question before the committee is the amendment moved by the honourable member for Thompson.

All those in favour of the amendment say, yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: All those opposed, nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment is lost.

On the main motion, all those in favour of the main motion, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: All those opposed, nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The main motion is lost.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would ask for a recorded vote, please.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested. Members rise to report to the House, and we better do it quick.

HEALTH

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): 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 4.(a)(1) page 84 of the Estimates manual. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Chairperson, I am substituting for our Health critic so I am going to be brief this afternoon. However, I do have some questions for the minister, and I would like to begin with correspondence that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) sent to the minister. Although it is dated May 6 of this year, it refers to a request in Estimates last year. I will just read the correspondence, and I can send the letter across the way if that would help the minister.

It says: Last year in the Estimates process I requested of the minister information concerning budgetary allocation of funds as a result of the mental health reform process. This information was promised me. It has not yet been forwarded. In addition, I understand the regional mental health councils as well as the advisory committee have asked this information be provided. I am requesting if you could ensure that this information is accessible for the budgetary process. Attached for your information is a copy of the data that I will be requesting.

I am wondering if the minister has had a chance to find this information if he could now provide it in the Estimates committee.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I look forward to reviewing the document the honourable member is providing again today, but I am advised that the information sought in that request is of a nature that we are not set up to co-ordinate easily the type of information being sought. I am saying this without having benefit of reviewing the request just recently. We will review that request, and whatever we can make available in the near future we will do so.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister indicate when our critic might receive that information?

Mr. McCrae: I am advised, Madam Chairperson, that the information that we are able to gather we can make available within the next week to 10 days, but that will not necessarily be completely responsive to the request, because the request seeks information that we are not able to make available.

* (1440)

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister, for the record, please clarify exactly why it is that the information is not available in the form that our Health critic requested it?

Mr. McCrae: For example, the request is for information about how many people in personal care are suffering from mental diseases. That information does not exist in such a way that we can make that information available.

I know that with changes to mental health care delivery more people will be found today in personal care or in psycho-geriatric care than previously. I do not know by what amount or numbers, and it is not information that is easily compiled. I will look further to enquire as to whether there is not some way we can comply with that request. If we can we will, but if we cannot it is simply the answer that it is impossible to do. We do some very, very good things, but the impossible sometimes takes just a little longer.

Mr. Martindale: Does the minister have information on the budgetary shift from institutional care to community care or community-based delivery of services? Is that information available?

Mr. McCrae: In total we are looking at, to this point, some \$41 million. Thirty-five point seven million dollars has been and is being redirected from acute care efficiencies and savings found. In addition to that \$35.7 million, we have one-time amounts coming to a total of \$5.3 million. That is another example of gambling dollars put to work to assist us in health care; a good part of the \$5.3 million is from lottery profits.

Mental health reform in Manitoba has had a very obvious significant impact on the number of provincial dollars directed to rural and northern areas and community rehabilitation and support programming. It is not just in rural and northern Manitoba that we are providing a full range of mental health services which has never been done before, but that is happening now. In addition, in the city of Winnipeg more appropriate services are being made available not only in acute care but also in community care.

Before there were any psychiatry beds closed in Manitoba—and this goes back from the time between 1989 and 1992. Before there were any psychiatry beds closed the government committed approximately \$1.4 million in ongoing expenditure and more than \$2.6 million in time-limited expenditure towards the following reform projects. Sometimes we slip into that tendency or into that habit of saying that, you know, we have not done anything in the

community and that we only sort of come along after just to begin those things. First, we take and then we give back later on, but here is an example where some \$3 million—\$4 million were spent before any psychiatry beds were closed.

For example:

In 1988 there were six new projects announced by my predecessor, for example, a Mobile Crisis Team in Winnipeg, and that provides after-hours service that deals with crisis situations at the local level.

The psychogeriatric team for the Central Region, that involves professional consultation at the local level for elderly persons with psychiatric disorders.

The acute treatment and consultation team in Winnipeg, that program provides brief treatment and consultation services for children, adolescents, family members.

The youth suicide information centre educates professionals and the public on risk factors associated with youth suicide.

There has been multidisciplinary team enhancement in Winnipeg, specialized services which allow high-need clients with histories of hospitalization to be served in community settings.

There is some multidisciplinary team enhancement in the Parkland Region. That is a project to support long-time Brandon Mental Health Centre in-patients in community settings.

There was a major demonstration project that was given long-term funding through reallocation within the health budget that was a redirection of \$500,000 and it is ongoing.

The Salvation Army crisis unit in Winnipeg, the Crisis Stabilization Unit in Winnipeg, that is an eight-bed facility and it provides short-term care for mental health clients in crisis who would otherwise need to be hospitalized.

Then there were some mental health projects funded by the Manitoba Health Services Development Fund—that is gambling dollars—and that is over \$2.6 million, additional care and support for demonstration projects in Winnipeg,

Westman and the Parkland regions, this project allows regional mental health programs to purchase services to allow high need clients to remain in community settings. That was the \$1.5 million over three years.

* (1450)

We have the CMHA, Canadian Mental Health Association, employment service project in Winnipeg. That project provides specialized vocational assessment, training and placement services. That is \$300,000 over three years.

The Society For Depression & Manic Depression Self-Help In Action program is a program to promote the self-help model in rural regions of Manitoba. That took in \$67,400 over 15 months.

There has been work done to develop a baccalaureate program in psychiatric nursing, Registered Psychiatric Nurses' Association of Manitoba responded to develop a baccalaureate program substantially oriented to community case work. The intent was to transfer responsibility for undergraduate training of psychiatric nurses from Manitoba Health to Brandon University.

Brandon University is a well-established institute of learning in Manitoba, and it is located in Brandon West constituency. That is a program of \$433,000 over 27 months.

There is a psychiatry training for rural and northern family physicians through joint planning of the mental health division in the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Medicine, departments of Psychiatry and Family Medicine. This project has been developed, and it provides training in psychiatry for family physicians working predominantly in rural and northern settings. There is a provision there of \$317,555 over two years.

I had the privilege and the pleasure of being at a meeting where the students involved, who are practising physicians, and I were able to talk publicly about that particular program, which it is felt will greatly enhance mental health service delivery certainly throughout Manitoba. It was very well received by the students involved. They

know already how their patients are going to feel about them having this enhanced training.

Then from 1992 to the present time there has been a structural reform through broad-based redistribution of resources. Here is where since the release of the January 1992 policy paper Building the Future of Mental Health Services in Manitoba, there has been significant progress made towards broad-based reform of the organization and delivery of mental health services. Approved plans will result in the redirection of a total of \$34,000,300 in annual departmental resources. That is extremely significant in terms of a redirection of resource and certainly spells a profoundly different way with people who need mental health services.

Over and above this figure, government approved \$2 million in bridge funding connected with the Western Manitoba Reform Plan, and \$744,300 connected with the Winnipeg Acute Care plan.

In western Manitoba there is a four-year plan to convert the resources of the Brandon Mental Health Centre with a more progressive and less costly spectrum of community-based treatment, rehabilitation and support services throughout all of western Manitoba; that includes Westman, Parkland and Central regions. The expenditure commitment here is \$19.1 million annually and \$2 million in bridge funding.

The Brandon Mental Health Centre is located just across the street from Brandon West in Brandon East, in the riding of our friend and colleague from Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), and I am very pleased that we have had the support of the honourable member for Brandon East and his colleagues in the downsizing and the ultimate closure of the Brandon Mental Health Centre as we know it today. That is not something that one takes on lightly, believe me, coming from that region. You have to make sure that a lot of work is done, not only with the patients, but also with the staff, and the union personnel and everybody involved in the mental health community, thanks to our Mental Health Regional Advisory Council, and to the member for Brandon

East and his colleagues and my colleagues and everybody involved. We are, I understand, on schedule and on budget with respect to that project.

It is going to mean far more appropriate service delivery to the people who need it. I happen to know patients, long-term patients, who are the beneficiaries of programming that allows them to live in the community, and their quality of life is very significantly enhanced, and it is about time we took this particular direction. I am delighted that even though it was our government that had the courage and the initiative to do it that we did it with support. It was necessary and we are doing it and it is working well.

Yes, there is anticipation and some worry and concern on the part of some people, notably those employed at the Brandon Mental Health Centre, but it has occurred to me over the last couple of years that it is not much short of amazing what has been accomplished. I think a lot of the credit goes to the people involved in Manitoba health who are in leadership positions, but also the co-operation extended by the union and by the staff, and the leadership at the MHC and in the mental health community in Westman. Because without that, it would be so easy for some people to use the progress that has been made to the wrong end, that being to spread the incorrect message that somehow there was something wrong happening in mental health when everything that is happening is right and going in the right direction.

So I do offer thanks to all of the people involved in this particular project, and there are other projects too, but this one is fairly close to home.

When you consider that, you know, unlike Saskatchewan or other provinces where they are closing down hospitals and more or less cutting off virtually the arms and legs of their health care system in those other jurisdictions, the only hospital basically being closed in Manitoba is right in Brandon, and it is being closed in favour of something more appropriate than what is being done there. It used to be called an asylum, and I think that model of mental health care delivery is a thing of the past and I think that is rightly so.

So I have got a lot of credit to offer to a lot of people in that regard, and my predecessor has certainly been very much involved in that whole process as well, and he and those with whom he has been working ought to be commended.

In Winnipeg, with the redevelopment of psych-health, there has been a relocation of services of the Health Sciences Centre, Department of Psychiatry, to a modern freestanding facility. Service has expanded in the area of forensic psychiatry.

There is an acute care plan, conversion of the resources of 65 hospital psychiatry beds to a wide range of community-based crisis response and support services. It is in this area that I think that we get the odd question raised, because it is so easy when taken in isolation all by itself a closure of 65 beds to say, oh, this is just awful, this is terrible, and whoever did that sure should be criticized roundly, when the fact is these decisions are being made in partnership with many partners in the whole system.

When emergency rooms get extremely busy and among the people looking for service are psychiatric patients, it is easy to sort of pick that, what do you call it, cherry-picking, and take that in isolation from everything else that is going on to make a case. It is easy to do. I mean, I think maybe that those involved who are paid to be critical will do things like that, and it is not a surprise.

As we do change, make changes, there are going to be some bumps in the road, and I am here to acknowledge that. With respect to the home care program, sometimes it is growing pains because it is growing at very, very significant rates.

With respect to changes in psychiatric services we are indeed making changes, and any time that there is a matter that requires attention, it is appropriate that we be made aware of it, but hopefully it is in a way that helps us along our way to mental health reform as opposed to standing in the way of mental health reform.

With respect to new services for high need groups, there are new community-based services for children and adolescents. That has been

approved by government and elderly persons with mental illness, and those services are in the development stage at this time.

With respect to psych health, there has been an additional funding of \$4.3 million annually, the acute care plan \$4 million annually, and the high need groups \$.8 million annually, for a total of \$9.1 million annually. This figure was supplemented by \$744,300 in bridge funding connected with the Winnipeg acute care plan.

* (1500)

Now, northern Manitoba. The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) earlier today was raising, brought forward a petition which spoke about the changes at the hospital in Thompson. I could not help but observe, albeit from my seat, that the option the New Democrats seem to be pushing in Canada is to close hospitals as opposed to what we are trying to do, and that is redevelop them and make them—rather than close them as they do in New Democratic Party jurisdictions, we are looking at redevelopments and making—for example, if there is a lack of commitment to Thompson General Hospital then why is it that we are bringing in new psychiatric acute care beds, things that have never existed in the Thompson Hospital before, something that northern Manitobans have been left without for generations? Now at last with changes like the kinds of what we are talking about, people in northern Manitoba will have a full range of mental health services.

If there has been no commitment to the Thompson Hospital, why have there been the developments there have been over the last number of years, and why indeed more recently have we enhanced obstetrics at the Thompson General Hospital by making Thompson General Hospital a teaching hospital when it comes to obstetrics by bringing in its residents in obstetrics and providing obstetric services, and that is good not only for those learning to practice medicine, but also those who are the recipients of obstetric services.

We have a feasibility study underway to see about the feasibility of actually linking Thompson

General Hospital with the Faculty of Medicine, medical school, to make Thompson General Hospital an affiliate teaching centre. So, you know, you have to put things in a context in order to gain a full understanding. It is so easy to take things out of context. Anybody can do that, any fool can do that, take things out of context and lead people who only really get to understand what goes on by what flows from this place and through the media.

So these things need to be said from time to time I think to ensure that there is a clarity as to where we are going.

With respect to northern Manitoba, we indeed are developing a full range of new hospital and community-based mental health services, not only in Thompson, as I have referred to, but also in the Norman region. That means jobs, jobs, jobs, all kinds of new health care jobs being created in Winnipeg, in Thompson, in Norman, in Westman, in Parkland, in Eastman, in Interlake, in Winnipeg, I think I mentioned Winnipeg already, so for the first time northern Manitobans will have an adequate range of services, and the expenditure commitment there in northern Manitoba is \$3 million annually.

With respect to Interlake and Eastman, recently approved plans call for the development of community-based crisis response and support services for adult and child adolescent populations in the Interlake and Eastman. Reform will address long-standing shortages of services in these two regions.

So there is an expenditure commitment in that area of \$1.3 million annually with approval in principle for an additional \$1.8 million annually. Then there is the outstanding issue of forensic mental health delivery of services, and I was able to be in Selkirk to announce that the Selkirk Mental Health Centre will continue to operate. We cannot do without some number of long-term mental health spaces, and Selkirk Mental Health Centre will provide that, but, in addition, we are going to bring in 18 new forensic beds to serve those people who are found not guilty by reason of insanity for alleged crimes committed or people

who have been found unfit to stand trial. Not only will we have the acute short-term requirements met at the psych health facility at Health Sciences Centre, but the longer-term needs will be taken care of at this new forensic facility at Selkirk.

I was pleased to be joined there by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and to see him there at the time the announcement was made and to see the interest that he was showing there.

The staff at Selkirk Mental Health Centre were I think relieved and pleased to know that there is an important future for them. We certainly recognize the contribution they have made in the past, but we have been a little disappointed in the federal Conservative and Liberal governments who have not shown their commitment to longer-term forensic mental health services.

I always maintained when I was Minister of Justice that if these, what we used to call Lieutenant-Governor warrants people, if they had not been found unfit by reason of insanity, they would have been guilty of crimes that would have landed them in federal penitentiaries paid for by the federal government.

So I am not one to go on at length about things like this, but I have mentioned before that the federal government has a role there, and any time the federal Liberals want to change their position on that I would welcome such a development because more and more the provinces are asked to shoulder a fairly significant burden.

Anyway, I do apologize for, I do not really apologize, but I know my response was a little longer than the honourable member bargained for. However, Madam Chairperson, it does give him an overview of where we are at and what we have been doing and the extremely positive nature of mental health reform measures taken in Manitoba.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, I would like to thank the minister for the detailed answer. I would like to move on to another area now of mental health.

First, I would be interested in knowing if the minister agrees that there is an increased demand

for counselling services for survivors of sexual abuse. I think he would be aware if there were, because there would be more demands on government to fund counselling and other kinds of services.

One of those services I am a little bit familiar with, and that is the Women's Post Treatment Project or centre, and the reason I am familiar is because they initially got some funding from the United Church a number of years ago. I think they are doing a good job. I think, in the long run, services like that probably save governments money because it is their analysis that women who are survivors of abuse are frequently involved with drug and alcohol abuse, I guess as a way of deadening the pain of their past experience, and when they get into counselling, they are able to come to grips with their addiction problem and talk about the real problem, their history of sexual abuse.

I would like to ask the minister, is there an increasing demand on government to fund these kinds of resources, and are the resources being increased or decreased or staying the same in terms of funding from his department?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, in my previous response I outlined the very very significant levels of funding that are being made available for mental health services in Manitoba. The honourable member for Crescentwood (Gray) raised the issue a little earlier today about grownups abused as children and services made available. I have a little bit of updated information for the honourable member, and the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) as well.

Mental Health Services in Manitoba are serving more people now as a result of mental health reform. There is that word expansion again, and I do not know whether we spent more money. I do not think we have in total spent more money, but we have, because of our restructured mental health service delivery system, been able to serve more people who have suffered mental illness effects of sexual abuse.

I am not a psychiatrist or even a specialist or an expert of any kind, but I know from many

conversations I have had that mental illness is tragically all too often an effect of sexual and other abuse as a youngster. Responding to this group of people in society is clearly part of our priority target groups. These target groups find themselves among those people who suffer from acute mental illness, from chronic mental illness, among children and adolescents and among the elderly.

* (1510)

In addition to whatever services we are able to provide from the Department of Health, there are many other professional caregivers providing counselling and support to these survivors of sexual abuse, such as the Department of Family Services, the Department of Justice and private counsellors.

By no means do I wish to be misunderstood as having said that that is enough, because until there is no further sexual or any other kind of abuse we will always end up with what appears and may indeed be an imbalance, more need than society in general is able to meet, so that it is a constant struggle to stay ahead of these problems that develop and all the more reason for us to support measures that point towards zero tolerance of violence or abuse of any kind in our society.

I am a strong believer that we ought to leave no room for abuse. Sometimes when I was in the previous portfolio I would be faced with criticism for so-called zero tolerance policy with respect to violence, and each time I remember responding by saying, well, those who are critical of that particular policy, are they proposing that we allow a little bit of violence or a little bit of sexual abuse and then maybe it would be all right? And no one would answer yes to that question.

As long as we have violence and abuse in our society, sexual and otherwise, we must maintain that position, that no abuse is acceptable, none. That is at the front end. As that policy becomes more and more effective throughout all of our programs, we are going to have less pressure at what I call the back end, the service, the treatment end of the spectrum, so that will it not be a wonderful Manitoba some day when that violence does not exist and we will not have to spend so

much time debating and discussing whether we are making enough resources available to deal with the effects of that kind of thing going on in our society.

So while there are some services out there, you will never catch me suggesting that there is enough.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask the minister, which department considers that they have the lead responsibility in this area? Does it fall under Mental Health or the Department of Family Services? Who has the lead responsibility for counselling the victims of sexual abuse?

Mr. McCrae: I do not think we classify things in that way. That is a little too sterile for my liking that we just say, well, if it is sexual abuse, it must be Family Services or must be Justice or must be Health, go to the other door.

We are trying to develop referral and counselling services and mental health services and family services, and we are trying to do it in such a way that the consumer does not have to be bureaucratized unduly. So that if in a rural community, and this is another reason to pursue the objectives of reform in the whole health care system, that you have this one entry point where you can very conveniently, and without exacerbating your situation, be helped quickly and efficiently.

So I cannot really say it is Health's problem or Family Services' problem or Justice's problem. In this government, we tend to work together.

Mr. Martindale: Can the minister tell us what services are available in rural Manitoba, and can he assure us that adequate services are available in terms of counselling women who are survivors of abuse?

Mr. McCrae: I just finished saying, Madam Chairperson, that I am not going to assure the honourable member that there is adequate levels of service to deal with abuse and the results of abuse, because until everybody is better and there is not any more suffering, I will not suggest that it is adequate. I suggest there is more than there used to

be. I suggest that we have more abuse shelters, we have more services and more funding for services in these areas, but to say that it is adequate, no I cannot suggest that we will ever be adequate until there is no more abuse.

Mr. Martindale: Would the minister say that there is equality of services between rural Manitoba and major centres? Are the services that are provided equally accessible, or are there differences in rural and major centres in terms of counselling services?

Mr. McCrae: I would not presume to tell someone in Melita or Tadoule Lake that they have equal access to services, no, but I can tell you that we are moving in that direction and constantly strive to do that through programming like decentralization and we need support for those kinds of things, for health care reform, and we need support for those kinds of things which bring services closer to the people who need them.

See, this is not to set up a tension between service deliverers and service receivers. I am trying to partner with service deliverers so that we can indeed achieve the goal that the honourable member is asking us to achieve, and that is to bring about equity of access to the extent that we can, but simple geography, for one thing, makes it clear that we are not going to achieve that goal. That is why it is a good thing to have goals, so that we can report to the honourable member, yes, we are moving closer than we have ever been to the achievement of those goals in the history of this province. But to say that we have achieved equal access for people in communities outside the major centres would very quickly be questioned.

I am reminded, Madam Chairperson, that we, of course, use the services of the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, which keeps us up to date on population health issues, population health data, trends and one thing and another, which is a very wise thing to do, I suggest, because you cannot embark on meaningful reform without some test by which to measure your success or failure.

The centre has made available some extremely interesting information which the honourable

member, I am sure, would be interested in knowing, that is, that no matter where you live in Manitoba—this came as a surprise to me—in northern remote regions of Manitoba or built-up populous areas like Winnipeg, there is an equality of frequency of visiting a physician. That does come as a surprise but, obviously, because of distance.

I do not think that if I lived in northern Manitoba, for example, I would have as simple or easy access to a brain surgeon, for example, or a specialist like that, but in terms of primary care in northern Manitoba and in all regions of Manitoba we can say, because the centre has researched this, that there is the kind of equality of access the honourable member is talking about, that people see on average the physician, the primary caregiver, sort of equally throughout the province, which was encouraging to hear. It certainly does not solve all the problems to hear information like that, but it was interesting and a little bit surprising. Maybe the honourable member feels the same way.

* (1520)

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, we have heard it said that some individuals have to be diagnosed as being mentally ill before they can get counselling. In answer to this question earlier today the minister said he did not know. I wonder if the minister has had a chance to get information from his staff to check out the veracity of this statement.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, I think the way the question was put earlier today had to do with the requirement of a diagnosis in order to access assistance. It is a question of where you are getting your assistance, and it is also a question of where specialized caregivers are. There is a finiteness to the resource. So that is where you prioritize peoples' circumstances.

We have in the Department of Justice, the Department of Family Services and in the private sector—there are those who are in the business, who make it their business to provide counselling services to people who are adult survivors of sexual abuse, whose abuse leads to various

problems which range all the way from dealing with everyday issues to acute mental illness. So it is a question of making sure we are able to apply the appropriate resource to the appropriate conditions that people find themselves in.

I think that is the best way I know how to answer the question. I do not think, before we even start doing an assessment of somebody who comes through the doors, we ask them for some certificate of diagnosis that they have schizophrenia or some such thing like that.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, I am finished my questions for now. Before I yield the floor to my Liberal colleague, I would just like to request of the Chair that we keep this line open—I am hoping that our Health critic will be here tomorrow, and he may have questions on mental health—just in case we get into hospitals later on this afternoon.

Madam Chairperson: That can easily be determined by the will of the committee and agreement between the minister and the two critics.

Mr. McCrae: I cannot imagine the honourable member for Kildonan coming in and suggesting the member for Burrows did not do an adequate job, but just in case, I guess we could agree to his request.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Madam Chairperson, I was following along the line of questioning from the member for Burrows, and while we are on that subject, perhaps I will ask a few follow-up questions before I go back and ask some general questions in the area of Mental Health Services.

I am quite curious to know what kinds of counselling services are available in the departments of Family Services and Justice for adult survivors of sexual abuse.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, I am sorry if I have led the honourable member too far down a path here. I cannot answer for the other two departments; I can only answer for my own. I do know that the Estimates of both of those departments are still to come, and the opportunities will be there for that.

I guess it is a question of what form and structure are we talking about of counselling. Counselling takes many forms, and I am not sure exactly how to respond for those other two departments except to suggest the member raise the question with the other departments, and I will try to deal with the Health ones.

Ms. Gray: I am making the assumption that the minister knows that there are services and what they are, because he is the one who just said a few minutes ago that services were available in those departments, and that is why I have asked the question. I am assuming his department would know that.

Mr. McCrae: I will try in a general way without attaching dollar signs to it. But certainly my experience in the area of Justice is that we have a lot of people who are abusive to their families, and we have ordered them through the courts to obtain help for their problems. They are abusive because they were abused themselves when they were young. Sometimes, maybe, it is part of that that has caused them to become ill and to do those crimes of abuse. That does not make them not guilty, but they still require help, and I remember the Justice department providing funding for counselling services.

I know that through our Probation Services all kinds of counselling is available. Now, not everybody is a psychiatrist, I can acknowledge that, but through Probation Services all manner of services are available to people who need those services.

In Family Services, we have all kinds of social workers who work in our province day in, day out, very faithfully and diligently, working with families and trying to heal problems that exist in families. So all that amounts to, I do not know, I would say hundreds of millions of dollars—hundreds of millions of dollars worth of funding spent in those ways. Now you see, if you try to put everything in a nice, neat little slot, it gets a little bit difficult.

In addition, I do not think I mentioned the services provided by the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. Many, many people who were abused

as youngsters end up abusing themselves by substance abuse of various kinds, gambling, you name it. The Addictions Foundation is involved in assisting people who find themselves in those circumstances, which are all effects. They are effects of problems that go back, in some cases, to their childhood.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, in the minister's response he talks about probation services. You need to be in conflict with the law in order to access probation services. The minister refers to social workers in the Department of Family Services. He is referring to Child and Family Services agencies which hire social workers. Those individuals deal with children, very seldom deal with their families, in fact have problems dealing with the children in need of care. Social workers with the Department of Family Services deal with the mentally handicapped and vulnerable adults. There is no family counselling program. That was cut a number of years ago.

The Addictions Foundation—again, you would have to be identified as having an addiction. Now the minister is correct. A number of adult sexual survivors do have alcohol or drug problems, but perhaps I can rephrase the question and say to the minister: Let us say that an individual seeks some sort of counselling in any rural community, let us take for an example, goes to the local community mental health office. Will they receive counselling services? If not, where would they be referred to by the mental health workers?

Mr. McCrae: Well, I think we are having a little problem understanding each other on this point, because so what if to access probation services you are in conflict with the law. So what is the point? [interjection] Yes, but as an effect of abuse as a child, many people find themselves in conflict with the law, and probation can be helpful to those people. So, you know, maybe it does not totally answer the honourable member's question, but just because people get in conflict with the law does not mean that we just throw them in jail and throw away the key and forget about trying to help them. I think that we have got—[interjection]

* (1530)

I think I hear one honourable member opposite saying that maybe some people just break the law and do not need services. She is right. There are people like that too.

Ms. Gray: That is not what I said.

Mr. McCrae: Oh, well, I misheard her. I do not hear so well out of this side, so if you are talking at me, make sure you aim in the left ear. That is on your right as you look this way.

Similarly, in Family Services, I am not trying to split hairs. I do know that Family Services workers—how can you deal only with children and not deal with families? [interjection] Well, if that is what they do, that is fine, but there are many, many cases, I am sure, when you do not just deal with children, you try to keep families from falling apart.

If it is the job of Family Services to snatch children away from their families and not have any sense of working with the family, then that is the wrong direction. If that is the direction the member is proposing, I do not agree with that, and I do not suppose she is really proposing that. I know that Family Services workers, yes, they do assist children to get away from their parents on occasion, and that sometimes is appropriate, but you cannot put everything in such neat little spaces. In Winnipeg there are more options available to people than there are in rural Manitoba. In rural Manitoba, with the reformed mental health service delivery system, our mental health workers do not turn people away.

Ms. Gray: Therefore, if we do not turn people away, can I assume then that individuals—I am referring specifically to rural Manitoba because there are a few more counselling services in Winnipeg—an individual in rural Manitoba who is experiencing, it was indicated they were a survivor of sexual abuse or had been sexually abused as a child and sought counselling from a mental health worker, that they would not be refused or they would be able to receive counselling?

Mr. McCrae: Well, I can only tell the honourable member what I just finished saying and if she knows of a case where someone has been turned away, I want to know about it because I will deal

with it. What I am saying is that we are not going to send people away in rural Manitoba. We are going to try to help them.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I am quite prepared to be corrected, and certainly policies could have changed since August of '93, but at that time the department indicated, and I quote: Over the past few years there has been an increasing demand placed upon regional mental health services to provide services to survivors of sexual abuse and couples who are experiencing marital difficulties, unquote. The memo went on to explain how individuals needed to fall within one of the four mental health priority target groups. In other words, they also would need some sort of a diagnosis, otherwise they would not receive service.

Now, let me tell the minister the reason for asking this question. I would like to know, in the area of mental health services, if the minister sees a responsibility of the department to look at the whole area of counselling services for survivors of sexual abuse. Look at it in the sense of maybe it is not the department that ends up providing the services, but maybe it is the department that takes a lead in ensuring that there are services developed over a period of time to deal with these individuals.

I think as we move ahead in a mental health reform system—and there is no question that back as far as 1983 when we had the first reports on mental health that one of the principles has always been, those individuals in the greatest need should receive top priority for mental health services, however you want to define the greatest need. We oftentimes in government have defined that as people who have a mental illness which can be labelled or where there is a diagnosis. I think as we move ahead in reform and planning, whether we have the services in place now, we still want to be thinking about how do we develop a mental health system, not just a mental illness system. I am sure the minister and the staff have heard these issues before from community groups, but how do we start developing that so we are providing services where if early intervention for some of these individuals can mean not ending up being labelled

or diagnosed and not ending up receiving psychiatric care or even care in an institution?

By asking the question, I am not suggesting that the department must be all things to all people, but I do think there has to be recognition of the issue. I really do not believe the other departments are providing that service. I think the Minister of Health has an opportunity to take some leadership in this area. Again, I would like to see how we are going to move towards looking at some of these individuals who would receive or need these kinds of services.

Another group that I would mention is the homeless. Let us look at the homeless in Winnipeg. You talk to any police officer in the city of Winnipeg, and a lot of them will tell you that they think a lot of those homeless individuals have psychiatric difficulties. I do not even think the mental health system is dealing with those individuals.

There are a lot of changes to be made. I do not think we can expect to have solved all the problems in a short period of time. So my question is, what kinds of services are out there if people are calling us? Is there some kind of services for these individuals, and does the Minister of Health see a role in the area of mental health to work in the regionalized system to move towards some of these kinds of services where we are actually providing some early intervention services to people before they even get labelled as having a mental illness?

* (1540)

Mr. McCrae: There is nothing in what the honourable member has said with which I could possibly disagree, especially when you know, as I do, some people who are adults, molested as children, and when you talk to them, it does not take very long to understand the pain they have suffered for a very long time. So I understand that.

The early intervention comments made by the honourable member we take very seriously. I think it is incumbent on us to address those priority needs and then to reach out, and I think that this is the first opportunity that we have had in Manitoba even to contemplate the possibility of reaching out

because we have always been more or less swamped with the priority sorts of cases. Now that we are able to deliver more services to more people, I can see us moving in the direction the honourable member is saying we should.

I think that is one of the benefits that we are going to see of changes to our mental health services, a whole different way of looking at what we are trying to do. I can see as a positive result of all of these things that we will indeed be able to respond, as the years pass, far more positively to the questions the honourable member poses with respect to early intervention.

You only have to learn a little bit about the effects of these problems to know how long people will allow themselves to suffer before they will go and seek help, where early intervention, something proactive that says, come on in, there is help, we understand—if it is that kind of approach the honourable member is advocating, I can see the value in that, because imagine the pain that can be averted, and cost too. Ultimately, we are going to end up paying acute costs for some people where it could have been avoided. So certainly I agree.

With respect to the homeless, it is true. I have heard the same comment that a lot of these people need mental health services, and if they had those they would not be out there homeless and dishevelled and whatever circumstances, maybe abusing themselves with substances and so on.

I am not able there to say that we have made the kind of progress we would all like to see either. In fact, in some areas reform has produced more homeless and we are not interested in doing that. I am told that in New York, for example, the people living on the grates in the streets of New York have multiplied as they—

Mr. Martindale: There are 40,000 people.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member for Burrows uses the number 40,000. I do not know what the number is, but I understand that it is a large number and that it is a direct result of simply closing institutions without doing anything else. That is the model of mental health reform that we are striving to make sure we do not put into effect here in Manitoba. We do not want the homeless to

be the result of any of our policies and we do not expect that is going to be the case. Those who are homeless out there, in many cases it may be because nobody knows what their real problem is, and perhaps with assistance from other authorities in the whole system we can learn things.

Let me just put it this way. We look forward to a closer working relationship with the Main Street Project as well in this regard, and maybe our Health department working more closely with that service can learn how better to look after the homeless in Winnipeg.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for that information. I have a few questions on regionalization of Mental Health Services, but I just wanted to comment as well that certainly when we as opposition members meet with various community groups and organizations, there are always suggestions for how to do things better or suggestions for other services, expanded services, et cetera.

As part of our role in opposition, we are here to raise some of those issues, which I am sure the minister has heard as well, because he meets with the same groups and organizations. That is not to say that in the case of mental health reform that community groups out there do not feel that there have been positive steps made, because they do feel there have.

So I put that on the record so that the minister and his department are aware that these questions are not to point out all the gaps in services, because in any kind of system, 20 years from now we will still have gaps in services and probably new issues to deal with, but as long as we can be open-minded and start working towards how we achieve more services, not necessarily through direct government intervention, but by empowering communities and mobilizing communities.

That brings me to my next question in regard to the regionalization of the Mental Health Services and the various councils that were set up a number of years ago as part of this mental health reform. I am wondering if the minister could give an update as to where those various councils are in terms of actually—I guess my question is, without

necessarily referring to the regions specifically, although he may want to, where are they at as a council looking at actually getting a grip on what their own services are and where they want to move ahead in the next number of years?

Mr. McCrae: To lend weight to what the honourable member just said about evolution and the comments of various organizations and groups as we go along, just when you think you are ahead of the game, you are out announcing a whole bunch of new initiatives and you have a hall full of providers and consumers. When you stand before them and you open up the room for questioning, you find out where some of those gaps still exist. That is, I think, a very positive thing to happen. It points out what you have not done yet, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that, so I appreciate what the member said.

With respect to the regional mental health councils, they have been extremely important to us and to the whole system in making recommendations and in designing the things that we have announced and embarked on. It is so good to be able to have specialists and consumers on all of these councils because then you know, when you do go out to embark on something different or new, that you have support and that you are going to be able to make it work, even if it is not perfect. You are going to have help in making it better as you move through implementation.

Councils are still there, and in all of the regions where we have announced our plans, those councils are there to monitor the work that we do to carry forward with what we have announced and to assist us in making sure our crisis stabilization teams are going to be doing the work that was designed for them to do, that they are doing it well, effectively, and that we are not wasting a lot of resource, or that we are not working at cross-purposes.

I single out the crisis stabilization, but there are other services as well. Everything we do is in partnership with the councils, which in some cases have now become implementation councils in addition to being simply advisory councils.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, in the regionalization of Mental Health Services, I go back to the Welcome Home program which the former administration implemented. I cannot remember the years, early '80s or mid-'80s, where we moved to deinstitutionalize people with mental handicaps. Again, we worked to have individuals in the community involved in community councils. It was a good example of where a good idea did not get implemented very well.

One of the difficulties that arose with that program was at some point the community groups wanted to be empowered and actually have control of dollars and budgets and be making some decisions on that. I think before that got resolved the government fell, as I remember. So that was the end of that story in regard to that issue, and the community councils were disbanded.

In regard to the mental health regional councils, do they actually have access to budgets in terms of services that are going into their communities? Do the regional councils have access to budgets? Do they know the dollars that have been allocated for services in their communities and/or do they have any input into their suggestions or recommendations for services and dollar allocations within their regions?

* (1550)

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, without commenting on the success or failure of a previous project, I think there is total empowerment, which takes the government right out of the picture, or there is partnership, which allows all the parties to come together. We have been able to achieve a fair amount through the partnership approach, and when it comes to budgets and dollars and input in those kinds of things, the councils are aware of how much money the government is able to make available for them to carry out their work, and we work accordingly.

There are those, like the honourable member, whose rightful role is to ask what is going on in the rest of the department and how the spending is being done and whether we should have taken more or less or not. I think there is a sense sometimes though with some people that there is

never enough; maybe that is what it is. I do not know who the honourable member might have in mind; I do not know who I have in mind either, but there are some people who will always be pressing for more funding to be made available, and then there are more reasonable people around who know that funding is a finite matter.

So I think that the budgets that are struck for the councils and the work they do is the subject of discussion, and budgets are arrived at that way. So I think there is a fair amount of sharing of information in this partnership approach, and the proof is in the pudding, the proof is in what we have been able to do. We have not been stalled in our tracks with regard to the reform of Mental Health Services; we have been able to make progress. The partners have been there from start to finish.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the minister may have answered this question in his comments, but just to clarify, for instance, when we get into the budget process for the next year, '95-96, will the regional mental health councils be sitting down with departmental representatives and actually making some recommendations for budgets within their own regions in terms of what exists now and where they would like to see changes to that? Will they actually be doing that?

Let me, before the minister responds, ask that question, because it is still coming back to me from some sectors of the community that some of the councils do not feel that they have enough involvement in the actual decision-making process. They feel that they have been there as advisory councils, but not necessarily to be part of the decision making. It may come down to a philosophy in terms of, will these mental health councils be there as advisories, or will they actually become empowered groups, where, along with government staff, they will be starting to make some decisions in terms of the needs of the community?

It gets back to the same issue of regionalization of other health services that we have talked about before, where you really take a geographical area of the province and look at forms of councils based

on individuals who live and work in the area and give them some autonomy in terms of looking at the needs of their area, keeping in mind government direction, government priorities and what minimum standards are in certain areas of service.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, when you enter into arrangements whereby you genuinely seek the input of those who are involved already in the system in one way or another, there is a creative tension, I suggest, that can develop. I think it is healthy that that happens, that we challenge each other. The government is certainly challenged by this process. We walked into that quite wide awake to that prospect.

I think you have to give some credit to people like Reg Toews, for example, who has quite successfully steered this process through. He is still fairly well-regarded amongst the people in the mental health community and that is—I am trying not to overstate the case, Reg, because you would blush or something like that and I do not want that to happen—but the issue of autonomy is clearly an issue of judgment.

Now the honourable member may divest as much authority or more than I would or a little less, and so it is going to be a question of how much of that do you do? Budgets must remain ultimately the preserve of this Legislature and the government to bring forward budgets. So I can understand asking someone to get involved in helping us design new ways of delivering mental health services. Some people in the group are going to say, well yes, but you have to give us more money than you are giving us, and we are going to have to respond, well, no, these are the dollars that we are able to make available.

So that kind of tension, I suggest, is a very natural by-product of this whole process and ought not to become such a great concern that we abandon the whole idea. I am not prepared to do that.

I believe the greater levels of autonomy will be achieved throughout the regionalized system of health delivery on that other front that we have talked about dealing with setting up regional

associations for the delivery of the whole range of health care services. As that is done, those involved in the delivery of mental health services are also going to be part of that process, and when that time comes I suspect we will see more autonomy than we see today, but even then though, the government will have to make decisions about how many dollars will go into each envelope because that is the role that we play here in the Legislature.

Ms. Gray: I am still not quite clear though from the Minister how the minister views the regional mental health councils. Are they there in an advisory capacity or will they actually be given more of a decision-making role in terms of looking at budgets and directing services, and I ask that question too because I do not know whether that has been made clear to them or whether there are just some community groups who they know that is the case, but do not happen to support that, so they want to offer another alternative or would like to see a change in terms of the role of regional mental health councils.

Mr. McCrae: Initially, Madam Chairperson, the answer is advisory, in the sense that the empowerment is incomplete. At a later time, when we have regional health associations, it is going to depend on the make-up of each association. I do not have it all clearly in my mind what those associations are going to look like. If I did, then I should not bother asking people to work so hard to devise governing structures for the future for the various regions.

* (1600)

To the extent that mental health people will be involved in those regional associations or regional governing councils, that remains to be seen. We fully expect that mental health services will be a key part of the whole continuum in the future, so we will want to encourage that those involved in the delivery and in the receipt of mental health services maintain the position that they have built for themselves in recent years in terms of having a say.

That is what it comes down to, having a say. We want them to be part of those structures. Exactly

what that is going to look like at this point, nobody knows.

Ms. Gray: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I thank the minister for that clarification.

One of the other issues that has been raised by some of the community groups in regard to the partnership that now exists between government and community in relation to the mental health councils and other committees that are ongoing—this is a concern that probably does not just fall within Mental Health but has been an ongoing problem in a number of programs and services throughout a number of departments for many many years—is the role of some of the other departments, such as Justice, Education, Family Services and their involvement, sort of, with the process, and how they tie into what is going on in health and mental health services.

For instance, one of the examples that was suggested to me was that, if you happen to be involved with probation services as an individual, you perhaps cannot access mental health services. I am not sure if that is the case or not, but traditionally we have sometimes tried to compartmentalize people and have one group dealing with their criminal behaviour, as an example, one group dealing with their mental health, another group dealing with another issue, et cetera.

Could the minister comment on sort of what steps are in place to try to get people who are involved in those other areas—Family Services, Education, not necessarily just departmental staff, but community groups and professionals in the community involved in looking at sort of the whole spectrum of health services, mental health, which is only one component.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, this is the subject of many discussions that I have been involved in at the level of the Human Services Committee of Cabinet, for example, where the various human services departments and their ministers gather to discuss issues just like the one the honourable member has identified here.

I think, by way of an important example, I could refer to recent developments with regard to child

and adolescent services. We have announced that we are going to have a centre for adolescent treatment, and there is going to be an advisory committee which will help guide the activities of that clinic as well as the Child and Adolescent Mental Services generally, and that committee is composed of various departments, including Family Services, Health, Justice, Education, so that we have made a start in that direction to bring some co-ordination to these things.

I think it was the Reid inquest, the St. Boniface tragedy, that really pointed graphically to the need for better co-ordination between the various departments, and I believe this is an important start in the area of child and adolescent mental health services that we can bring a more holistic approach to things. We need to do that, I acknowledge, in the areas of services provided to adults as well.

Sometimes I think it is easier to do in rural Manitoba where, in fact probably is easier to do in rural Manitoba or easier to change our thinking in that regard when, you know, the one building, sometimes one office services more than one department, and that is not inappropriate, certainly in rural Manitoba.

There are times in urban life that I think that we over the past, especially during the '70s and '80s when money was so easy to come by, we saw a problem and we built a program to match the needs presented by that problem. Then after 20 years you stand back and you have a look at, my goodness, what have we created here, and we have created very many agencies, government and otherwise, that ultimately end up with less co-ordination than would be desirable.

So sometimes I think the honourable member should come over and sit on this side of the House because we agree on so many things.

Ms. Gray: Or vice versa. [interjection] When the minister says it never occurred to him, I know exactly what you mean.

One of the principles that is talked about in this mental health reform is a move towards mental health prevention and mental health promotion. It is given the types of projects and where we are moving right now in mental health reform, and it is

not probably a top priority in terms of what we have seen so far in the kinds of services or changes in mental health. I say that as a comment, not necessarily as a criticism. I would ask the minister, what over the next couple of years does his department see in terms of where they want to go with mental health prevention and mental health promotion?

Are there any committees that are specifically developed or have been put in place to look at this very issue, or do we have perhaps some work that has already been done by the Health Advisory Networks who I believe some of their committees talked about mental health promotion?

Perhaps the minister could comment on that whole area.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, you might characterize the stage we are at as the beginnings perhaps of the recognition of the value and the need for promotional and preventive areas of mental health services. Maybe this is the reason I have some problems with this area myself, because getting a firm understanding of what people mean when they talk about mental health promotion and prevention, amongst primary, secondary and tertiary mental health service providers, the debate rages on with respect to prevention and promotion. I think that with mental health as well as with a physical health situation—you can always promote good diet and you can always promote safe water systems and all of those things which, through one means or another, can find their way into mental health problems if you do not look after those things.

* (1610)

Certainly we have provided money to the self-help organizations, and those self-help groups promote their services and promote a wellness sort of model of mental health in our society. They promote through the schools with the use of professionals. They do visit the schools with promotional messages. Promotion and prevention has been on the agenda of the provincial mental health advisory committee now for some time, and that means it is still the subject of debate. So I am not sure I am going to be the one to take this thing

all by myself too far down the road without the help of all of my partners, which I am glad to have those partners.

I think we are making some inroads with regard to child and adolescent treatment functions and activities in those areas, but I think there is much yet to do in that area.

Ms. Gray: The self-help groups that are organized, a lot of them out in rural areas, and I see a lot of them have received funding through Mental Health Services, can the minister give me a bit more information on the nature of these self-help groups and how they were formed?

I ask that because I had thought that some of the self-help groups in Winnipeg were formed as a result of groups of people who had found themselves with a particular mental illness, such as schizophrenia or manic depression, and so some of these organizations and groups had formed. I know those groups exist.

In regard to the other self-help groups and some of these groups that have funding that the minister has identified, can he tell us a bit about the nature of those organizations and who is on those self-help groups, and do they represent any particular target groups within Mental Health Services, or are they just a group of concerned individuals, or any information that he could provide?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, just for the honourable member's information, in 1991-92, the commitment from the government to self-help organizations amounted to \$37,500, and in 1994-95 the government's commitment amounts to \$980,000, so a fairly significant change in thrust in that regard.

The self-help organizations are primarily, the ones the honourable member mentioned, the Schizophrenia Society, the Depression and Manic Depression Society, the Anxiety Disorder Association of Manitoba, and those are illness-specific, if you like, organizations, although I am not sure how specific they really are, because I do not think they turn people away if people come to them. But there is another one that is more general in nature called the Manitoba

Mental Health Network, which is not specific in naming a particular condition.

However, I think that when we have located—I remember being involved in some discussions in Brandon when we located three of those organizations in one office, and many of the people there agreed with me. Well, it was not me that first said it, but agreed with the point that sometimes, these conditions, one can lead to another if certain circumstances come together.

These organizations are made up of consumers, former consumers, family members, friends, interested parties, those kinds of people come together to attempt to provide assistance to each other and to others who might come forward seeking assistance.

The reason for having offices is that kind of objective you can achieve through promotion and prevention as we have discussed, but also to make it a little easier, I think, for people to seek help when we try to make these offices accessible and, well, cordial also to people who come forward without judgments being made or anything like that, or a stigma being attached to people coming to visit. Those are some of the principles behind the operation of the self-help centres.

I am not talking about new money. We are talking about redirected money, but certainly that emphasis is changing towards more support for self-help.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the minister referred to earlier the new staff years, I guess, that are being allocated for child and adolescent services. Now, correct me if I am wrong, but did that recommendation in terms of a move towards those kinds of co-ordinated services come from the child and adolescent committee that was struck as part of mental health reform?

* (1620)

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Madam Chairperson.

Ms. Gray: Is that committee still functioning in terms of looking at the whole plethora of other issues that affect children and adolescents?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Madam Chairperson, the answer is in the affirmative, and they are assisting

in the further development of policy direction, and implementation has been moved forward.

Ms. Gray: Will this group be looking at some of the issues related to fetal alcohol syndrome? I see a relationship here of children in care or even who are at home with parents who are FAS children. Although some of them may not have a psychiatric diagnosis, certainly they have a number of conduct disorder problems or behavioural problems. Is that in the mandate at all of this particular committee?

Mr. McCrae: Again, this is a little bit difficult because we know that young people with fetal alcohol syndrome will ultimately, who knows how many, but will end up being served by or helped by our programs in various departments but certainly in this one as well.

One of the problems that we have, and I am recalling discussions I had with people whose brains are scrambled by substance abuse or, you know, the sniffing, some of those brains cannot get fixed as a result of the damage that is done to them. Those are areas of gaps, and it is a pretty hopeless kind of feeling one gets even though we know there are some things we can do, but they fall short of a total cure for all of the problems that people have—the gaps of people with unmet needs. They are just never going to get better. They are never going to be ordinary normal human beings with the kinds of chances of happiness or success that people who do not have those problems have. Those gaps, those needs are not ever going to be totally and completely met, that is, with the science that exists today.

Hopefully that science will change, and maybe we will find ways to restore damaged brain cells and things like that. I do not know that today that is possible. So that is a problem that we have when we allow expectations, my own included, expectations to be built up to a level that we are not going to be able to meet, and that is sad.

This is why we have to go back to the discussions we had earlier in which the honourable member asked so many questions, very appropriately I suggest, when it came to early intervention.

I see in today's *Globe and Mail* there is a story about, and I think it is similar to something I said in the House the other day, that intervention can work for kids before the age of three. I mean that tells you how much happens to a person's life in the first year or two that is determinative of what kind of quality of life or even length of life that person is going to have.

So that is why all of those other questions the member asked about the services provided in communities, and targeting need and focusing, and public health nurses, and all of the various services we provide—the more we can deal with issues like abuse, and we have talked about that too, something that can enrich the childhood lives of our fellow Manitobans. It does not just make special kids out of them, it does not make special treatment. It is not that, because we save our society a lot of headaches for a long time to come if we can do right by those youngsters who come into this world. It is not very often their own fault that they find themselves in such unfortunate circumstances. In fact, it is the negligence of other people that they find themselves in such circumstances, or the outright stupidity of other people that they end up with ruined lives.

I am sorry to burden the honourable member with that, but it certainly is an observation that needs to be made from time to time that the more we do sooner, the better. The honourable member talked about that a while ago.

Ms. Gray: The minister has talked about redirected dollars. Perhaps we can go back a bit and look at the move to have services in the community as opposed to necessarily in the institution.

I should know the answer to this, but if the minister could refresh my memory about how many psychiatric beds in the province of Manitoba have been closed to date. Is there any plan to have any further beds closed over the next number of years?

Mr. McCrae: Well, the honourable member's question takes me on quite a trip around Manitoba to talk about what has been happening. Initially, in responding to the member for Burrows (Mr.

Martindale), I made some comments. There were 65 beds closed in Winnipeg. Ultimately, at the end of the process there will be 200 closed at Brandon Mental Health Centre, which is the hospital closing down. That has made it possible for us to move forward with announcing the opening of 10 acute beds in Thompson, Manitoba. Those people who will be occupying those beds used to have to get on an airplane or whatever and come to Winnipeg. Eight in The Pas, 10 in Dauphin, 25 in Brandon, eight in Portage. This does not include, I do not think, the 100 psychogeriatric beds at Rideau Park, for example, in Brandon. Several years ago that was done, and that replaced 100 beds at Brandon Mental Health Centre, but that is a separate issue.

We have created through this process 125 jobs in rural Manitoba, 230 jobs rural and Winnipeg combined. It is hard for me to say how many jobs were lost with the closure of those 65 beds because of the way things work in the hospitals and depending on how many vacancies there were and so on at the time, and how many were laid off and how many were redirected into other areas of health care delivery. We are left with 18 child and adolescent beds. We are left with 149 general adult psychiatric beds in Winnipeg. That is sort of a bed count for you. But you can see that we are taking in one area and putting them somewhere else.

* (1630)

By the way, the numbers I have referred to are outside any discussion of the redirection at Brandon Mental Health Centre. I did refer to 200 beds there which are separate from the number of positions that will be created, that I have talked about having been created already. That is a whole other area, the Brandon Mental Health Centre project. It is a little bit confusing, but it tells you what is happening in various communities.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the 65 beds in Winnipeg—a number of those were certainly at the Misericordia Hospital and the other hospitals in Winnipeg—is there a process in place that has been used to monitor the impact of the closing of those psychiatric beds? Could the minister share with us that process and any impacts that have

been felt negatively and, if so, how they have been corrected?

Mr. McCrae: There are a number of ways to monitor the performance of our psychiatric services in hospitals, as a result of the closure of 65 beds. I think one of the more effective ones is going to be the bed utilization committee that we hope will help us integrate and co-ordinate the use of the bed capacity that exists throughout the city of Winnipeg.

I frankly do not think in the past that the hospitals in Winnipeg have been well enough in tune with each other, so that while we might hear of a pile-up or a waiting line or a jam-up or whatever at one hospital, that might have happened while there was capacity somewhere else and nobody knew enough to use it. That to me tells me there is room for improvement there. It does not mean, as some people suggest, that you just keep opening more beds, because for a peak day at St. Boniface, for example, if you have five people waiting for a bed, you open five psychiatric beds and leave them open, that is ridiculous. That is what our friends in the New Democratic Party are constantly suggesting we do, that we build a capacity that would be there to handle three plane crashes and two train crashes and four bus collisions all at the same time every day, and that is the kind of capacity we should have in our hospitals. Well, the people do not support that, and the NDP will find that out in due course.

The bed utilization committee, however, to me represents the best hope of getting a better handle on how to use the beds that we have. It was decided, after much analysis, that 65 beds could safely be removed from the system with other developments going on, and I can see how that decision would have been arrived at. However, now we are using the bed utilization committee services which has representation from the hospitals, from the nursing profession, from physicians and from Mental Health. I think that is the best hope, to have a well-managed bed utilization regime going on here in Winnipeg.

* (1640)

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, what are some of the issues that this committee has identified in terms of barriers to effective bed utilization within the city?

Mr. McCrae: The committee will be gathering data, and is gathering data right now, and will be looking at several important dimensions of the issue. There was a consultant who was used to assist in determining what was the appropriate number of beds to be taken out of the system in the first place, and the evidence was that length-of-stay issues were the reason for the ability to do that, and length of stay will also be a part of the discussion of the bed utilization committee. Level of acuity, of course, is an important factor. The shortfalls or otherwise of discharge planning in our hospitals and, very, very importantly, the practice patterns of physicians will be brought into the discussion. All these things will no doubt be dealt with when that committee makes recommendations as to what to do next.

We will not leave the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation out of all of this. They will have a role to play. I think that the medical profession will play a key role in the committee and in the resolution of the problem. The honourable member and I might have exactly the same psychiatric condition and we might visit two separate psychiatrists, and the honourable member for her problems will be hospitalized for three days, and I have exactly the same problem and I will be hospitalized for one day. That has a lot to do with the problem too, as the honourable member will understand.

So if you look at all of those things and you get the right people looking at it such that you come up with the recommendations that can enjoy the support of others, then we can have a realistic prospect of addressing whatever problems remain.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the minister refers to discharge planning and length of stay as well as an issue that this committee is dealing with. I would imagine if the health system was able to effectively do discharge planning throughout the system in this province in all programs, we would probably be saving millions of dollars a year alone

by addressing that one issue, albeit a complex issue.

It has been suggested to me that in regard to length of stay and discharge planning that we perhaps do not have the system in tune enough, that hospitals, particularly in the city of Winnipeg, were not doing discharge planning not necessarily appropriately but soon enough. In other words, there may be individuals who are sitting in hospital beds at Health Sciences Centre, as an example, possibly St. Boniface. If in fact discharge planning was underway, there could be services either that are already in the community or they could be developed for an individual, and they could be moved out of the hospital so that those beds would be opened up for someone who presents an emergency, who actually does need to be admitted.

Can the minister indicate what are we doing to facilitate the discharge planning? Who is actually making the decisions, and where does the accountability lie to ensure that the individuals who are currently utilizing psychiatric beds are, in fact, individuals who require those beds and could not be independent in the community with some other supports?

Mr. McCrae: This is a matter that requires the attention of hospitals, physicians and our Mental Health division of our department, and those people have all accepted, I believe, the responsibility to examine the issues and their own practices.

The honourable member is sure right when she points out that all of us owe it to those who may someday arrive at the emergency room and very badly need a hospital bed and it is not available because somebody is still in a hospital because nobody used the proper judgment in getting discharge planning done.

It is not good enough to say, well, just leave the capacity there in the hospital, because most of the time that is not appropriate and not necessary. There are those who very, very much press for excess capacity in our hospitals, and I mean excess, excess, beyond that which should reasonably be used. Those are notably the members of the New Democratic Party and those

who are paying for commercial space on television to press for a system that will choke our health care system to death if it were followed. We know they would not do it, because we know what New Democrats do elsewhere. We know that the New Democrats in Manitoba are not different. They have not got any money. They would not have any money if they were ever given the chance to govern again. They would not have any money to do what they pretend to defend every day here. Yet when we ask them for their proposals, they are silent. They have nothing to offer except the tired old slogans of 25 years ago that said build more and spend more and build more and spend more and hire more and tax more, and deprive our children of a future.

That is not on with this government, and it would not be on should the New Democrats somehow ever find themselves on this side of the House again. It would not work out that way, because we know what they would do. They would do what New Democrats do elsewhere when backed into a corner. They hack and they slash and they cut and they chop and they sever and they amputate. Their surgery is the kind of surgery that Manitobans have been spared because of the phased approach that we have been using here in Manitoba for the past few years.

So the answer to the honourable member's questions, I hope, will come forward as we continue to work with committees like the bed utilization committee, when the Manitoba Medical Association agreement is put into effect, and we have the efforts of the medical services council to give us advice on issues relating to the practice of medicine in this province. Certainly the arguments we hear about retention of status quo and build bigger hospitals and employ more staff and have more union bosses and all of those things that work against the quality health care that we want to have in Manitoba, those people are not helping with the debate on health care in Manitoba. In fact, they are helping so little that no one is paying attention to them any more.

That is where we are at. Those who have a positive contribution to make, we want to have that

contribution. We invite New Democrats to the table; they do not come. We invite the nurses' union to the table; they do not come. They do not want to help us build a quality, sustainable health care system for the future. At a time when we need their help, they are simply refusing. They simply seek power for whatever they want to do with it. I do not know, except we would be very unfortunate if we ever found out, because we know what they do in other provinces.

* (1650)

Ms. Gray: When an individual goes into hospital in a psychiatric bed, is there sort of a plan that as soon as that person is admitted that a certain group of people get together and actually start a discharge plan process? I know they try to do that with the Home Care program.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Madam Chairperson, but not everywhere, and therein lives are challenged. That is why we have this bed utilization committee, to try to bring them all around the same table.

Ms. Gray: I want to talk a little about some dollar figures in terms of the shift that has been made from the institutional side to the community side in the mental health area. I think in 1990-91 fiscal year, these are the government's figures, in the institutional sector the department was spending approximately 87 percent, 88 percent in the institutional sector and that in the remaining sector, we were spending about 12 percent. Has that percentage of dollars spent in institutional versus noninstitutional, has there been much shift since 1991?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, as you can see, the Department of Health has been undergoing some reorganization, and we have taken in a new senior official at the Department of Health, so new he has not even got his previous clothes off yet.

I do not have that percentage precisely for the honourable member today. She is right that, in the past, 87 percent was dollars spent in institutions. I can tell the honourable member this though, that of the monies redirected thus far in Manitoba which we have talked about and attached figures to, 80 percent of the redirected dollars are redirected to the community so that when I talked about

Thompson, The Pas, Dauphin, Brandon and Portage hospitals providing the acute care, that only accounts for 20 percent of the redirected dollars. Eighty percent of the redirected is to the community.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I would like to give the Minister of Health some information that has been compiled by the Canadian Mental Health Association which I think of the departmental figures in terms of institutional versus noninstitutional, and it goes to 1990-91—I would be interested to know if the department could, when we resume in Estimates tomorrow, give us an idea of the breakdown that is current for '94-95 or '93-94.

Mr. McCrae: We are pleased to have the information the honourable member is tabling. We will look at it and see if we are able to comply with her request.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I believe there is a resolution as well that was passed at the provincial mental health advisory group, which had asked for some of that information just as an update to see if we are moving more towards the community-based services and moving away from institutions.

Just as a comment on the bed closures and a question: With the number of beds that we have closed, and I certainly support the move to close some of the beds and move to community-based services, has our per capita bed ratio moved more in line with other provinces or are we still high, because Manitoba was very high before these changes in bed allocation?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, it depends where you are talking about, but certainly as a province, a provincial average, we were on the high side when it comes to bed ratios. That again is an issue for the New Democrats to look at as they are developing their policy, which I know they have not developed yet with regard to health care.

It cannot be said the same for rural Manitoba, because we were on the low side there. But because of the way our province is uniquely a city-state, as the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) sometimes says, we were well above in

the averages here in the city of Winnipeg. So that leaves us still on the higher side as far as averages go.

You can show people in the most graphic ways that you have too many beds, and they will somehow cling to the belief that a bed is something that you never touch, that you do not touch. Yet in New Democratic jurisdictions, one of the reasons we are still high even after the bed closures in Manitoba is that the cuts in other provinces go so deep in New Democratic provinces. The cuts go so deep that we would not dream of trying to keep up with that kind of hacking and slashing that goes on in New Democratic jurisdictions.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, in terms of redirected dollars, the minister had indicated early on in the Estimates that there was some \$2,956,000 which had been redirected to Winnipeg mental health acute care alternatives. Can the minister indicate what exactly is involved in that sum of money?

Mr. McCrae: I could give the honourable member the long answer or the short one, but since we have only got a minute, it looks like it is going to be the short one. The Salvation Army Crisis Stabilization Unit is a six-bed expansion to become a 22-bed crisis stabilization unit. During calendar year 1993 that facility handled 767 admissions, 401 men and 366 women. During the month of December '93 the facility handled a total of 71 admissions, 33 women and 38 men.

Sara Riel has a new eight-bed Crisis Stabilization Unit which I had the privilege and opportunity to visit. Between its opening date on July of 1993 and the end of March 1994, the Sara Riel Unit handled 354 admissions, 138 men and 216 women. With respect to Mobile Crisis Services, the Salvation Army employs 11 staff in this and between May 1993, which was when it began, and March of '94, the service had 9,002 contacts, with a total of 2,181 individuals in crisis situations. There is more, but it appears we will have to address that on a subsequent occasion.

* (1700)

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

Order, please. It is my understanding that a recorded vote has been requested in the other section of Committee of Supply.

Report

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Deputy Chairperson of Committees): Madam Chairperson, a motion was moved in the House by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and the motion was defeated. A recorded vote was requested by the honourable member for Inkster, and the other member was there.

Formal Vote

Madam Chairperson: In the other section of Committee of Supply during the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training 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 Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 considering the Estimates of the Department of Education, a motion was moved by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). The motion reads:

I move that this committee recommend to the House that this committee postpone the Education Estimates as suggested by the Minister of Education until the minister tables the ACCESS report.

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 Inkster.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 7, Nays 43.

Madam Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated. Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? Six o'clock.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 17, 1994

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