



Second Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*



Vol. LI No. 30 - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 15, 2001

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupert Island	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 15, 2001

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Michael Teriaco, Rose Cipriano, Shelley Wilson and others, praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Selinger) consider alternative routes for the additional 230kV and 500kV lines proposed for the R.M. of East St. Paul.

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of R. Haas, C. Polanski, Deb Brown and others, praying that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Anne Juskow, Valerie Strong, Jeannine Robert and others, praying that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Terry Hartling, Wayne Sperry, W. Henselwood and others, praying that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) consider his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the R.M. of East St. Paul has the highest concentration of high voltage power lines in a residential area in Manitoba; and

THAT the R.M. of East St. Paul is the only jurisdiction in Manitoba that has both a 500kV and a 230kV line directly behind residences; and

THAT numerous studies have linked cancer, in particular childhood leukemia, to the proximity of power lines.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro consider alternative routes for the additional 230kV and 500kV lines proposed for the R.M. of East St. Paul.

* (13:35)

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), I have reviewed the petition. It complies with the rules and the practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause

approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mr. Conrad Santos (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of the evolving future, may I make my report for the Committee of Supply. 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 Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Red River College of Applied Arts, Science and Technology 1999-2000 Annual Report.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2001-2002, Departmental Expenditure Estimates for Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, also Manitoba Community Support programs, as well as Manitoba Sport.

* (13:40)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 10—The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that leave be given to introduce Bill 10, The Safer

Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des collectivités et des quartiers et modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Administrator, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table the Administrator's message.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, this bill replaces The Community Protection Act. It establishes a swifter, less complicated, safer and less costly scheme to help people who believe that property in their neighbourhood or community is being continuously or habitually used for such things as prostitution, the unlicensed sale of alcohol, the sale or use of illegal drugs, and the illegal sale or use of other intoxicating substances.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Pam Smith, visiting from the Isle of Wight, England, accompanied by Cathy Shipley of Winnipeg. They are the guests of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Arena/Entertainment Complex
Business Plan**

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, yesterday there was an exciting announcement by the True North group talking about the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

An Honourable Member: The great free enterprise party over there.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Murray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, from what we understand, the private sector is a driving force to help revitalize downtown—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you we are always delighted on this side of the House when that side of the House recognizes the importance of the private sector.

With the announcement that the private sector was driving the True North project and understanding that the taxpayers of Manitoba are making a contribution towards True North, I wondered if I could ask the Premier if the Premier has looked at and studied the True North business plan.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the Leader of the Opposition is supporting the proposal today. I think that that is an excellent suggestion.

The members opposite have claimed that the Crocus Fund was going to be guaranteed by up to \$50 million by the Government of Manitoba. That was wrong. The member from Fort Whyte claimed that the Crocus Investment Fund was illegal. That was wrong.

We are pleased, as the Leader of the Opposition has indicated, that the business plan and the plan of the public sector—and we are still working on all the legal documents—the framework agreement has been released publicly. There is still a considerable amount of work on the legal documents, including, as the members opposite will know, on community access.

We think the Leader of the Opposition is now on board. We think it is good for downtown Winnipeg, and that is good for the province of Manitoba.

* (13:45)

Business Plan—Tabling Request

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I think at this point Manitobans are quite sure because they think, unlike in '95, that the new Premier is in fact in support of this arena, unlike the way he was against the last one.

My question then to the Premier is: When he has access to look at the business plan, would he table that for the House?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, in 1995 the members opposite will be aware that, prior to April 26, 1995, the public was told that there would be a \$30-million investment when in fact we found out on January 10, 1995, there was an \$85-million request for public money. Subsequent to that, it was over \$100 million of public money plus issues of the operating loss agreement. This is a completely different time and a completely different agreement. It is a completely different agreement, and I think it is important for us to turn the page from 1995, because I think if they turn the page and get beyond the 1995 proposal they could actually take a stand. Instead of being nowhere on this issue, they could actually take a stand for revitalizing downtown Winnipeg and being positive.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Doer: Well, maybe members opposite need an opposition plan. They come into the House last week and say that the Crocus Fund investment was illegal. When are we going to get an apology from the Leader of the Opposition on that point?

Provincial Contribution

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): I am somewhat concerned as to why the rantings and the ravings of the Premier. I am just simply asking a question.

I would just ask the Premier quite simply—and he does not have to shout; I am just across the way here. But my question simply to the Premier is: Could the Premier verify that the total provincial financial contribution—and I hope

they listen because this is important, and we do not want Manitobans misinterpreting what his response is. I am just simply asking: Can we verify that the total provincial financial contribution is made up of \$10 million of infrastructure money, \$3 million of tax relief and a cap of \$1.5 million annually in VLT revenues for 25 years?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): One of the most important parts of this agreement is the whole issue of public risk for either cost overruns on the capital side or operating overruns on the facility. Some of the issues of the 50 VLTs are well known in the public. Yesterday there was some release of information on the property tax issue. It is dissimilar to the MEC proposal in '95 where it was proposed that no property taxes be paid. So that point was missing from the member's question, and the other facts have been out in the public. All the public issues, when all in contract form should be released and made public.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Highways Capital Program Approval

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans recognize that while we have and are blessed with a very short summer season, it is simply without compare, and we are very proud of that. Unfortunately, with the short summer comes a very short construction season, something I think that the Doer government fails to recognize.

The headline of a Manitoba heavy construction industry news release sums it up, as well as I believe the clipping from the *Brandon Sun*: Manitoba construction industry facing work shortage. I think our question simply is to the Premier when I make a reference as well, if I could, to Manitoba's *Heavynews*, and I quote a Mr. Jack Wiebe. He says: I have a small company, 30 or 40 employees. Right now, I only have three or four. It is very difficult to plan. The season is short anyway. June is usually rainy, so July and August are the only good months. If we are not organized by June we are

in a very difficult situation. So my question to the Premier is: Why is the Premier delaying the approval of the Highways capital program?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I would refer the Leader of the Opposition to the Highways budget.

Mr. Murray: I hope that the Premier understands the difference between the budget and the tendering process. Mr. Speaker, with tendering not getting underway until June or July, much needed work on Manitoba's highways may not occur until late July or early August. In the meantime, 75 percent of the construction workforce is remaining idle and in some cases, according to Zenith Paving, and I quote: Half the workforce has already gone to Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier, through his inaction, endangering the employment of an industry that employs, Mr. Speaker, in excess of 10 000 Manitobans directly or indirectly?

* (13:50)

Mr. Doer: When I was in Brandon last week at the Chamber of Commerce luncheon there were announcements that tenders were already out on a number of key intersections: Braecrest Drive, with its intersection on Highway 10; another number of intersections that were crucial for Highway 10 that require work, \$10 million. I understand there have been some tenders let already. I understand another set of tenders is going to be let tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, the articles that the member is quoting mentioned that the private sector capital investment is on level with previous years. There has been a greater due diligence on a number of issues in the public sector on capital. One of the changes we made, that the Leader of the Opposition should be aware, the Provincial Auditor did not certify the books in '98 and '99. One of the reasons for that was interfund transfers of money. The second reason for that was not proper accounting of capital decisions that were made in the Estimates, made in the Budget and not accounted in the deficit in terms of a pay-back plan. So we want to make sure. We recognize the industry is very, very important.

Here we are in the first question getting criticized about proceeding with the entertainment complex in downtown Winnipeg, which will create close to 1600 jobs and indirect jobs in construction. We have Red River community college proceeding. We want to proceed on the floodway, on highways, on carefully constructed health care investments. We have a higher than normal improvement and renovation in education. I think it is a good, balanced approach to our construction needs in Manitoba. I will answer more with his third question.

Mr. Murray: There are delays in the highway capital program, the infrastructure program and the community ring dike program, Mr. Speaker. While the Premier is busy trying to build a legacy, he is ignoring the day-to-day workforce that exists in Manitoba. He is making life difficult for the construction industry in terms of making equipment and the personnel decisions.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit today to immediately addressing the situation before the entire construction industry and the entire construction season is written off and employees and companies have gone elsewhere to look for work?

Mr. Doer: In the article the Leader of the Opposition quotes, it quotes that the private sector investment is at comparable levels to previous years. Mr. Speaker, we have made a number of announcements on capital spending in the province of Manitoba. Some of those have been announced and have been tendered. Other announcements, and I mentioned Highways, as I understand it has had a number of tenders already issued. I mentioned Brandon. I mentioned also in the second question posed by the Leader of the Opposition that other tenders will be let in Highways tomorrow.

Flood protection is proceeding. I was in Rosenort. It is 80 percent completed, 90 percent completed. Ring dikes in Emerson are being tendered. The completion of a ring dike in Emerson is in the Budget, Mr. Speaker. We have other work we are doing in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out also that we are restoring some of the money that was cut by members opposite in the drainage budgets, and we are going to have money in the

Intergovernmental Affairs budget, the Conservation budget and the Highways budget to reverse the terrible decisions of the past on drainage. Lastly, for example, at the University of Manitoba alone, a huge deficit of infrastructure, we have announced a \$100-million program: \$50 million from the private sector, \$50 million from the public sector. Again, we do not believe that it is the right message for the future to have a roof that leaks at the Engineering Faculty. We are going to change that.

Flood Prone Areas Property Buyouts

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I asked questions about the status of the buyout for the 28 property owners of Greenview and St. Mary's roads, south of the floodway. The Minister of Conservation erroneously stated, and I quote: We are over 50 percent completed on the work.

Could the Minister of Conservation please update this House today as to the actual status of the buyout and when these property owners might reasonably expect to have this matter settled?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I stand by the response that I gave to the member a couple of weeks ago.

* (13:55)

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question: Could the Minister of Conservation confirm today that nothing has changed and that only four of the twenty-eight property owners have had their buyouts finalized?

Mr. Lathlin: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Dacquay: Could the Minister of Conservation please explain to this House and these property owners why it is taking so long to resolve this matter?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I can indicate to the member that ever since we have been in government we have worked with these people. I know when we got into government, as I

explained to the member once already, we developed a grid to try to determine which projects had been completed, which projects were yet to be completed and we gave a status report for each project. As soon as we were finished with that report, we started sharing that information with the communities and individuals affected, and that is how we have worked ever since we have taken over the file. We have tried our very best to make sure that the work was moving along, and I think we have made some real progress.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Seine River, on a new question.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Speaker, on a new question, I am absolutely appalled at the answers the minister has given and I am certain the homeowners will be as well.

Could the Minister of Conservation please tell this House and the 28 property owners when he last met with these residents?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I believe the member is referring to those individuals residing on St. Mary's Road, Greenview Road and the Houghton Road, with respect to the voluntary buyouts.

Mr. Speaker, there were 22 residential properties at one time, 24 agricultural properties and 14 vacant lots were on St. Mary's Road, as well as on Greenview Road and the Houghton Road. It was originally agreed that the buyout would occur for those 22 residential properties at a cost of some \$5.5 million, and then it was later agreed—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Premier (Mr. Doer). Given that he has indicated he wants to buy out these residents to accommodate the widening of the floodway, why has he not resolved this issue so that we can get on with resolving the floodway issue?

Mr. Lathlin: With respect to the purchase of the agricultural land under the voluntary buyout, additional resources were identified, which

brought the budget up to \$6.6 million, to also buy the vacant agricultural lots that were pointed out to us by the residents. The way it stands now, 12 of the 22 residential owners have accepted a buyout offer, and six homes are presently being vacated. The remaining homes will be vacated as per the purchase agreement that was made.

Lake Manitoba Water Levels

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): The volume of water that has been diverted from the Assiniboine River into Lake Manitoba is now reaching significant levels and causing concern. There are ranchers on both sides of the lake who are losing land which will probably be lost permanently for the year. What efforts has the department taken to avoid this damage? My question is to the Minister of Conservation. Are the dikes on the Assiniboine River capable of carrying more water, or can he give an anticipated peak level of that lake to my constituents?

* (14:00)

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): As I indicated to the member, I believe it was last week I did a tour of the Westbourne area. On my return back to Winnipeg we stopped at Portage la Prairie, and I had an opportunity to look at the drainage ditch that he is referring to. He is absolutely right. I told him when I returned that there was water all over the place. We met with the civic leaders from the R.M. of Westbourne, and they understand that this issue is not a new one. It has been there for several years. Different governments have been asked to deal with it, and so I made a commitment to the people of Westbourne that we would start to look at the issue again with the view of eventually coming to a resolution to the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Conservation alludes to the Whitemud drainage basin and the problems of the Westbourne municipality around Big Grass Marsh. I am asking about the Assiniboine River diversion

that has pumped water into Lake Manitoba, probably raising the level of that lake somewhere close to five inches. On that flat land, that amounts to a mile or more, in some cases two or three miles back inland. Farmers are losing their livelihood in many cases. I am asking—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please remind the member that a supplementary question should need no preamble. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Ste. Rose, on the same point of order?

Mr. Cummings: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am not unaware of the rules of the House, but I was trying to point out that it was the Assiniboine Diversion not the Big Grass Marsh that is my problem. May I ask—*[interjection]* I know what a business plan looks like at least.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable members that *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble. I would ask the honourable member to please put his question.

* * *

Mr. Cummings: My supplementary question is to the Minister of Government Services and Minister responsible for Emergency Measures. Would he be prepared to recognize these losses as a man-made loss, the same as occurred in 1997?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): I question whether indeed this was done in the past. Our position in terms of damage this spring is unchanged from when the member was in government as well, and that is we have the federal-provincial Disaster Financial Assistance

program. There are certain losses that are eligible. In fact, I have taken the opportunity to visit a lot of the damaged areas of the province with spring flooding this year, and we will be preparing a program based on the information in terms of the losses. Once again, the member does know the criteria that are out there and people will be eligible under the DFAA program. If it meets the criteria, they will be eligible.

Mr. Cummings: My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Government Services. I was referring to the additional water that has been added to Lake Manitoba which is a man-driven situation. I am asking him if he is prepared to argue on behalf of my constituents, the same as we did in '97.

Mr. Ashton: I am somewhat puzzled by the question. There are still some legal issues outstanding from 1997, and I would certainly indicate, and I think the Premier (Mr. Doer) indicated earlier, probably the greatest area that has been created, not by nature but by, if you want to call it man-made, has been the way we have let our drainage system decline. I am very proud that our Government this year in its Budget has started to re-invest in our drainage, because that is the biggest problem in rural Manitoba right now in terms of man-made situations: lack of proper drainage.

Knapp Dam and Pump Station Status Report

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Conservation. In December I raised concerns about the Knapp Dam and Pump Station. In reply, the Minister of Conservation indicated at that time that "there was a problem encountered in the project, a very minor problem, a problem that can be easily fixed."

Yesterday in Estimates the minister admitted it was a major problem, that water was leaking under the pump station and that it cost about \$225,000 to fix. I would ask the Minister of Conservation in the Legislature today to acknowledge that the size of the problem was indeed much greater than initially anticipated, that it was quite a large problem.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): I can indicate to the member that the Knapp Dam pump will be fully operational this spring and that the design problems that were experienced by the crew working on the project will be totally rectified, corrected, and we anticipate having commissioning of the system probably by mid-June.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary: Will the minister indicate, in light of his comments last December, that if there were major problems he would seek on the part of the contractor that there would be reimbursement or some action taken on his part to recover costs? Will the minister indicate what action he is taking and whether those costs can be recovered?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his wise counsel. That is precisely what we are doing.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary, in view of the fact that I also raised concerns about the certificates of competence of some of the contractors or a contractor, I would ask the Minister of Conservation what he is doing to make sure that appropriate standards are set in the future that contractors will have the required or the real certificate of competence that is needed?

Mr. Lathlin: Again, Mr. Speaker, the member is generous today with his advice, so again I will take that advice gratefully and look at it.

Education Facilities Capital Program

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): While visiting St. James-Assiniboia recently with the Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski) and the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell), I recently announced the 2001-2002 capital funding agreement for the public school system.

Could the Minister of Education please apprise the House of the levels of support for capital infrastructure and the priority items for this Government?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure for me to be in St. James-Assiniboia School Division recently to make the capital announcement for the 2001-2002 school year. In the last 18 months, this Government has invested over a hundred million dollars in our public school infrastructure. The bulk of that investment is in infrastructure, in roofing, mechanical systems, windows systems, and so forth. There is a tremendous capital—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. If the honourable minister feels like making a ministerial statement, I think he has that opportunity before Question Period, and that would give us an opportunity to speak to the positive initiatives that this Government might bring in, which is not very often.

* (14:10)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I did not hear a rule or citation from *Beauchesne's* cited. There is no point of order. It is an important question, and I regret that the Opposition did not see fit to ask that question, but we did.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, it is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education and Training, to conclude his comments.

Mr. Caldwell: This is a hundred-million-dollar investment of public funds. It is a very important question and it is a very important issue for the people of Manitoba to be aware of.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Caldwell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand why members opposite are a bit sensitive to this, because they left a legacy of a quarter of a billion dollars of infrastructure renewal that needed to be attended to.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. *Beauchesne's* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate. How can this minister stand in this House when one of his own members asked the question and provoked debate on this side of the House and expect us to sit there?

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to take it under advisement and take a serious look at what this minister is doing. He is making a ministerial statement, and he is taking advantage of this House's time.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the Opposition would feel provoked or embarrassed. It is because they did not ask that important question on behalf of Manitoba children.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 417: Answers to questions should be brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and to not provoke debate.

For clarification of all members of the House, the rules are very clear that all members in this Chamber except ministers of the Crown—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. For clarification, it is very clear that all members in this House, except ministers, have the right and the opportunity to ask a question.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, to conclude his comments.

Mr. Caldwell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The \$100 million that has been invested by the Doer government in the last 18 months to rectify structural problems, mechanical problems, electrical problems, roofing problems around the public school system in the province of Manitoba represents 237 projects in this province.

Big Grass Marsh Overland Flooding

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier. I am at this time, asking about the Big Grass Marsh. Two of his ministers have indeed visited the Big Grass-Westbourne area, and that is appreciated. One of the biggest problems we have is making sure that the rest of the community of Manitoba knows how significant the problems can be with overland flooding.

I wonder if he would be prepared to take a look personally at the situation at Westbourne.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have been in touch with the rural municipality. I believe next week I am scheduled to visit the community and listen to their concerns, as the member has pointed out. I will let him know the time and date so he can be there at the meeting. I know that the two ministers have been there. We were in Franklin last week. I think it is very important to be there, and I will be there next week.

Devils Lake Diversion Status Report

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): As we all know and have heard in the media, the Devils Lake situation is not declining, and flooding is very prevalent in the Devils Lake area. We also know that the Army Corps of Engineers has initiated a series of meetings across the Red River Valley informing Red River Valley residents and communities as to what the process will be to establish an outlet at Devils Lake into the Sheyenne River.

Can the Premier apprise this House as to what kinds of communications he has had with the State of North Dakota and the U.S. government, recognizing the fact that he has signed an agreement with the State of Missouri and indeed has come to an agreement with the State of Minnesota to ensure Manitobans that nothing will happen on the Devils Lake outlet until there is concurrence with Manitoba? Can the Premier assure this House that all steps are being taken to ensure that the regulatory process will be in place before any construction takes place on Devils Lake?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): As the member knows, in July of 1999 the North Dakota state government under former Governor Schafer and now carrying on under the present governor has unilaterally declared that it will build an outlet from Devils Lake into the Sheyenne River which ultimately will go to the Hudson Bay watershed. We became apprised of this on the day we were elected and sworn in that the unilateral declaration had been made, and since then we have attempted all efforts to indicate one major issue here, that it is not North Dakota's right nor Manitoba's right to be involved in trans-boundary water issues.

It is our job to raise the issues in the most legal way possible with other states like Minnesota and Missouri, but the treaties are held by Canada and the United States. North Dakota, in our view, cannot proceed legally with an outlet that is unilateral without the full regulatory approval of the United States and without the full involvement of Canada under the International Joint Commission treaties that have been in place in this country since 1909.

So, Mr. Speaker, certainly Manitoba has a memorandum of agreement with Missouri, which we were asked to do by the federal government. We got that. We have an agreement with Governor Ventura to oppose this project in the state of Minnesota. Minnesota is with us. We actually will be having a briefing this Thursday with all the members that will be meeting with the North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota legislators a week and a day from now, but it is our view that North Dakota should not and cannot unilaterally proceed. We think the federal U.S. government has got to stop a state from

proceeding in a unilateral way, and we have written Prime Minister Chrétien to say that.

* (14:20)

Mr. Jack Penner: I think the Premier is well aware that the Army Corps of Engineers has initiated—let me ask the question of the Premier then. Has the Premier been fully apprised of the initiative that the Army Corps of Engineers has taken as of a couple of weeks ago to do an EIS and to bring to conclusion by October of 2002 the study process and start construction in October of 2002? Is the Premier aware of that?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, there are three proposals in the United States dealing with Devils Lake. One is the Stump Lake outlet, the second one is the Peterson Coulee outlet and then the third one is the Twin Lakes proposal.

The Twin Lakes proposal has been a unilateral decision made by North Dakota to proceed in a unilateral way that was declared, by the way, in July of 1999. That was reaffirmed by Governor Schafer at a meeting we had in Devils Lake in November of 1999. At that time, Governor Schafer indicated that construction would proceed and be completed by the fall of October 2000. That date has come and gone. The Army Corps of Engineers are looking at the Peterson Coulee outlet as opposed to the Twin Lakes outlet. So there are two different proposals that are being studied right now.

We are aware that the new FEMA director was in North Dakota last month during the flooding visiting Grand Forks, Fargo and Devils Lake. We are also aware that the lake levels at Devils Lake allowed some very minor water to go to Stump Lake.

When we came into office and we were told in '99 that the construction was proceeding within 12 months, we were opposed then, we are opposed now.

Yes, we are concerned about any declaration to proceed against Manitoba's interests.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Order of Manitoba Recipients

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): On May 11 Lieutenant-Governor Peter Liba announced the names of the eight Manitobans who will receive the Order of Manitoba medal on July 5.

While I congratulate all recipients on their accomplishments and recognition, I wish to focus my comments on one of these fine Manitobans. That is our former Premier Gary Filmon. The Order of Manitoba is described as an honour awarded to those Manitobans "who have demonstrated excellence and achievement in any field of endeavour, benefiting in an outstanding manner the social, cultural or economic well-being of Manitoba and its residents."

This honour, the highest in our province, is reserved for those individuals who have given some sustaining benefit to our province and to all Manitobans.

It was with delight but not surprise that I learned our former Premier, a man who led the Progressive Conservative Party for over 16 years and led this province for over a decade, was going to receive this well-deserved honour.

Mr. Speaker, this Doer government chooses to remember the former Premier's time in office as a low point in Manitoba's history. They spew the misconception that this great province was led down a dark and misguided path during the 1990s. How embarrassed members opposite must be now. The man they believe did nothing for Manitoba is now receiving the highest honour this province has to offer. This is one more example of how wrong the Doer government is about the path our province should be taking and the strength and leadership Gary Filmon offered Manitobans for almost 12 years.

This Government may not want to believe it, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): On April 12, 2001, I had the great pleasure of attending a ceremony honouring the recipients of the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal. This presentation was a wonderful occasion for the members of the 17 Wing and its larger units and 'D' Division RCMP receiving the medal to be formally recognized and appreciated by their country for their important contributions to peacekeeping efforts.

Making the presentations of the 437 Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medals were: the Honourable Peter M. Liba, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba; Brigadier General D. Tabernor, Deputy Commander Land Forces Western Area; Assistant Commissioner T.W. Egglestone, Commanding Officer 'D' Division of the RCMP; and Colonel D.C. McLennan, Wing Commander 17 Wing Winnipeg.

Inspired by the 1988 awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to United Nations Peacekeepers, the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal was created to acknowledge the efforts of Canadian peacekeepers. This includes all serving and former members of the Canadian Forces, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other police services, and Canadian civilians who have upheld the 50-year tradition of Canadian peacekeepers.

From all members on this side of the House, I would like to congratulate our recipients for their courage and for their accomplishments and contributions to peace. We applaud your commitment to helping people in war-torn countries to have the opportunity to live in a safer place. Your new medal should be worn with pride knowing that you have helped make the world a better place.

I would also like to thank the family members of our peacekeepers, many of whom were in attendance at the ceremony, for their efforts in overcoming the hardships of separation and for their ongoing support. Again, we thank you and we are all proud of your accomplishments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Oak Park High School Fundraiser

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): On May 5, the students of Oak Park High School in

Charleswood organized a concert at their school in order to make a wish come true for a 12-year-old boy with cancer. The students of this high school were behind Jean-Paul Craft in his fight with Burkitt's lymphoma, a rare type of cancer that affects only about 100 children in North America each year.

The students of Oak Park approached the Children's Wish Foundation some time ago about being involved in a fundraising effort to grant a child's wish. When they were informed about Jean-Paul's wish for a very special guitar, they knew this was a perfect fit.

The students worked very hard to raise money, from pizza Fridays, the canteen and a basketball tournament and the school's annual musical production, among other small fundraisers. The culmination of this effort was a concert where two bands performed and Jean-Paul played a couple of songs with them. This was his first public opportunity to play his new dream guitar, and he also performed a duet with his sister Amy at the concert. These were very special performances that touched the hearts of everyone at the concert.

Congratulations to all the students at Oak Park for their dedication and hard work in making Jean-Paul's dream come true. The Oak Park student council presidents, Kevin Landreville and Evan Duncan said that this endeavour has made a real difference around the school and has touched everyone in a special way. They said, and I quote: It is not what we are doing for Jean-Paul, it is what Jean-Paul is doing for us.

I personally want to recognize the efforts of the students at Oak Park for their caring and their initiative and to say how proud we in Charleswood are of these young people.

I think it is so important to recognize the efforts of youth, the efforts that they make in our communities and the contributions that they make in our communities. The students at Oak Park I really feel are particularly special, and I certainly appreciate the opportunity of recognizing them in the Manitoba Legislature today.

* (14:30)

Royal Bank Cup

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): From May 5 to 13, Flin Flon was gripped by hockey fever as the city hosted the National Junior A Hockey Championship, the Royal Bank Cup.

Flin Flon is a community with a long hockey tradition. I can mention the Memorial Cup Championship of 1957 or the names of hockey legends such as Teddy Hampson, Patty Ginnell, Mel Pearson, Bobby Clarke, Reg Leach, Gerry Hart, Reed Simpson, among others.

Flin Flon is a small city with a big heart. It is a city with extraordinary capability to host outstanding events in the field of sport and culture. It is renowned for its northern hospitality.

I would like to congratulate co-chairs, Don McElroy and Ron Watt for their vision and commitment to make this the best Royal Bank Cup tournament ever held. I commend the over 700 volunteers, organizers and committee chairs for making this event a reality. Over 10 percent of the population of Flin Flon were engaged as volunteers.

Congratulations to the Royal Bank and many other corporate and individual sponsors. Congratulations to all of the teams for winning the right to be at the Royal Bank Cup, for their remarkable effort and sportsmanship. Congratulations to the Camrose Kodiaks for their win and to the Flin Flon Junior Bombers for their hard-fought second place finish. We are proud of you. Go Bombers go!

Canada Day Poster Challenge

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, May 17 at 2 p.m., the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba will be hosting a reception to honour Manitoba's four young finalists for the Canada Day poster challenge.

Each year the Department of Canadian Heritage sponsors the Canada Day poster challenge which encourages young Canadians to create posters demonstrating their pride in our great country of Canada. This initiative began in

1987 and has significantly grown in popularity with over 30 000 posters being entered each year.

The theme of this year's challenge is "Celebrating Canada's Diversity." Participants in the contest are urged to submit posters exhibiting the diversity of languages, religions and cultures in Canada and are asked to write a few sentences on how their poster expresses their appreciation of Canada's diversity.

Each province and territory designates one finalist. The winner of the national contest will have their poster displayed across Canada and will receive a trip for them and a parent to travel to Ottawa to enjoy this year's Canada Day celebrations on Parliament Hill.

I am very pleased to announce that Manitoba's first-place winner and one of the youngest people being honoured by the Lieutenant-Governor on Thursday afternoon is Joel Furtado, a young man from the great constituency of Southdale. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Joel on this achievement and thank all finalists for their participation in this worthwhile event. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, just an announcement to repeat what we announced the other day. There will be no condolence motion tomorrow. That will be arranged at another time for the late Senator Molgat. As well, would you canvass the House to determine if there is leave to waive private members' hour today?

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to waive private members' hour for today? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, Estimates continue as scheduled in Rooms 255 and 254. Would you canvass the House to determine if there is consent to vary the sequence of Estimates for the Chamber so that the Estimates for the Seniors Directorate will be considered

first, followed by Civil Service Commission, to be followed by Seniors, to be followed by Culture, Heritage and Tourism?

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to vary the sequence of consideration of Estimates by changing the sequence in the Chamber so that Estimates for the Seniors Directorate will be considered first, followed by the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission, to be followed by Culture, Heritage and Tourism which will then be followed by Estimates for the Status of Women? This change is—

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): I am sorry. Mr. Speaker, if the House leader could just move the Seniors; Status of Women; then Culture, Heritage? No, just a moment, it is Seniors; Civil Service; Status of Women; then Culture, Heritage. Right?

An Honourable Member: Seniors; Civil Service; Status of Women; Culture.

Mr. Laurendeau: Correct.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, just to clarify. That order should be Seniors; Civil Service Commission; Status of Women; Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

Mr. Speaker: The sequence will be Seniors; Civil Service Commission; Status of Women; Culture, Heritage and Tourism. *[Agreed]*

These changes will apply permanently. *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), 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.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

CONSERVATION

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): 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 Conservation.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 12.1.(a) Minister's Salary, on page 42 of the Estimates book \$28,100—pass.

Resolution 12.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,223,600 for Conservation, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): This completes the Estimates of the Department of Conservation.

The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is the Estimates of the Department of Health.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and the critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates? We will recess? *[Agreed]*

The committee recessed at 2:45 p.m.

The committee resumed at 3 p.m.

HEALTH

* (15:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Health. Does the honourable Minister of Health have an opening statement?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Sure, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Would you proceed.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I welcome all of the members here for the Estimates process. I

normally do not make an opening statement. I usually generally like just to get into questions. I have done very small opening statements. It has been my general policy, but today I felt like I might outline some of the initiatives that have happened in health care over the past year and put it into a perspective that I think is important that people deal with.

I just want to start by commending all of the people who work in the health care system throughout the system, who dedicate their time and energy to providing quality care and care to all Manitobans. They extend themselves. It is difficult work. It is extensive work. They extend themselves to provide for the care of other Manitobans. I have encountered examples of individuals who have gone in on days off to work to help, individuals who have volunteered time and energy. I just wanted to commend all of those people in this health care system who together collectively work on behalf of all of us to care for all of us. I wanted to point that out in the first instance.

What I also wanted to do, Mr. Chairperson, is deal with some of the issues and some of the highlights in the health care system over the past year. I have not prepared notes, speaking notes. I did in a few minutes scratch down a few items that I thought I would deal with and relate to. I am going to outline these.

First off, I should give a report to the committee that over the last year we culminated in an agreement signed by all of the provinces and the federal government with respect to a partial restoration of the CHST. From what I understand it is something like a restoration to 1995 dollars, which, while not near what we had hoped for or tried for, nonetheless it was a deal that all of the provinces felt obliged to sign. We had a small part in the culmination of this, insofar as Manitoba was the chair for both the Health ministers and simultaneously the chair for the First Ministers during the course of these discussions. The final agreement was rounded out following a series of six or seven meetings across the country. While I have said quite frankly that it is not anywhere near what we would like to receive in terms of federal dollars and restoration, nonetheless we signed the agreement together with the other provinces.

Roughly, through the agreement, there were three, I could put it in these terms, pockets of money, all within the CHST. The first was the capital equipment money. I might indicate that Manitoba played a huge part in getting the federal government to agree to it in the first place. It was one of our prerequisites that we had discussed with the federal government for any agreement, that is, that there would be some kind of equipment renewal. We were very pleased that Manitoba succeeded in having within the agreement the equipment renewal and capitalization fund.

The second area was primary care, some funding for primary care. Again, I can indicate that Manitoba, as well, pushed this. I do not want to reveal negotiations that occurred right to the very end, but we were very aggressive right to the final document was authorized to try to expand the contribution of the federal government to the primary care field. Manitoba tried very hard to up the ratio of funding for primary care, recognizing that it was an area of health care development that we all wanted to move toward. Unfortunately, we did not achieve significant funding in this area. The amount of money that Manitoba will get over a three-year period is something like, if memory serves me correctly, \$5 million for primary care projects in each of the next few years, which is very small in relation to the kind of needs of primary care reform that were identified throughout the year-long process that took place.

The third area that was allocated and much fanfare was made about a \$1 billion IT initiative. There is a \$1 billion over a number of years that was allocated towards IT. We do not really have access to these funds. These funds are part of an overall infrastructure project that is being put in place in collaboration with the provinces through essentially a federal Crown corporation. We have a part to play in it in terms of the overall infrastructure, but it is not the kind of pool of money or resources that would, say, allow Manitoba to have access to X-millions of dollars to do a particular project. It is possible that Manitoba could access some funds to do a demonstration project that could be utilized in the national network over a period of time on a pilot basis. We are still exploring those possibilities, but overall we do not have access

to those funds, which is one of the reasons why when the pool of money was put together it appeared to be far more significant than in fact it really is, insofar as \$1 billion over several years is not really money that Manitoba can acquire in order to improve directly its infrastructure. Its infrastructure in terms of IT does need substantial upgrading and substantial resourcing, there is no question about that.

Over the last year a lot of time and energy, significant time and energy, was devoted by the department and by Health towards the putting together of this national agreement between the provinces and the federal government. We achieved a limited success with the agreement, and we were happy to have played a small part in the overall establishment of that national agreement.

There is a lot more to be done on the federal-provincial front. Manitoba has been very aggressive in pushing the federal government and the other provinces for a significant addressing of the issues dealing with pharmaceuticals and prescription drugs, and we recently concluded a teleconference meeting that was instigated by Manitoba with all of the provinces. What we are trying to do is move along the agenda, because at the federal-provincial level the agenda moves, in my experience, quite slowly, and there were study groups and all kinds of developments that were put in place in 1998 to deal with pharmaceuticals and prescription drugs, but they have been moving along quite slowly. Manitoba stressed to all of the other provinces the need to get these on the agenda, and we succeeded. It will be on the agenda of the next provincial health ministers' meeting and we will be able to deal with some of the substantive issues related to prescription drugs and pharmaceuticals.

To that end, we have also had a fair amount of contact with other jurisdictions about collaborating on the issue of pharmaceuticals and prescription drugs, insofar as in every jurisdiction in the country it is quite clear that pharmaceuticals and prescription drugs are, if not the most significant cost driver, are one of the most significant cost drivers across the health care system. There is a need to try to find some way of maximizing the ability to provide prescription drugs to our population while at the same time dealing with costs.

Members might be aware that two years ago, for the first time in history, the cost of prescription drugs in this country exceeded the costs of physician coverage, and that has continued to the present. There is no doubt that prescription drugs are now part of a medicare system. Unfortunately, there is no real mechanism in order for the provincial governments to match the costs that are occurring in the prescription drug field. Consequently, when we come to drug utilization and drug programs and providing drugs, we are not able to do as much as we certainly would like to do.

It is a national problem and it is something that we have been very aggressive on. We are working with the other provinces to try to see, on a number of different tracks, the first being to see if there could be any movement on the federal front to assist us, and that has a variation of themes, and secondly to try to see if there is any kind of collaboration we could work with, particularly with western provinces. I am relating to utilization and application of drugs because I have said publicly and before that Manitoba will be interested in almost any initiative that could see us maximizing the use of drugs and increasing the ability to provide drugs to our population.

So that essentially sums up some of the initiatives that have occurred since we last met with respect to the federal and provincial scene, something that took far more time than, I suppose, a lot of us anticipated, but, in the end, we did achieve an agreement, and we were able to move forward.

On the health care front, in order to quantify or qualify what has happened over the past year, one can look at a variety of factors. We think that in a health care system, where there is estimated to be 14 million contacts between the population and the health care system, the work of people in the health care system is outstanding.

*(15:10)

I note that recently there was a poll done that looked at people's appreciation of the health care system here in Manitoba, and it was dramatically higher than it had been for the year

or year and a half previous, dramatically higher, almost double, in terms of appreciation of the health care system. That, in no small way, is a measure of the kind of hard work undertaken by individuals who are trying to make things better and improve the system.

I think that people recognize that a number of the major initiatives that were put in place when we were first elected, while, as I have said on many occasions, we cannot overnight change a system, have made some substantive difference in the way the system is approached and in the way that health care has developed. No better example, I think, exists probably in the fact that there are more individuals enrolled in nursing programs now than at any time in the past decade. It has in fact doubled what it was four years ago. That is dramatic, when you think about it, Mr. Chairperson, in a turnaround in a relatively short period of time.

The bad news is that you cannot educate and train a nurse in one year, with the exception of the LPN programs, but, in terms of the RN programs, we are still awaiting some of the results and the fruits of the efforts.

We are also very pleased with the work that is undertaken with the diploma program, despite the dire predictions of some individuals about the ability of the Province to launch a diploma nurses program. It was filled. The program was filled. The students are doing very well, and it is, by all measures, an outstanding success and an addition to the health care system. One needs only to go to rural Manitoba and talk to people in rural Manitoba where time and time again we are advised that the best thing we could do in the health care system would be bring back the diploma nurses program.

Tangentially, along with that, as I speak about rural Manitoba, the second-best thing that often rural Manitobans tell us is that we should train more doctors. This year we are very pleased that the first time after the cuts in the early '90s to the medical program, we are expanding the college, the admission to the medical program, at the University of Manitoba. Outstanding response, people are very appreciative of the fact. They recognize that, in the years of the '90s, there was an attrition factor

related to physicians. They are very pleased that we are going to educate and train more doctors.

Related to that, Mr. Chairperson, is the fact that we are also opening up 15 residency positions, and these residency positions, I believe, 9 are going to be devoted to family practice in rural Manitoba, again, to provide resources and services to rural Manitoba.

I might add, Mr. Chairperson, that all of these figures are coming out of my head. So if there is a number or two that might be somewhat inaccurate, I apologize in advance. I believe that most of the numbers that I am giving are correct, but I am not referring to any notes.

The other significant thing, I think, that has happened in the last week or two is the announcement of the foreign doctors program. For the first time, Manitoba has developed a program that will train and allow the ability of foreign-trained Canadian citizen doctors to practise medicine in Manitoba. I cannot overestimate the significance it has to have had to many people's lives. The way the program was structured, I commend all of the individuals and organizations involved. It was a monumental task to bring together all of the various groups, to put them in together and try to carve out a program that is literally unique in Canada and will permit foreign-trained doctors in as little as a weekend test, for example, to have the ability to practise with a conditional licence in rural or northern Manitoba and put them on the same par as other individuals who have conditional licences and permit them the opportunity of taking their Part II examination in order to get a full licensure.

It is a unique program. It is a new program. It is a made-in-Manitoba program. It addresses one of the fundamental criticisms that we have heard, which are that you are not doing enough for doctors, and you are not taking advantage of those highly skilled and educated individuals that are amongst us who have come to Manitoba in order to provide for health care. So it is an attempt to meet those objectives.

So the nursing and the doctors and the medical programs are all new initiatives. Several years ago none of this was in place. Now it is in

place. It is funded. That is not to say there will not be some difficulties. I always anticipate there will be some difficulties, but I think the initiative is indicative of some of the hope that has been put back into the health care system with respect to the future. There will be more. We identified very early on that human resources may be the single most important issue facing health care. There will be more initiatives on a variety of fronts that will be coming forward dealing with the human resource issue.

Unfortunately, as I have said on previous occasions, you cannot overnight deal with a problem that has been building for a decade, but in the first 18, 19 months there have probably been more initiatives on the human resource front than at any time in the past decade. That is a recognition of the need to rebuild the human infrastructure in our health care system and provide the kinds of supports to deal with the demands that are put upon all of us in a health care system that has a variety of needs.

Mr. Chairperson, in the past few weeks we have had the occasion to proclaim The Protection for Persons in Care Act, again a new initiative and an initiative that was not in place, an initiative that has been brought in by this Government based on a pledge that occurred in the '90s and recommendations that occurred in the '90s as a result of situations in some personal care homes where individuals suffered some unforeseen—well, unfortunate consequences.

We were able to proclaim an act that will provide protection for not only those individuals who are in institutions in this province but for individuals who work in those institutions to provide care and to be able to have a vehicle to deal with issues that relate to people's care.

I should tell you, Mr. Chairperson, this is the first part of what will be a more complex and a much-needed complaints mechanism system that we intend to roll out over the next few years and will form the basis of a system that will allow for patient complaints and follow-ups to occur much quicker than they have over the past several years.

Just last week for the first time as well in Manitoba we announced an eating disorders

program at Health Sciences Centre, again an initiative that had been a long time in coming and that we were very honoured to have the opportunity of working with organizations like EDAM, Eating Disorders Association of Manitoba, to put in place, a program that was community-based with institutional supports that will provide the kinds of supports for those individuals who have acquired this illness and their families in order to help them.

I was aware, and we were aware, of the significance and the prevalence of this particular affliction, but I have been quite surprised at the number of individuals who since we have announced this program have commented to me about the need for that program. It is very clear that this is an area of need that had not been wrapped together and brought together, and we were very fortunate to be able to do this and to fund it. We look forward to improving the situation for individuals in our society who suffer from this affliction.

This is not something that one should tread with lightly. This disease in many cases results in fatalities, fatalities of young Manitobans, far too many. If this program can play a small part in improving the lives of those individuals and those of their families—and again it is another example of a new direction, a community-based program, an outreach program, a program dealing with not conventional acute care illnesses that one is used to dealing with but dealing with an affliction that affects far more individuals in this province than most people are aware.

In addition, Mr. Chairperson, that very same week we saw the opening of a PACT office, Program of Assertive Community Treatment, again a Manitoba first, a program that had been studied for a decade in this jurisdiction, which we had called for, a community-based program, a program to deal with the acutely mentally ill.

* (15:20)

The plans are to take 100 or 120 individuals who suffer from severe mental health problems, usually schizophrenic or psychotic individuals for whom no program effectively works and to wrap around them a program where a variety of

individuals, health care professionals, social workers, dieticians, nurses, doctors and related individuals provide services to that particular individual when and where that individual needs it, a program that is world recognized as being effective. Now we have that program in Manitoba.

Another program, another effort to reach out to our fellow citizens, something that is outside of the acute care conventional approach, which is community-based and which is again indicative of the many things that Health is doing differently and importantly to affect our citizens, whether it is eating disorder, whether it is PACT or whether it is the most comprehensive vaccination program for flu shot ever undertaken in this province and for the first time ever in the province of Manitoba a pneumococcal vaccination program, again another preventative measure undertaken.

Or, Mr. Chairperson, for the first time a program to deal with childhood injuries, a program never undertaken before comprehensively. The feedback from that program was outstanding and is going to form the part of continuing programs of preventative health care for our citizens.

So the last year has seen some interesting innovations and developments and expansions of our health care system in the ways that the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, the CIHIs of the world, the Michael Rachlis of the world, the health care economists, even the people who advocate the privatization of health care through the French model have to look at and indicate that that is the kind and the way the health care system ought to be proceeding, innovative programs, programs never before seen in Manitoba.

We have seen two other initiatives undertaken by the Province of Manitoba that are unusual. We have seen two efforts based on compassionate assistance to individuals and groups. The first is a compensation program offered to victims of hepatitis C who are outside of the '86 to '90 window of compensation from the federal-provincial agreement. Manitoba is one of three provinces that offer compensation to these individuals. We announced it; we are

doing it. We think it is the right thing to do. We think it is the kind of thing that the average Manitoban looking at it would say is necessary.

The second is a compensation package offered to the 12 families, the 12 parents of the Health Sciences pediatric cardiac inquest. We offered a one-time \$100,000 compassionate assistance to these individuals.

In both cases the situations were unique. In both cases the situations resulted from systematic breakdowns of the system. In both cases we think Manitobans felt, and we on behalf of Manitobans felt, that it was the right thing to do. Neither case in our view is precedent setting. Both cases have unique circumstances. Both cases, we believe, were necessary.

I had the occasion, continuing along with the theme, last week to open officially a health resource centre in the village of Ethelbert and another one in the village of Pine River, two unique ventures to deal with the health care needs in those communities, two efforts strongly supported by the community. Ironically the sight upon which we officially opened the health resource centre in Pine River was on the site of an old hospital that had been there a long time ago. The citizens of that region recognized they require the resources of that centre. It is staffed and functioned by nurses and others, and they are a welcome addition to our continuum of health care.

So you see, Mr. Chairperson, very clearly a pattern emerges: a reinvigoration and supports in the acute care system; a training and educating of health care professionals to deal with the difficulties that occurred over the past decade; a move towards the community; a move towards the most comprehensive community programs that have ever appeared in this province.

Mr. Chairperson, several weeks ago we had the occasion to announce the expansion of the Nor'West Community Health Care Centre. Again, a primary health care project, and work on the River East and Transcona Access centres.

Mr. Chairperson, these are new initiatives in urban settings that again fit into the model of where one should be going in health care,

providing primary base care, work that was not done over the past decade, but we have undertaken to fund it and to put it in place.

I was aware of grand plans and grand schemes over the '90s, Mr. Chairperson, but so many grand plans and grand schemes went for naught. We are putting in place funding, budgeting and dealing with those issues. I am very pleased that we have a health care system that is prepared to be innovative. Last week we had occasion to open the Boundary Trails Hospital. The largest green project hospital undertaken since the 1980s. Very exciting for the community. Incredibly sophisticated technology. The community was very happy. It was very pleased to see the opening of that health care facility. It is something that had been worked on and dreamed of in that community for almost a decade. We had the honour of funding and cutting the ribbon.

Mr. Chairperson, I refer to many of the new initiatives. One of the new initiatives that was undertaken, and unfortunately like so many other new initiatives that were undertaken, has been met with distaste by the Opposition, and I expect that; that is their goal to oppose and oppose they do, oppose everything that we do in fact.

Mr. Chairperson, I think the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) had a comment, but I am sure she will get her opportunity.

Mr. Chairperson, when I was attending the health care meetings, both across the country with health care ministers, one of the key issues that was isolated and indicated to me there was difficulty was the movement of private clinics, private hospitals into the health care system. I am aware, and I hope we have a good debate on this, that the Opposition want us to go that way. I am aware that Mike Harris is going that way. I am aware that the Premier of Alberta is going that way. That is this one single-minded approach that we must go to privatize because that is going to save health care. I noticed there have been numerous articles in the paper by a consultant to the Tory party on that point. I note there seems to be this fixation that everything must go private to save medicare.

Mr. Chairperson, I do not think we should be so narrow in our thinking that only going private is the way to save medicare. You know, the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation was set up by Don Orchard when he was minister to evaluate change, innovation in health care. It has a worldwide reputation. It has examined the privatization efforts. You know, it has concluded both from the Alberta experience and the Manitoba experience that going the private route results in longer waiting lists. Statistically demonstrated and proven. Yet there is this blind dogma, an ideology that suggests that is the only way to go with respect to health care. An ideological preoccupation that stuns me, because that seems to be the only answer. Go private. Go private.

*(15:30)

I say, Mr. Chairperson, why can we not try a made-in-Manitoba innovative model? That is what we are trying with the Pan Am experience. We are going to take some of the benefits of the private sector, and we are going to try to be innovative. Members opposite say, open the Canada Health Act. Fund private clinics. Fund private hospitals. Make people pay.

Mr. Chairperson, we say, there are different models to follow. We do not have to blindly follow the ideological dogma. We think we ought to look at innovation. That is what Pan Am is all about.

You know. I hope and I know we will have a healthy debate on the Pan Am initiative, and that is the way it should be, but I just ask members to consider opening their minds to different options and not proceeding blindly to only pursue privatization, and privatization at all costs. To be blindly fixated on privatization is the only solution to the health care problems that we face, because I have always felt that these one-trick panaceas will not solve it. Yes, there are initiatives that are taking place on the private front. Yes, there is demonstrative evidence that it does not work, but there are initiatives taking place. But to blindly, at every opportunity, suggest that private is the only way to go, I think is a mistake and a trap that some individuals tend to fall into.

With respect to Pan Am, we provided, Mr. Chairperson, significant analysis, unprecedented in my years in the Legislature, of information which indicated that Price Waterhouse pointed out that the Pan Am exercise could result and would result in significant profit to the health care system, which can be reinvested back into the health care system. Aw, the members heard the word "profit," and they are getting all excited. I want to indicate that that is part of the difference. We think profit should go back into the health care system, and that is what we are trying to do in terms of Pan Am. So we are not only going to have initiatives that can plough money back into the health care system, but increase the number of services that are offered.

You know, what I do not understand is, when so much innovation and development is occurring in the health care system, how members opposite could vote against the Budget, to vote against PACT, to vote against eating disorders, to vote against protection of persons in care, to vote against the compensation packages, to vote against the vaccination packages, Mr. Chairperson, to vote against the doctors expansion, to vote against the nurses expansion. It is perplexing to me, but I will leave it to others to do the analysis.

One of the other developmental areas that I think bears discussion is the whole area of palliative care. We are enhancing and expanding the community-based palliative care programs. I think Manitoba has been recognized as a leader in palliative care, and we are very pleased to fund and continue those initiatives.

I should note, as well, Mr. Chairperson, since I am highlighting some of the new initiatives and some of the changes in our health care system, that, of course, yesterday I had occasion to announce the look-back trace-back program in Manitoba. By Thursday, I anticipate that up to 20 000 Manitobans, actually 18 500, but perhaps it will be a little broader at the end of the day, will receive notification that they may have a small chance of being infected with the hepatitis C virus, and they are going to receive that letter and be asked to contact their health care professional and are provided with a requisition in order to draw to have a blood test.

Cadham Lab is going to be the recipient of the sampling and are trying to and are promising to have a two-week turnaround from the time the blood is drawn until the test is back in the hands of the health care professional. We are hoping, with our resources and everything that the public health people are doing, that we can achieve those goals. We felt we had to proceed. I was criticized at yesterday's press conference for not moving sooner. I said that I could not speak for the previous government, that governments allocate their resources accordingly, but that we were doing the best that we could do since the program took about a 14- to 16-month planning phase.

It will be difficult for some Manitobans, but for those that are alerted to the fact that they might have hepatitis C, it will provide them with an opportunity to be in advance and to take preventative steps and measures to deal with their particular situation. We are hopeful that we can diminish the effects that that illness can have on individuals as a result of the non-detection.

One of the areas, when I indicated earlier that there was a need for an infrastructure and diminishing of resources that had occurred when we entered office, was the whole area of EMS. As members might be aware, when we came into office we were in receipt of a report that had been commissioned by the previous ministers that outlined a huge gap in EMS resources across Manitoba. It outlined a series of measures that should be put in place to try to narrow that gap to put EMS services on par with those in other jurisdictions and with what should be acceptable in a modern health care system.

Mr. Chairperson, we began the task of rebuilding the EMS system. I find it perplexing that members opposite have criticized some of our efforts, and to be charitable there has not been a lot of efforts in the decade preceding. We doubled the resources we put into EMS. We doubled the resources we put into EMS in last year's Budget, and we increased resources this year. We are renewing half of the EMS fleet in this province. That still is not enough. We have renewed the communications equipment and we are putting in place a call centre to be located in Brandon that is going to be a call centre for all of rural Manitoba.

Again, you cannot overnight do and change something that has been left to deteriorate over a decade. So while we are taking efforts to do everything we can in EMS, we cannot do everything we would like to do in EMS. I think individuals are appreciative of the efforts that have taken place under this Government to begin the long road back to rebuilding an EMS system for all Manitobans.

* (15:40)

We had the occasion this morning to deal with the Canadian Diabetes Association and deal with some of the statistics as it relates to diabetes. We in Manitoba are fortunate that we have a strategy that was put in place in 1998. I remember at the time commending the minister of the day for doing that. We have undertaken to continue those measures and to continue to put in place the recommendations of the diabetes strategy. We have and we will continue.

Unfortunately, we still are playing catch-up to a certain extent with the ravages of the end stages of that disease. None of us, I suppose, can be proud in this Chamber to the significant amount of money that we are paying for end stage treatment of the disease in the form of dialysis. While we are expanding dialysis, as we speak, there is more construction on dialysis units taking place over at Seven Oaks, that is both a testament to the care provided in the health care system and to a certain extent it is a recognition of a failure, collectively, to do more to prevent this illness and the end stage of this illness.

Of course, the greater proportion of sufferers of this particular illness are our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, First Nations communities, where the ravages of this disease are apparent for all to see. Mr. Chairperson, we are undertaking some initiatives. We are working with some of the Aboriginal communities to deal with this. We are also proceeding to move on increased dialysis.

Recently, not only have we had a vaccination program for pneumococcal for the first time, a vaccination program most extensive for the flu for the first time, a child injury campaign to reduce childhood injuries, a significant hep C look-back, trace-back compensation to various

groups, but we are returning to the Manitoba tradition of helping others by re-instituting the subsidy to water testing that was cancelled, cut, slashed and removed by the previous administration. We have put it back in place, a subsidization to help our rural and northern fellow Manitobans to encourage the testing of well water. We are very pleased to have put back in place this particular subsidy.

We also had a unique circumstance recently in our health care system, insofar as we had a cluster of cases of hepatitis C. We also had a cluster of cases of meningitis type C. It occurred in clusters in the city of Winnipeg, and based on recommendations from Public Health we launched an extensive vaccination program essentially for teenagers who were the most affected and at-risk group, Mr. Chairperson.

We followed the dictates that had been followed in the only occasion that I am aware of when Public Health undertook a vaccination program. That was in '92-93. We followed the same standards and patterns as at that time. I reflect on that, Mr. Chairperson, because I was the Health critic at that time. I said what we should do is we should consult, and we advised and gave briefings to the Leaders of the two political parties in this Chamber and outlined for them what we were doing, several briefings.

While I did not have briefings when I was critic, nonetheless, Mr. Chairperson, we undertook that, and we provided them with extensive information to the opposition parties because this was not a partisan issue. This was a health issue. This was a Manitoba issue and we felt we should deal with it in the best spirit and way that Manitobans dealt with it.

I recall, Mr. Chairperson, that at the time of the '93 vaccination program—unfortunately several children died in adjoining communities—I remember being contacted by parents saying we should have vaccinations in our communities. I contacted Public Health officials who said: In our best judgment we should confine the vaccinations to the particular communities that are affected.

So I adhered at that time when I was critic to the advice of Public Health officials, and, as

minister, I adhere to the advice of Public Health officials today. We continue to adhere to their advice and follow their advice. I was appreciative of the Leader of the Liberal Party for his advice and comments in this regard, and I indicated that in the House, that he was helpful and useful, that in the non-partisan way that we dealt with public health issues, he assisted us in dealing with this issue. I was appreciative of what the Leader of the Liberal Party had to say and had to do in regard to the meningitis issue.

Unfortunately, Mr. Chairperson, events of this kind are very tragic and very sad. I am very pleased to report that there are no new cases at this point. There was a case of May 4, relatively mild, a type C case that occurred in I believe MacGregor, and, fortunately, that woman recovered.

In terms of the future, Mr. Chairperson, I think Manitoba tried very hard to obtain authorization from the federal government for the conjugate vaccine. We pushed quite strongly together with other jurisdictions for the conjugate, and now that the conjugate has been approved, we are working with other provinces to determine when and if and how that conjugate vaccine can be utilized.

I really want to commend the work of the Public Health officials and the nurses and all of the health care professionals who chipped in and devoted their time and energy to help their fellow Manitobans. I can tell you that behind the scenes the work that went on in Public Health in terms of dealing with other jurisdictions across the continent was outstanding, and the co-operation from other jurisdictions was outstanding.

I could tell you that at some point, Mr. Chairperson, and without telling secrets, that there were issues related to supply across the country. Fortunately, when we realized there was a difficulty, we secured supply, but there were points in the whole exercise when we were debating with other jurisdictions whether their need for supply and their need to supply the vaccine to their citizens was more important than our need to supply the vaccine to our citizens. So we had some very difficult decisions to make, but we based them on health considerations, and

we based it on the need of the population to provide for that care, and we did it in a non-partisan fashion. A NDP government in B.C. vaccinated; a Conservative government in Alberta vaccinated; a PQ government in Québec vaccinated; and an NDP government in Manitoba vaccinated, but those labels did not apply when it came to health issues.

I was proud to be working with a team of officials who worked as hard as they did in order to put in place a vaccination program. We keep our fingers crossed and on the best health advice we have obtained so far, we are doing all right, but our Health officials remain vigilant and are monitoring the situation regularly. We are in a position and we will continue to be in a position to do what we have to do, based on the best public health advice for all of our population.

What I have done this afternoon, just in a few brief moments, highlighted some of the developments that have occurred in health care in the past year in the province of Manitoba. I have had people say that more has happened in the past 18 months than happened in the past decade. I will leave that to others to decide. I have had people say, in terms of the efforts and the approach, the fact that there has been a balance toward rural Manitoba, a balance toward the urban Manitoba and a balance toward northern Manitoba, has been respected and reflected in our health care system.

* (15:50)

I think that we never get it always right. We do not get it all right. I think for the most part there has been an attempt to move the health care system to reinforce the acute care side, to put in place the basics, to plan for the future, particularly as we address our human resource shortage, and to look at different approaches and different models of approach with respect to health care.

I am reflecting on some of the primary care initiatives, of which we have announced several. One of the things that of course has been looked at is people have said, well, why has Manitoba not put out a huge strategy on primary health care reform. As I said at the MMA meeting several weeks ago, to attempt to put everyone

into a room and try to arrive at a consensus on primary health care reform is somewhat difficult. What we are attempting to do in Manitoba with respect to primary health care reform is to look at a number of different models to see what works and then to expand them accordingly. That was met particularly at the MMA with, from my view, outstanding approval.

There was some concern that a model of primary health care reform would be forced upon people in the health care system, that was a cookie-cutter approach. We think, in the health care sector, in the primary care sector, there is a variation that ought to be approached. There is an Ontario model. There are a variety of models in Manitoba. There is a nurse resource centre, there is the access centre, there is the primary health care centre, there is the Nor'West Centre, there is the centre for santé. There are a variety of approaches that we have continued, that we have launched, that we are going to look at, that will look at primary care and the approach to primary care.

Of course there is much to be done. There is always a lot to be done with respect to a health care system. I am appreciative of the efforts of the staff who work diligently to put in place some of the measures that they do put in place. I just want to recognize and acknowledge what I did yesterday at the hepatitis C announcement, that people in the Health Department, if you look at what kind of initiatives have been put in place the past year, it has been difficult for them. The vaccination campaigns, both the flu and pneumococcal, the water campaign, the meningitis campaign, the hepatitis C campaign, have all been launched, have taken great time and energy. I have to commend all of the people who have participated in those efforts, because they make a lot of difference to the health care of individuals in Manitoba.

I deliberately have not focussed on some of the significant areas of health care that we are going to deal with quite clearly during the course of these Estimates, that we generally deal with, the core programs in our acute care system, the acute care's programs, the home care's, the personal care home program and all of those components that make up our health care system. I deliberately have avoided those, not

because of their less importance, but rather because generally what happens during the course of the Estimates is those programs get a fair amount of scrutiny.

What does not generally get scrutinized or discussed or analyzed are those other programs that we have put in place, those other ones that reflect some of the direction of the health care system. They do not always get the care and attention. Most of them do not make for major points in Question Period, nor do they make for significant discussion often during the course of the Estimates debates. Nonetheless, they recognize the fact that rather than just talk about changes in health care, we are actually implementing changes in health care. We are actually doing things differently, doing things in a different way.

You know, Mr. Chairperson, when you do things in a different way, sometimes it prompts controversy and discussion, and it promotes a healthy debate. In some of these areas, I look forward to a healthy debate. I anticipate we will have a good debate, but my only caution is to suggest that the one dogmatic, idealistic approach, the privatization approach to health care is but only one solution and ought not to be seen as the panacea and the save-all and the be-all and the end-all of the health care system, because in my experience there are no panaceas, and, secondly, all of the data—and take a look at the data. Even that in Manitoba shows that those kinds of one-stop simplistic solutions have not been effective. They are a model, they are options, but they ought not to be the one panacea approach to the entire health care system.

Alas, Mr. Chairperson, I note that my time is up. It is amazing how one can discuss these matters extemporaneously, but I look forward to continued discussions during the course of the Estimates debates. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the Minister of Health for those comments. Does the Official Opposition critic, the honourable Member for Charleswood, have any opening comments?

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to make a few opening remarks, and I would like to thank

the minister for his opening comments, although I do take issue with some of the points that he raised. I will be addressing those through the Estimates process.

I would like to take a moment to commend the minister for what he is trying to do in health care, but I would like to indicate that good intentions alone are certainly not enough. I would recognize the effort he is putting into the job, and I do know how much he cares about the issues. I think that is very obvious many times in his responses to questions or the look on his face when he has to address a certain issue, and you can tell when somebody cares about an issue. I recognize the immense challenges he faces in dealing with the complexity of our health care system and appreciate that there are no easy answers and that nothing happens overnight.

I also want to recognize and appreciate the work effort, perseverance and heart of everybody working in the health care system, from those in Manitoba Health to those in the trenches. Certainly in talking to people at all levels within health care, it amazes me that there is so much heart and so much belief in our health care system and so much determination by people to make it work. The Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) certainly has the honour and the privilege of creating the environment in which people work, and certainly I want to recognize the efforts of all of the people who are involved.

My remarks, Mr. Chairman, are going to focus on one thing and that is the need for a plan, because without a plan I have to wonder how we can promote improved health outcomes and avoid misuse of precious resources. John Keen, a strategist, explained that a vision can focus, direct, motivate and even excite business into superior performance. The job of a government is to identify and project a clear vision.

The World Health Organization has told us: Today and every day the lives of people lie in the hands of our health care system. From the safe delivery of a healthy baby to the care with dignity of the frail elderly, health systems have a vital and continuing responsibility to people throughout their life span. The question for any health care system is, given the health care providers and the resources devoted to the health

care system, how close does it come to the most that could be asked of it?

Manitoba has Canada's highest level of spending and Canada's third highest level of nurses per population, but are we receiving exceptional health care? Manitobans entrust both their bodies and their money to the health system which has a responsibility to protect the former and use the latter wisely and well. This Government needs to provide the stewardship. They need to have a plan so that there will be effective and responsible management of our health care resources.

Mr. Gregory Dewar, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

During the 1990s, we saw an economic downturn and a sharp cutback in federal funding. However, the Conservative government maintained the funding to the health care budget by increasing provincial funding. I am proud of the plan we had and the things we were able to achieve in spite of these financial difficulties.

* (16:00)

I would like to review some of the 1999 statements made by the then-Minister of Health, Eric Stefanson, to demonstrate that we had a plan that was effective and efficient and resulted in improved outcomes. I quote: As we approach the millennium, it is an honour and a privilege today to present the Estimates of the Department of Health for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2000. Today I am asking this committee to support my department's request for \$2.1 million inclusive of capital and operating expenditures. It represents our ongoing commitment to quality health service for all Manitobans. I certainly note that a large majority of this House voted just yesterday to approve our 1999 Budget. We have recognized the need and are responding to it with unprecedented new resources, more than \$2 billion in the context of a comprehensive plan.

He would have been shocked to see the costs of health care rise so dramatically as they have, with no improvement in waiting lists, no end to hallway medicine and a spectacular increase in health care provider shortages, but I digress.

Mr. Stefanson went on to say, and I quote: First, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank, on behalf of Manitobans, the ongoing work and dedication of the many health care providers in the provision of health services to their fellow Manitobans. I also want to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the staff and boards of regional health authorities in developing and co-ordinating local health services specific to the needs of regional residents. I am pleased to acknowledge the tremendous progress made by the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, the Winnipeg Community and Long Term Care Authority and the regional health authorities over the course of the last one to two years.

It is clear that Eric Stefanson understood the need to recognize the people who make the health care system work. Sincere recognition and genuine appreciation are highly energizing.

Mr. Acting Chairman, Eric Stefanson went on to say, and I quote: Health care now represents approximately 35 percent of the Manitoba provincial Budget. It is by far our largest single expenditure. It is a higher priority for us than almost any other province in Canada, and it has been sound management over many years that has allowed us to make health care such a high priority. We are determined to maintain and sustain our health care system for now and for the new millennium.

Little did he know that a report published three months after these opening statements would demonstrate Manitobans, once referred to a specialist, had a shorter wait than patients in B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and only one week longer than those in Ontario. Beyond this, Dr. Brian Postl responded to the report by pointing out the numbers can only get more impressive, since a number of initiatives to lessen the wait for surgery have been introduced since the study was conducted.

I will have several questions later as to why this bright picture was not maintained. Our government in 1999 was recognizing and supporting our health care providers, including our nurses, and supporting them in positive ways.

Eric Stefanson went on to say, and I quote: That is why I intend to introduce legislation to update The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, The Registered Nurses Act, The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act, and The Physiotherapists Act. This existing legislation is more than 20 years old, but the role of nurses and other health care providers has changed dramatically.

Many nurses have told me, Eric Stefanson stated, and I quote: That much of their frustration comes from not being recognized in the ever-increasing responsibilities that they have taken on over the years. It is safe to say that nurses from 30 or 40 years ago would have some difficulty recognizing the profession today. The legislative changes will recognize these new roles and will include enhanced public representation on governing bodies and committees.

Clearly, Eric Stefanson understood the challenges that faced the health care professions, particularly the nursing profession, as he went on to say: Last month I was also pleased to announce a \$7-million nursing fund to assist in training and recruiting nurses. In addition to the nursing fund, nursing issues are being addressed by attracting more nursing students and exploring incentives to attract more nurse specialists. I am pleased that nursing programs are now offering more courses at rural and northern sites. I am also pleased that employers are converting more part-time and casual nursing positions to full-time permanent positions. As we have outlined in our plan, more physician specialists are being attracted in high-demand fields such as anaesthesia and neurology. Allied health professionals have been added and will continue to be added to support rehabilitative care and other important areas of patient care.

Eric Stefanson went on to say, and I quote: We are also accelerating the recruitment of doctors for rural and northern areas. Medical students have available to them a program offering loans in return for services to communities where doctors are needed. To encourage more medical students to consider rural practice, Manitoba Health also offers paid summer work experience with family doctors in rural areas.

Once again, Eric Stefanson was not aware of just how successful our government's actions were. As the College of Physicians and Surgeons would announce in the fall, there was an increase of 21 in the net number of physicians from one year ago and the Manitoba Medical Association would cite the rural ER program as very successful in recruiting and retaining physicians in rural Manitoba.

I would like to have the time to read Eric Stefanson's whole speech because it is so very informative. Nevertheless, the time will not allow it. It is important to say that the plan included improvements in mental health care, community care, continuing care program, addition of a significant number of long-term beds, 226 senior support projects, new mobile breast screening service, a comprehensive breast health program, companion care, new funding for better services for speech, language, physiotherapy and occupational therapy for children, expanded rehabilitative and therapy services for seniors, construction of 17 new specially equipped birthing rooms for labour, delivery and post-partum care, a comprehensive strategy to address Aboriginal health and women's health.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Other innovations and accomplishments included an integrated and co-ordinated approach to manage waiting lists, central bed management, enhancement of weekend discharges, a commitment to keep Manitobans informed about their health care system, introduction of community care access centres, which I noted that the minister referred to today, development of new standards and regulations for long-term care facilities, and the list did go on and on.

I quote Eric Stefanson again: When it came to waiting lists, our government in 1999 understood the need for even faster access to tests and treatments. That is why we announced one of the highest priorities for our government, and certainly for me, is to reduce waiting lists. I am committed to making sure that our access to service is among the best in Canada. Two new MRI machines will help us provide more than 3500 new scans this year alone. Our capacity for

CT scans has increased by about 15 percent, and with the expansion of ultrasound services about 8700 more procedures can be performed this year. Additional funding for cardiac care will provide echocardiograms for 3000 more adults and 300 more children, and cardiac catheterizations for 800 adults.

It is clear Eric Stefanson knew that Manitoba needed a plan and that plan was having good effects. Today Manitoba is an example of a province where untargeted increases in overall government health spending are ineffectual. We have the highest per capita provincial government spending, and there is no reduction in waiting time. This has caused a growing dissatisfaction with the health care system.

Eric Stefanson demonstrated that the Conservative government had to plan for increased demands in the future when he stated: One of the pressures that the system will be facing is the complications resulting from diabetes. I am pleased that we have recently expanded our dialysis capacity by 15 percent, which is making it possible to provide 15 000 more treatments annually to meet the growing demands. Dialysis services have been added in Ashern and expanded in Portage la Prairie and The Pas. In the coming years, we will continue to meet the challenge of diabetes faced by a growing number of Manitobans, but prevention is by far the most important way to protect the quality of life of Manitobans at risk of this disease.

Mr. Chairman, we will be asking this Government if they have a plan to deal with the health needs of the baby boomers. As the baby boomers age, their need for medical care and hospital use will increase dramatically. In fact, at the diabetes breakfast this morning we certainly did have an opportunity to hear about the future impacts that we will be seeing in this province and this country as more and more people will develop diabetes.

* (16:10)

In 1999, Eric Stefanson demonstrated that he understood the stressors on the health care system when he said: Another critical priority

for us and for our government is to relieve hospital overcrowding. Hospitals should be used for what they were intended, as places for acute care. This coming year, we will be adding more than 600, in fact, with the additional capital announcement as part of the Health capital budget, we are now up to 850 net new personal care home beds to provide better accommodations for people needing long-term care who are now in acute care beds. Let me repeat, we have tripled the budget for home care since we began restructuring, and we will continue to enhance this program which is so vital to relieving demand for hospital beds.

Our plan also encompasses exciting new approaches for emergency care. Misericordia's 24-hour Urgent Care Centre is a new service that is taking the pressure off Winnipeg emergency rooms and is contributing to improved access to health services.

Eric Stefanson goes on to say: Another important area where we are improving access to health services is through primary health care, the basic care that is the first line of defence in the treatment of illness and in the promotion of health. Several primary health care models are being tested in Manitoba, including four community nurse resource centres. For example, we have already implemented the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre and several additional primary health care centres around the province are in the planning stages. Examples of such initiatives include proposals for the Francophone centre and primary health centres in other communities. But no matter how good our illness care system becomes, it is far better to keep healthy than to suffer the burden of illness or injury. End of quote.

The current Government has done nothing but to slow down the movement towards primary care. They are now announcing things that we were doing in 1999. In fact, they are now just putting in place narrow focus programs, where in 1999 we were announcing multifaceted programs, and I quote: Let me just list a few examples of the innovative programs that help families raise healthy children and that lead to the promotion of good health.

Women and Infant Nutrition, or WIN, provides up to \$65 per month to help women on

social assistance eat well during pregnancy and during the first year of their child's life. Stop FAS works with women at high risk for delivering babies with fetal alcohol syndrome. BabyFirst funds visits by public health nurses and home visitors to help new parents provide good care and nutrition, and EarlyStart helps families meet the ongoing health and development needs of growing children. End of quote.

Mr. Chairman, this demonstrates that our government knew how to focus money where it was most needed and to create multifaceted programs that would deal with the most important issues. We were ensuring that taxpayer dollars would focus on the areas of highest need.

The last statement of Eric Stefanson that I will have time to review is, and I quote: I want to acknowledge that as a new Minister of Health I am building on foundations that were laid by my predecessor. I am proud to continue the work of building on a plan to ensure the system is here today and into the future. We are very fortunate in Manitoba. Our economy is strong, our fiscal house is in order. We have the ability to build on very strong foundations. If we all work together, if we have the will and if we have the vision, we will build the health system that Manitobans need and deserve. So in the new millennium we will need to continue to make new choices and decisions. All our efforts are aimed at one goal, a high-quality health system that is sustainable for now and for the future. I want to remind all of us that the health system is far too important for narrow interests. End of quote.

It is clear that the Conservatives knew in 1999 and still know now that the health care system should provide a wide range of health services to fill current and future needs so that Manitobans can live longer and healthier. It should be constantly looking for alternative ways to fill the needs it is currently filling and searching for new or more appropriate treatments. It is a needs driven system and will only be seen to be successful if it fills the needs of Manitobans.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) has stated in the House and publicly that 90 percent

of what the Conservatives did in health care was right. I wholeheartedly agree with him. In fact, during this past year, as I have reviewed various files and planning documents, I have to say that I was overwhelmed by the progress our government had made in health care in the last decade. I was impressed with the vision, with the plan, with the innovation. In many areas Manitobans were leaders in Canada, and we did it during a time of fairly substantial financial instability. How we achieved so much despite the challenges that we did face still surprises me. But there is no doubt what I saw articulated in document after document was a solid vision for health care, with sound prioritization of what was needed to strengthen our health care system and a clear indication that our goal was to improve patient care and patient outcomes.

But to listen to the Minister of Health, even during his opening remarks, and his many comments over the past year, one would think that with his criticism after criticism of the previous government that nothing had ever been achieved. However, I would again remind him that when he became the new Minister of Health and had a chance to begin to review our complex and complicated health care system, his reaction was to recognize our accomplishments and to praise us for doing 90 percent of what we had done in health care he felt we had done right, which brings us to look at where our health care system is at today.

The kind of spending we are seeing is, I feel, unmanageable and unsustainable over the long run, particularly in this area of health care and the many challenges that are going to be in our future. We have seen health spending increase by \$469 million over the 1999-2000 Budget. That is a 22% increase in two years. That is almost half a billion dollars. Health care spending is now 38 percent of Manitoba's total Budget or \$2.6 billion. Because we have not seen a plan for health care, I have little comfort or little confidence in this Government's ability to manage the health care challenges wisely. They do not appear to be looking for the efficiencies in health care. They do not seem to be looking for the innovations which could help make our health care system stronger. It takes very little effort to defend the status quo. It is so interesting to note that right after the NDP

government formed Government the Minister of Health said, and I quote him: We do not have any control over spending. The buck stops nowhere.

It looks like it appears it still stops nowhere. He said then when the budget was \$2.1 million, that spending was out of control. He called it a disaster. Half a billion dollars later, I wonder what he calls it now.

The Minister of Health also said that every day he spends on the job is like a frightening ride on a runaway train. Well, it almost begins to appear that maybe that train has derailed itself a little bit, and we have to wonder where the spending is going to stop. How can it possibly be sustained at this rate? Where is all this money the minister has now built into the baseline going to come from down the road, in future years, especially with some of the huge expenses which will arise in the next few years?

* (16:20)

After riding an election promise to eliminate hallway medicine and fix health care in six months with \$15 million, the Doer government pumped half a billion dollars into health care, and we still have hallway medicine and health care is not magically fixed like they claimed it would be.

In opposition, the NDP demanded over and over that when we were in government we should put more money into health care, and we did add more money as we were able to and as we were able to meet the increasing demands in health care, so we did put more money into it. Then they became government and accused us of reckless spending. Then, interestingly enough, they built all this so-called reckless spending into the baseline and added 6 percent on top of that, and then they overspent that amount by \$75 million.

Well, the Minister of Health said the buck stops nowhere. He is wrong. Whether they like it or not the buck stops at the desks of the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Health Minister. They have choices to make. As we unravel their spending in Estimates, it will be interesting to see where they have chosen to spend and why they made that

choice, and if it is making a difference to the patient. Is health care 22 percent better? Are patient outcomes better? I think the evidence is saying no, despite the fact that the Doer government has increased health care spending so that Manitobans spend well above the Canadian average and spend more than any other province in Canada on a per capita basis.

Has all this extra spending, half a billion dollars in two years, helped them to keep their election promises? No, Mr. Chairman, it has not. Throwing money at health care is not the way to make the system sustainable in the long term. We have to manage that spending wisely and fairly. Money alone is not the solution, as we have seen these past 20 months. Informed, solid spending decisions need to be made based on a vision and a plan for health care in Manitoba.

The recent report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information called *Health Care in Canada 2001* demonstrated that Canada ranked third among G7 countries in terms of health care expenditures per person behind only the U.S. and Germany, yet there is little evidence that spending more meant better health care. The World Health Organization has rated Canada 30th in the world and the U.S. is rated 37th.

This report told us that we are not getting good enough value for the health care dollars we are spending. Failure to achieve that potential is due more to systemic failings than to technical limitations. When we look at Manitoba we see restricted access to specialists, longer waiting times for surgery, longer waiting times for diagnostics, longer waiting times to get a hospital bed, hallway medicine is alive and well, the nursing shortage has doubled, there is a growing shortage of physiotherapists, lab techs, X-ray techs and on and on.

I am not surprised that there has been an erosion in public and professional support. We see patients forced to adapt to our failing system. Patients are fleeing Manitoba to have tests and treatment in the United States. Patients have seen their autonomy and choice reduced due to queuing and rules that force them to go to whatever ER is dictated to them. We see patients forced to obtain part of their care in one institution and then obtain medication elsewhere.

We see patients choosing to pay for alternative medicine in part because they cannot obtain timely access to traditional health services. The patients pay for the lack of planning, and it also causes Manitobans to lose confidence in the health care system. Manitobans loss of confidence is particularly tragic as it strikes at the core of what we believe in as Canadians.

I would like to cite an international study which reviewed the experience of people over 65 in five countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, U.K. and the U.S. I would like to do this because it is the elderly who experience the health care system most often. This study told us that Canada ranked fourth out of five in access to needed medical care. They tied for last with access to specialists, was fourth in waits for surgery, was last in availability of nurses in hospitals and third in receipt of extra help after hospitalization.

Manitoba is an example of a province where untargeted increases in overall government health spending is ineffectual. We have the highest per-capita provincial government spending, and there is no reduction in waiting times. This demonstrates that others can and do better. Other countries create plans, measure outputs and create public confidence. Why can we not do this in Manitoba?

We need to plan now for the extra demand that the baby boomers are starting to place on the health care system. Hospital costs and demands have begun to rise sharply as baby boomers are reaching their mid-fifties. By the time baby boomers are 70 years of age they will use hospitals five times their lifetime average, greatly increasing the costs. We will obviously need a system which is much more efficient and has more staff in all areas. The bad news is that 50 percent of the current nursing staff are baby boomers.

Mr. Chairman, the *Free Press* has quoted the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) as saying there is no grand scheme. The World Health Organization has told us that formulating health policy, defining the vision and direction is a basic task of government. Why is the Doer government abdicating its responsibility for having a health plan? As a nurse, I learned that

planning was extremely important, and that was what I did everyday as a nurse, and I expect no less of a government.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I end my remarks and I look forward to asking further questions in Estimates.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the critic from the Official Opposition for those remarks.

Under Manitoba practice, the debate of the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of a department. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of this item, and I will proceed with consideration of the next line. Before we do that, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table, and we ask that the minister introduce his staff present.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I am joined by Milton Sussman, who is the Deputy Minister; Dwight Barna who is Acting Director of Internal Programs and Operations; and Audrey Wilgosh who is the Assistant Deputy Minister of Regional Affairs.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for those introductions. We will now proceed to 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$579,000, on page 89 of the main Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Mrs. Driedger: I have been asked by the Chairman to just indicate to the minister that if we can proceed the same as we did last year in terms of having some degree of latitude, that we would start out globally, and as my colleagues came in from the other committees that there would be a chance for them to ask global questions, and as we were to proceed, we would, if the minister so wishes, go through a line-by-line process.

Certainly, I will do my best to adhere to all of that. It is a very large budget, and I anticipate actually several days of global questioning like we did last year, and then I am quite prepared to go into the line by line. The global questions will be largely around policy, and, certainly, I would indicate that I am very flexible. If the minister's staff are not here, I am quite prepared to come back to certain questions when he does have staff available in certain areas, if that is his wish.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the member for those comments. I concur that we proceed on that basis. I appreciate her flexibility, as she appreciates ours as well. So I think that is a fair start.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it agreed to then have a global discussion on this department first, then later on line by line? *[Agreed]*

Mrs. Driedger: In starting with, I guess, the Executive Support, I would like to welcome the new deputy minister into his job and the challenges that he faces. As I am not very familiar with Mr. Sussman's background, I wonder if the minister could tell us a little bit about Mr. Sussman's professional background.

* (16:30)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Sussman joins us directly from being the vice-president of the long-term seniors care from the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Prior to that he was 13 years as the executive director of 1010 Sinclair, and prior to that extensive community involvement.

Mrs. Driedger: I am curious, in terms of this particular job, I know that it had been filled before with somebody in an acting capacity. Knowing that health care is such a huge challenge, I am curious how many people applied for the job. Mr. Sussman obviously rose above all of them to get it. Congratulations.

Mr. Chomiak: You know, I cannot recall in terms of the selection process how many applied. There were applications, and then there was, I think it is something in the neighbourhood of, well, there were a lot of applications. We short-listed down to, as I recall, if memory serves me correctly, it was five. I think that was what happened.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the minister could just give me a bit more of an indication of the process that was followed. Were head-hunters hired? Were ads put in papers across the country? Is that normally how one would fill this role?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, in fact I had a discussion in this regard with the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) with respect to

the determination of a deputy minister. An agency was used, applications were put across Canada. There were several applicants from outside of Manitoba that applied. The usual ads were put in. The company that provided that did the usual summaries and breakdown of each candidate.

Mrs. Driedger: Would a minister normally play any role in hiring a deputy minister, or does that happen at a different level within government?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, effectively the deputy minister reports to the Executive Council, to the Premier, actually, through the Clerk of the Executive Council.

Mrs. Driedger: So is the minister then indicating that he, as a minister, would not have had any role to play in the hiring of a deputy minister?

Mr. Chomiak: No, Mr. Chairperson, I am not saying that. I am just outlining who the actual person reports to and how the actual structure works.

Mrs. Driedger: So could the minister clarify, would he have played any role, say, in interviewing the short list.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

Mrs. Driedger: In looking at page 23 of the Supplementary Estimates book, it indicates, the Managerial line is showing a salary of \$126,000 this year and \$117,500 last year. Would this be the line indicating the deputy minister's salary?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister tell me what the salary scale would be at this point in time for a deputy minister in Health?

Mr. Chomiak: With respect to the salary scale, I will have to provide that information to the minister. There is a scale that applies to deputy ministers, and I do not know it offhand.

Mrs. Driedger: In that same particular area, the numbers for 2000-2001 are different from last year's Estimates book for those same numbers, and I wonder why that would be. I thought the

numbers, for instance, for 2000-2001 would be the same in all books and why they would now look a little bit different.

Mr. Chomiak: What numbers is the member referring to?

Mrs. Driedger: Under Estimates of Expenditure 2000-2001, where it says Managerial \$117.5, Professional/Technical \$141.7, Administrative Support \$259.3. Those numbers are different from the Estimates book last year for that same period of time, and I am wondering why they would look different.

Mr. Chomiak: I am familiar with that process and that in fact is the case. They are adjusted numbers from the previous year.

Mrs. Driedger: As I am fairly new to the process, I wonder if the minister could explain to me "adjusted numbers."

Mr. Chomiak: I am advised firstly that these are Estimates of Expenditure based on what is proposed budgetary expenditures. Through the year there were some salary adjustments that were allowed within there, as well as some other related adjustments to individual salaries that reflected the actuals that occurred that are now in this book for the actuals that are reflected on the category Estimates of Expenditure 2000-2001.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister of Health tell me how many staff there would be in the deputy minister's office?

Mr. Chomiak: The advice that I am given is that it is four, including the deputy that would be five.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister identify the names for me and tell me if they are new or the same as last year, and whether they are a part time or full time?

* (16:40)

Mr. Chomiak: We will provide the member with that information.

Mrs. Driedger: In looking at the organizational chart, I note there have certainly been some

changes in there and I do not recall the date but could the minister tell me when the fourth ADM was added?

Mr. Chomiak: August of 2000, I am advised.

Mrs. Driedger: I see that the associate deputy minister position is vacant. Has that been vacant since Sue Hicks left that job?

Mr. Chomiak: At this point it is still vacant.

Mrs. Driedger: Because it is such a significant position, I am curious as to how the department is functioning by having that as a vacant position and, therefore, whatever the programs are called underneath, how they are reporting then through Health.

Mr. Chomiak: There is an acting individual in that position.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate who that acting person is?

Mr. Chomiak: That individual is Linda Bakken.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate when Linda Bakken assumed the acting role?

Mr. Chomiak: I am advised it was near the end of September.

Mrs. Driedger: I notice also that Mr. Barna is still in an acting position, and I understand that he was in an acting position in last year's Estimates. The minister had indicated to me last year that there was a competition underway with regard to filling that particular job, and I guess I am wondering what is happening with all of that in terms of that competition. Has it ceased to exist? How long will Mr. Barna remain in an acting position, or will he actually assume that position?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, as I understand it, the competition was inconclusive in May of last year, and the new deputy minister of Health is endeavouring to finalize all of these positions, he is hoping by the end of June.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate: Is Linda Bakken there on a secondment? If she is, from where?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, she was the former director of Capital Planning in the department.

Mrs. Driedger: Is she then on secondment into this position?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, she is not on a secondment in the sense of she is not from outside of the department, but she is in the acting position. Her position, I believe, as director of capital, is being filled by someone else on an acting basis.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister tell me whether he is proceeding then with a competition right now to fill that position, or how is that being handled?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, those determinations I am leaving to the determination of the deputy minister.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate for me what the deputy minister might be doing in terms of trying to fill that position or if there is anything happening right now or if they are going to wait awhile before anything takes place?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, that position and all of the other positions are a part of the endeavours of the deputy minister to deal with these matters by the end of June.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister tell me, just because I see it is now part of the Estimates. There is an Office of Protection for Persons in Care. Where would that fit in this scheme of the organization chart?

Mr. Chomiak: It is under Internal Programs and Operations.

Mrs. Driedger: So just to confirm then, that department is reporting to Mr. Barna?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, through Corporate Services to Mr. Barna.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate for us how many staff he has in his office, who the EAs, SA, special advisor are?

Mr. Chomiak: Jean Bourgeois is a special advisor to the minister. Kim Morrison is a special assistant. Scott Harland is a special assistant.

Mrs. Driedger: Are all of these staff full time?

Mr. Chomiak: I believe so. Certainly more than full time, as far as I know.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the minister could indicate for me, in each of those special assistant roles and special advisor roles, what the salary scale of each is and where each of them is on that scale.

Mr. Chomiak: I will endeavour to come back with that information.

Mrs. Driedger: Some of these positions must have changed over this past year because certainly I know now that I am talking to somebody different when I have to phone up there. Has there been some staff changeover in this past year?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

Mrs. Driedger: Would it be in the area of special advisor or special assistants?

Mr. Chomiak: There has been a change to the special advisor. There has been a change to special assistant in the form of Mr. Harland, and Ms. Morrison continues in her position from when we last discussed.

Mrs. Driedger: And does the minister have any executive assistants?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I have an executive assistant in the constituency who is the same person I have had, Evelyn Livingston.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister then indicate that, out of the special advisor and special assistants, he would have three staff in those positions?

Mr. Chomiak: I have a special advisor and two special assistants, and then I have—and the member for Russell-Roblin would know better. I have an executive assistant as well.

Mrs. Driedger: Is that the total then of the minister's political staff?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I believe so, Mr. Chairperson.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister tell us if he has any political staff that work for him that might be paid through another department?

Mr. Chomiak: No, I do not think so.

Mrs. Driedger: I would ask then who his Cabinet communications people are that are connected with him. Maybe we will start there.

Mr. Chomiak: I am not sure I understand the question.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister tell us which Cabinet communications people are assigned to work with him with immediate issues?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the general media work that I generally do with Warren Preece.

Mr. Derkach: Just for information, Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the minister whether or not Mr. Warren Preece is paid from the Department of Health.

Mr. Chomiak: No, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Derkach: So does the minister have any other communications staff besides Mr. Preece?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not believe so. There are IRD people, right, that we have always had, but, other than that, no. There is the IRD group that does all the IRD stuff. That is in fact the same people. The only people that I am aware of that do communications for me is Warren Preece, communications.

* (16:50)

Mr. Derkach: Can the minister advise us where Mr. Preece's salary is located?

Mr. Chomiak: I think that is through Executive Council.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the minister could undertake to find out through which department Mr. Warren Preece might be paid.

Mr. Chomiak: I am confident that it is Executive Council.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister tell us if there are any reclassifications within the department?

Mr. Chomiak: I am not certain what the member is asking.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister just tell me if, in his knowledge, there have been any changes, any staff changes within the departments where people have been reclassified at different levels, perhaps moved up levels?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I would assume in the department that there are dozens, if not hundreds of reclassifications.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister undertake to find out what these might be and give us an indication if these are just normal reclassifications, you know, changes in the year, or if there have been any significant reclassifications through the department in the past year?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, that is a highly subjective determination. If the member is asking if any of the political staff in the minister's office have been reclassified, I do not believe that is the case, if that is what the member is looking for. In terms of the department itself, there are numerous reclassifications that occur all the time. They are just part of normal departmental operations. So that is what I am aware of.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate if there have been—and there certainly does appear to be some changes—but what he would consider minor or major reorganizations this past year and if he could just explain how some of the different programs were moved around.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, what essentially happened with respect to the organization was that there was a recognition that the External Programs and Operations had far too much by way of areas, as I recall. Secondly, one of the things that we determined was that if a Department of Health is going to be regionalized there ought to be a significant—in

fact, there is this rather overwhelming recognition in the Department of Health that we are no longer really, in essence, a deliverer of programs. Rather, our role and responsibility in an evolving health care system of regionalization is to be more of a monitor and evaluator, et cetera, and that is a significant change. That is something that has been part of the movement last year and movement this year to change actually part of the outflow, outlook and the nature of the department.

Hence, what you see in the new flow chart is an assistant deputy minister responsible for regional affairs, Ms. Arlene Wilgosh, who has under that particular category a whole series of initiatives that relate to a lot of programmings, some of which was under the External Programs and Operations, but a lot of it relating to regionalization and regional affairs.

Essentially, roughly that is the major significant changes I think that have occurred in terms of the organizational structure.

Mrs. Driedger: The home care and long-term care have been delineated specifically, and I do not believe last year they were called that. Are they here because those are new departments, or is it just a renaming of something that was in place?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I think it is just a case of delineating the specific programs in a particular category. It is not that there is any new entities or any new individuals. In fact, it is just a little bit clearer in terms of reporting structures.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate if there are any planned minor or major reorganizations forthcoming?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, at present the plan generally is to proceed. The deputy minister has indicated there is going to be some finalizing of positions, et cetera, before the end of June. I should indicate that I do not anticipate a significant change to the structure, although I think I said the same thing last year, and I think the minister who preceded me said the same thing and the minister preceding me said the same thing, in fact, they did, and I did. However, having said that, what I think you will see is a

recognition that we want to evolve the department more towards a department that is conceptually more akin to a monitoring-evaluating type of department as opposed to a program delivery department. Together with that, in the plan sense, you will see changes, but in terms of the actual structure per se, I do not anticipate significant changes from the way it is outlined in this flowchart, subject to the qualifications I said earlier, which is that both myself and every minister that has preceded me has said the same thing, I know that for a fact. It is just one of those things.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate that with regionalization and the health authorities taking on the operations, and, as he indicated, the monitoring, et cetera, will be more Manitoba Health's role, the policy development, is there an intent at all to downsize Manitoba Health?

* (17:00)

Mr. Chomiak: I think that it is likely inevitable that the Department of Health will be physically downsized.

Mrs. Driedger: Has the minister had an opportunity to review how the Health Department in Alberta is set up? I understood that despite the largeness of what they have to deal with in Alberta, Alberta Health is quite a bit smaller than what we have. Is that an accurate statement?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not know if it is an accurate statement from my understanding of Alberta, insofar as they have a number of agencies that are semi-autonomous and special operating agencies that are indirectly related to Health, which I think is one option. I actually am a big fan of the Health Minister in Alberta, Gary Mar. I like him a lot. I had planned actually to spend some time with him in the next few months, because I wanted to compare notes in some areas. At that time I will probably get a better understanding and review of the situation.

Mrs. Driedger: I cannot recall, but from the Webster report it seems to me I recall that he was indicating some fairly substantial changes, feeling that with the emphasis on the delivery of care happening now with the regional health authorities that Manitoba Health really did not need to be as big as it was. Are you in the process of implementing any of those recom-

mendations that he would have made in that report?

Mr. Chomiak: That is a complex question. I do not think it could be answered in a short statement. There is no doubt, and I have said this publicly and otherwise, that with the advent of regionalization, the role and function of the Department of Health has changed. I think the natural evolution of the department is such that it will continue to change. In my own view, my own corporate structure view, I see it more as a holding company entity, but that is just a personal thing based on part of my experience. Nonetheless the department will evolve into a different function and role. That is what Webster suggested.

Now, just let me tell you why it is a little bit more complicated then. For example, out of the 1100-or-so-odd employees at the Department of Health, 500 are at Selkirk, which is directly operated, Selkirk Mental Health Centre. Another 90 or so are at Cadham Provincial Lab. So there are some entities that are still directly, there are some direct functions that the previous government operated directly out of the Department of Health and did not regionalize, et cetera. There is a balance of entities that comprise Health not directly. Therein lies part of the complexity.

I know that a study was done under the previous government with respect to their own function as SMHC. I have only had occasion recently to look at that role study, which suggested a whole bunch of variations with respect to when and if and what SMHC, for example, should comprise. So if for example SMHC was moved out of the Department of Health, it would almost cut the personnel at Department of Health literally almost in half. The next question, and that is where we get to Alberta, would be: Should it be part of a sort of separate mental health entity functioning in the mental health field? Should it be part of a regional health authority? Should it be a special operating agency? Should it continue at the Department of Health? All of those were canvassed in the study that was done for the Department of Health several years ago.

In theory we want, and in theory and in practice we are moving the department towards a

role and function of that being an overall—I use the word "holding company." It is not quite the right word, but it sort of captures the essence of it. You will hear complaints in the regions that Manitoba Health is too rich. You will hear complaints at Manitoba Health that the regions are too rich. No, you will not hear that. Nonetheless, there is a need to have a balance in terms of roles and functions. Unfortunately, and this is a little bit sensitive because Health has been through so much change and fluctuation for the past decade that when one moves on this, one wants to move I think carefully and with the best interests of everyone in mind. In theory, yes, we are going to move to it; no matter who is in administration, they would have been moving in that direction. The question is how we achieve that goal.

Mrs. Driedger: Is the minister then intending to put some kind of a process, like a structured process in place that would look at changing either the organizational structure or the roles or the management? Is there other than just sort of going day to day and watching as things roll into place, or is there actually going to be some kind of a process put into place that would be followed, and this would be something that would be managed as you went?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I do not think it is accurate to say that this is day to day. There is far more thought and far more organizational structure that has gone into it than that, but suffice to say that there are a number of options that are being reviewed and looked at.

Mrs. Driedger: The numbers in the department would certainly be a lot more clear. Oh, I can see now. Yeah, 415 for Selkirk Mental. Removing that from the mix here would certainly give a good picture, a much clearer picture of the number of people that are actually in the department. I see that from last year's numbers to this year's numbers, there have only been three people added to the mix, added to the total numbers.

I guess I am back to the question because, in the last election, the minister did make an election promise to decrease the bureaucracy. It was a pretty clear indication that that was where they wanted to go in Health because the minister

was highly critical of what he felt was too many people in the bureaucracy, and that he intended to decrease it. So we are now two years into this. Last year, I believe the numbers were decreased by maybe nine, and now they are back up by three.

I guess I would like to ask the minister what his intention is in order to try to reach that election promise of decreasing the bureaucracy.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, that is why we melded together the two regional entities that the former government had put in place, two bureaucracies, two separate entities to run in one city. That is why we thought, and it was well received outside of Winnipeg and within Winnipeg with respect. Despite protestations from some people that we should not do that, I think it has functioned very effectively. By melding those two separate regional organizations together, we thought that was a very effective way to achieve our goals.

Mr. Derkach: So is the minister saying that that is exactly what he meant during the campaign when he said that the department needed restructuring and needed downsizing was the simple change of two agencies to one, and that met his goal? Is that what he is saying?

* (17:10)

Mr. Chomiak: What I am saying is particularly during the course of the election campaign, one of the things that we heard consistently over and over and over again from people in the field, well, it was actually, as I have said on many occasions, there were a couple of things we heard: First was bring back the Diploma Program, but the second was too much bureaucracy in terms of the two health authorities. That was so obvious and came on so strong that that is why, despite protestations from particular individuals on the member's side of the House, we melded the two bureaucracies. We melded two regions into one.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I do not want to get into a fight with the minister here because I seem to recall what the election commitments were. I guess they had such a dramatic impact on me

that I still cannot forget them, but I want to ask the minister whether this in fact was what he meant during the campaign, because he certainly did not reference and neither did his leader reference the one entity, and that was the amalgamation of two boards into one.

The minister knows full well, in his discussions with the previous minister, that indeed that was the direction the former minister was going to be moving in, but he did want to ensure that the two entities were operating effectively before he did that. I do not fault the minister for doing this, but I am asking the question: Is this the extent of his commitment that he had made with regard to reducing the size of Manitoba Health?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not want to counteract the member's recollection of events, but I think if he looks deep in the recesses of his memory, as I have just endeavoured to do, he will see that there was a commitment to meld those two authorities together, and that was specifically made during the campaign.

Mr. Derkach: My question is not specifically with the two authorities. My question is with regard to the entire department, Mr. Chair. I am asking the minister whether or not he feels now that the department is right sized to the extent that no more changes are going to be made with regard to downsizing it based on what his commitment and some of his platitudes were during the election campaign.

Mr. Chomiak: I have already indicated that there are a number of options that we are looking at with respect to the department in terms of structure, and I said that any administration would be looking at, and regardless of political stripe, just from a straight administrative and managerial viewpoint, a different way of organizing a Department of Health given that there is a commitment to regionalization.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, obviously the minister, if he has a plan, will have had some input from the department and perhaps from some outside sources. Is the minister going to be in a position to share with colleagues in the Legislature his plan for right-sizing the department?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not think it is correct to say that there is a plan for right-sizing the department. What there is is a plan for better organizing the department in order to deliver what is necessary for Manitobans better. Let me just use as an example one of the areas in the Department of Health. It has been under extraordinary pressure for the past six to eight months and that has been the Public Health department. The Public Health department of Health has done, as I said in my earlier comments, a flu vaccination campaign, a pneumococcal vaccination campaign for the first time, extensively involved in a water report and water follow-up, a huge involvement obviously in a meningitis vaccination campaign, now extensive and completely controlling a hepatitis C look-back, trace-back operation. That branch of the department, and I just use that as an example, has been extraordinarily—in fact, I have had to weigh decisions managerially based on what I thought was the capacity of that branch of the department to do things. I have had to weigh options because that is part of any managerial decision because of what they have been under.

So one can easily make an argument. One could make an argument quite easily that, given the activity and what will be obviously intense greater activity in the area of public health because it is very clear from what we are doing where we are going, that one could see, for example, a move towards enhanced capacity in that particular area. On the other hand, as I indicated before, there was a study, for example, by the previous government that SMHSC should be configured differently.

So there are a variety of options and routes that we are going to proceed down. Suffice to say that from a structural sense and we are intending to move the department more akin to what a regionalized government requires, and I know the member had extensive experience in doing that in terms of his reorganization of the Department of Education. There were variations in terms of how the former member, the former minister reorganized the Department of Education to deal with different priorities. It will evolve and it will change, Mr. Chair, and I think it changed the day we came into office to the extent that it would have been the same had the members stayed, that we were committed to

regionalization. We were not going to turn the clock back on regionalization, but we made that decision. It then sealed the direction of where the Department of Health should go. There could have been a question mark, for example, or difference had we come into office and said we are not sure about regionalization. We are going to go a different way. Then the department would have obviously been structured differently. We are clearly going towards an area of continued regionalization.

Mr. Derkach: I thank the minister for that response. I do go back to the campaign, and, of course, health was a fairly prominent and important issue through the campaign. There were statements being made, I guess, by all parties with regard to health, but the most significant statements, in my mind, were made by the present minister and by his leader, now Premier (Mr. Doer), with regard to how health could be changed and fixed overnight. I think, after having had an education within the department as minister, the minister now understands that many of these issues cannot be turned around on a dime and many of the commitments that he had made certainly cannot be lived up to. I think that has been proven over time.

The minister did say that, for example, I will just use an example, and the minister can correct me if he likes, we would do away with waiting lists in six months and that indeed we could do it with a minimum cost of \$15 million. So, to that extent, I think the minister has realized that some of these things cannot be changed within the time frames that we sometimes commit ourselves to. I think he did that on the basis of two things, one, on the basis he needed to make an important election commitment, and, secondly, he was not up to speed with what could be done in a given period of time. So I think the minister has realized that some of these things cannot be done as quickly as he would like.

I guess, where I am going is to ask the minister, with respect to the department, I do not fault the minister for wanting to make changes. When you listen to the people who have been involved in the department and worked for the department from one administration to the other, they certainly have a lot of knowledge and a lot

of depth with respect to how we could evolve the department into a better delivery system. I admire the people who work in it.

For us who are in the political field, if you like, we try to learn as much as we can and get as good an understanding of where it is a particular department is going, whether it is health, education, agriculture, whatever it might be, but it is also important for us to have a minister share his intentions, and when the minister was critic for education, I know he pressed me on these issues. I simply want to ask him in return, I guess, what his plans are for the reconfiguration and the reorganization of the department from what it presently is.

* (17:20)

Mr. Chomiak: I am glad the member referenced the hallway medicine initiative. I was glad that his critic, the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), referenced the CIHI report, because it is not CIHI—Manitoba gets recognized as having done the best job of hallway medicine in the entire country, nationally. In fact, as I said often in the House, I was very pleased to see that Ontario copied, program by program, programs we announced on November 22, 1999, with respect to hallway medicine because of the success that built upon, and, in fact, at a conference in Ontario, Manitoba was cited as the example for dealing with hallway medicine. So I am glad the member recognizes that and recognizes CIHI and recognizes what has, in fact, been the case in the province.

We have not been afraid. We have not been afraid to put our money where our mouth is. We published the statistics on the Web site. Oh, now I must say, periodically, there have been, I think, a few weeks over a couple years' period where the numbers have not have been as good as we would like, and members have jumped up and down and called press conferences and done everything under the sun to suggest that somehow the fact that there was a problem a week or two or three is a failure of our commitment to deal with hallway medicine.

Well, the members can twist it anyway they want. They can twist it any way they want, Mr.

Chairperson, but I will tell you that national organizations have recognized it. I am glad the Member for Charleswood cited CIHI as an example, because CIHI is the very agency that said that Manitoba had done a better job than any other jurisdiction with respect to the hallway situation. So I am glad that we said it. I note that the member's statements are not always consistent in that regard, but I guess that is part of it. There will be disagreement and there will continue to be disagreement. I suppose two, two and a half, or three years from now, the public will decide again whether or not commitments made were lived up to. I think that will be very clear at that time.

With respect to the organization, I do not know how much clearer I can be other than to advise the member of what I advised earlier, that in point of fact this is the structure that we are functioning with. This is largely the structure that will continue. However, I indicated that in an evolving situation of regionalization there is inevitably going to be change that reflects the needs and the requirements of the province. We cannot remain static and we cannot keep an organization functioning one way when in fact it is more efficient to function another way. If the members want us to hire consultants to come in to do a kind of analysis, I do not think we are going to do that. If that is what the member wants me to do, I am not going to go out and hire a consultant to go in and restructure or do restructuring.

What we will do is, as I indicated, we are going to evolve the department. There are a variety of options and approaches we can take with respect to how we deliver and what we deliver. The essence is we want to become more of a monitoring, an accountability agency in moving Health towards structurally what we think it ought to be and what it ought to be in a regionalized sense.

The Member for Charleswood cited Alberta as an example. There are a variety of examples and structures in place. We think we have evolved the department and changed the department quite significantly in the last 18 or 19 months with respect to the way the department was structured. There have been some changes that more fit or are designed to

deal with delivery of programs. We have seen changes in the way we approach the regions and deal with the regions. We have seen an evolution and the development of the relationship between the Department of Health and the regions. One of the goals of this present structure, as I indicated earlier, was to make the department more able to deal with regional interests.

There is a need to deal with standards and standard measurement and outcomes and outcome measurements and monitoring. That is one of the areas that we definitely have to move towards. There is a need to have an understanding of risk and risk management. Those are all areas that we need a better development in the department on and that we are going to move towards.

So generally what I am saying is we are moving the department more to an agency akin to doing that. There are going to be some changes. The overall structure as it presently stands, the basic structure I think will probably remain. It will be some of the emphasis and some of the additional duties that will be assigned to some areas. Some other areas will see a diminishing or a moving of duties to other areas.

I think that all of this has to be looked at in a context. I think the member should recognize the context is that the Fyke commission has reported, Sinclair has reported, Romanow will report. I think it is very clear to all of us who are involved in health care that there is a need to change some of our orientation in terms of how we approach health care.

Fyke was very strong on matters of quality and dealing with quality standards and quality control. Indeed that was one of the major recommendations of Fyke. I think in essence that is what Sinclair was all about. Sinclair, if you wrap it all up, basically dealt with quality and quality control.

Very shortly the Thomas commission will be making recommendations, and that is partially one of the issues that I am waiting for. The Thomas commission is going to make recommendations with respect to how we approach the recommendations in the Sinclair

inquiry. I expect that there will be attention paid—so the member can read through what I am saying—to some structural issues. I expect it will happen in Thomas because I cannot see how it cannot happen.

So if the member will understand there will be some changes. There are different options in our approach, but clearly there are general directions we are going to move in, and some of the matters and issues that are going to be occurring in the next few months could have an impact on how we organize.

Mr. Derkach: I do not have any qualms or any difficulty in the minister changing the department. I mean that is his right and certainly he needs to do that in a way in which he thinks the Government will be able to best address the issues that the department and the regions face.

I want to harken back to his early comments about—

An Honourable Member: We should only do this for a limited period of time; otherwise we are going to do this forever, but go ahead. You owe me so—

* (17:30)

Mr. Derkach: It is my right.

Mr. Chair, I want to simply reiterate for the minister that during the election campaign, and I will never forget the ad where the Premier was not looking directly into the camera that was filming him but was looking to the side, and he made the commitment where hallway medicine would be eliminated in six months. *[interjection]* We have a copy of it, Mr. Chair. The minister made that same commitment. Now, yes, hallway medicine over the course of time has been reduced. It would have been reduced had the former administration stayed. I think as people we all had the same goal to try to reduce the number of incidents of patients in hallways. I think that was regardless of who the minister was or is. That was a goal of everyone. But the minister made a commitment in the election campaign that he could not live up to. Understandably, I think it was a wrong-headed

commitment to make at the time. However, it did get the sympathy of the people on his side.

The minister says that he is looking at changing the department to where, in his words, we think it ought to be. I guess what we are trying to find out from the minister is what his thinking is that the department ought to be, would look like. How are these changes going to impact, for example, on the different regions?

Although regional health is here to stay and we acknowledge that, we see problems out there, significant problems, problems which need to be addressed in terms of deficits, in terms of programs that are available in the various regions. There has been some enhancement of programs in some of the regions, but indeed there are regions that are still struggling, regions that feel somewhat abandoned right now by the department in addressing some of the challenges that they have. We know the problem of small rural hospitals where all of us want to make a commitment that these will never close. We do not want to see the Saskatchewan model apply to Manitoba.

I think in reality we all know that changes have to occur. The population is changing, the demographics are changing. We need to address the issues to ensure that we better address the true health needs of people in the regions. I think our regions are struggling. They feel that now they are in a position where they have to make some of these decisions, and they are going to have that responsibility left on their shoulders.

I look across at the member from Dauphin, and that same issue I know persists in the Parkland Regional Health Authority because part of it does flow into my area. I know it is the same in Marquette. I know it is the same in the southwest region where these issues are being struggled with.

Now, in his change of the department, is the minister also looking at how we can better address those particular needs of these regional authorities in rural Manitoba? I know if you look at the comparison of money that has flowed into the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority as compared to some of the rural regional health authorities, there is a significant disparity there. I

understand that we have our major hospitals here and that some of the major challenges are here, but, on the other hand, what I would really try to discourage the minister from is diminishing the effectiveness of the regional authorities outside of the city.

So, Mr. Chair, I do not fault the minister for making changes. I encourage him to make changes, positive changes, but I would also ask him if he would be so forthright as to share his view and what his Government thinks, what they feel that the changes to the department are going to be in the next short while.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I note the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) was indicating to the member for Roblin what his favourite ad in the campaign was, where the reporter was looking for the Oakbank personal care home. That was pretty powerful.

I want to correct the member. In a percentage increase, the Winnipeg Region is receiving less this year than the regions outside of Winnipeg. In fact, we restructured—*[interjection]* Well, the member says categorical funding, but in terms of percentage we deliberately structured it that way to give additional funding to the rurals, as opposed to Winnipeg. In fact, in the vast majority of cases, the Winnipeg Region got less as a percentage of funding than the majority of the rural health authorities.

Now, what the member asks is a significant question. I have stated, and I have stated this publicly on many, many occasions and otherwise, that as we move down the road of regionalization, the structure of the department has to change to deal with that role and function of regionalization. As we evolve as a department, the department will assume different roles. Some functions will probably be devolved to regions, certainly. Some structures may become different entities in their approach. Overall, the department has to become a more significant factor in the monitoring and the evaluating and the outcomes of what happens in health care.

It is not a political statement to say that we do not know overall everywhere in the country,

but Manitoba, we do not know really well. We do not do outcomes well. We do not evaluate and assess outcomes very well. So, in many cases, we put resources into functions and programs that have no discernible positive benefit one way or the other, and we do not measure that.

Why I kept referencing Fyke was that that is really one of the recommendations of Fyke. The whole exercise that I discussed in my opening comments with respect to the federal-provincial relations had a component of that agreement that would monitor and would report health indicators after a certain period of time in each region, so that we could do a comparative analysis of what was going on.

CIHI, and because CIHI is funded by Manitoba Health, is sort of one of those agencies that we all fund, that we all participate in, that is designed to try to do that. In their recent report that the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) referenced, where she indicated we were per capita spending—although, if you look at sex-age adjustment it does not flow, but that is another issue—per capita higher spending in some areas than in other areas. It cited the fact that we have more nurses than other areas. I should tell you that that is not significantly different than the 1992 blue book that was put out by the Department of Health, but that is a whole other debate. So we are doing monitoring, and we are doing evaluation, but we do not do it that well.

The Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation was set up to do that, and it has a number of deliverables every year that are dictated by the provincial government that it delivers. One of the more recent ones is a reference that the member made to small rural hospitals. It did an evaluation of all of the hospitals outside of Winnipeg. I am not saying this for partisan reasons. That evaluation was directed by the member's Executive Council when he was a member of Cabinet. They said go do an evaluation. It came back and it did an evaluation of the effectiveness of hospitals.

So we have agencies like CIHI and the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation that do some retrospective evaluations. There are a

number of areas that we do not do that effective follow-up in terms of what we are putting our resources into. A lot of it is intuition, a lot of it is just what people feel has to be done. It is ironic the member cited the Saskatchewan experience, but the data in Saskatchewan shows that in those regions where a hospital was converted to a primary health care centre, the outcomes of health in those regions increased. On the other hand, as I have often cited publicly and otherwise, the incumbent government does not have a seat outside of the urban centres. So it makes for an interesting discussion.

The point I am making, in a roundabout way, is the Department of Health intends to and will do a more significant job of co-ordinating its role and function and has improved dramatically since we have been joined by Ms. Wilgosh in terms of our communications and our assistance to the regions. We have to do a better job of monitoring and evaluating programs and systems.

* (17:40)

We need to and will develop far better financial systems with respect to how we account for and allocate funds. I mean, the member was part of Executive Council. We go through Treasury Board, right, and we have the same kind of system where we divide up the money on a program by program basis. We give it to the Department of Health, the Department of Health divides it up program by program. They give it to the regions who then divide it on a global basis and go back to Health. That was recommended by Webster, and we have to strengthen the financial capabilities of the department to do analysis, to do follow-up and to assist the regions. There are needs to co-ordinate activities between various regions. There is a co-ordinating rule. There is RAM that is set up but there is also co-ordinating roles for overall responsibilities, and we are looking at different options in that regard for certain commonly used functions. I do not mean laundry, I mean IT.

How is IT approached? Is it the Department of Health that runs the IT? Is it the regions who actually are responsible for all the IT that run IT or is it a combination of both and how is it co-ordinated? That is a very significant issue. There have been various options and experiments that

have occurred in other jurisdictions and in Manitoba with respect to that, but I will leave that aside because that in itself is a whole major issue.

The department has evolved since the time that we came into office. We structured it differently. We structured it to move it more towards a regional-based approach and reflecting the regions. We have some work to do in terms of making it more substantive to allow to do more of the qualitative analysis that is necessary in the health care system so that we can make determinations from a policy sense as to where our resources should go, and we can do follow-ups.

At the same time, we have stressed far more than I think in the past that operations are conducted by the regions. They are the operators, and they conduct the delivery of health care not health micro-managing particular decisions. Now it might be that people want us to do it that way, and there might be a public interest in some cases for us to do that but we have tried very hard to have the regions run and to accept their operational recommendations because they are there, and they are best familiar with the terrain. I do not mean that physically but I mean that in general. They are best familiar with the situation in their particular regions. So we have tried to give them support in that regard. There is at least half of the department that is still under delivery of straight operations and that still exists.

We have recently put in place the protection of persons in care. I said in my opening comments that we hope that will be the first basis of a province-wide complaint resolution system. We want that to be the first leg of a system that sees complaints and concerns about the health care system function province-wide, have responsibilities more taken by the regional health authorities but overall supervisions from the Department of Health. One of the main areas that we have to get some control over is how we evaluate. In a lot of ways, we have delegated authority for evaluation to professional bodies, and we do not have a role anymore, generally.

If one looks at the legislation that we passed collectively in this Chamber, government does

not have representation, for example, on the board of directors of the professional associations. We have delegated that to associations. So we have to evolve different ways of doing follow-up in terms of what happens out there in the field to maintain the responsibility of government. Clearly, public health has become much more significant in the eyes of the public, and it is something that we have to spend more attention on.

So, generally, I do not know how helpful that is to the member. There will be changes. I am awaiting the recommendations of the Thomas commission, which I anticipate will be reporting shortly, as to some of their advice in this regard, because I know from my reading Sinclair that there needs to be some increased capability of the Department of Health to monitor, I guess would be the best word, and if Thomas does not recommend something in that regard, we will do something regardless, because that is clearly an issue that we have to deal with.

If you look through Sinclair, there are a variety of functions that would see an expanded role of the Department of Health and a lessened role of the Department of Health. If I were to say we are going to downsize the department today and we are not going to worry much about—let me give an example to the member. If I were to say, you know this insured benefit stuff, we are going to contract out, or we are going to give it to the regions, for example. I do not think you can but—it may not be the best example.

Sinclair strongly recommends more sending of patients outside the province of Manitoba on a variety of issues. Who monitors that and who delivers that? Who makes that determination? Is it a region? Is it a Health department? Is it another outside agency?

So that is one of the reasons why I am not being specific; I am being general in terms of the goals and directions we want to go. There will be some specific changes. They are going to await Thomas and some of the other information that is being done. We know that we have to evolve and change, and we are going to do that accordingly.

Mr. Derkach: The minister might appreciate why I am asking these questions, because as of

late we are not sure the department or the minister has been forthright with Manitobans in terms of the direction that he is moving in. We seem to find out after the fact.

Mr. Chomiak: Give me an example.

Mr. Derkach: He says give me an example. I will cite two very significant examples.

One was the criticism of frozen food, what they called frozen food, during the election campaign. Then the minister decided to buy the company for \$30 million, and the food is still the same. As a matter of fact, if he challenges me, I have statements from administrators that will confirm that the food is exactly the same as it was prior to him purchasing the company.

So what did we accomplish by that? We spent \$30 million plus another \$12 million—

Mr. Chomiak: We were in debt 30 million, Len, you know that.

Mr. Derkach: We spent 30 million taxpayer dollars. In addition to that, we spent another \$12 million in renovation costs, of taxpayer money.

Now, that is a philosophical change, and the Government has the right to do that. I will not take that away from any government, but what was ironic was—the minister talks about outcomes. The outcomes have not changed.

The outcomes have not changed. The food is still the same. As a matter of fact, the acceptance of that food is as high today as it was before. Indeed, the only thing that has changed is now the Government is quiet about it. We never did make an issue of it because I do not think there were people dying in the hallways because of the kind of food that was being served. Nobody, nobody in his right mind would ever want to serve bad food to clients, and I do not think any minister did that in a deliberate way or attempted to.

The other issue, of course, is the purchase of the Pan Am Clinic. We are not sure whether the deal is done yet or not, but, clearly, here is a direction that the Government is moving in that is contrary to what I think Manitobans were

viewing in terms of the effectiveness of this clinic. I have some personal experiences with the Pan Am Clinic within my own family, and, of course, a lot of those injuries that happen in a sports-related activity were handled by the Pan Am Clinic in a very effective way. You could get in and out very quickly, with no waiting lists, and the procedure was done, I think, to the highest quality.

* (17:50)

We see the comments the minister makes with respect to private clinics in the city. He says we do not want any private hospitals, but then he does not define the difference between a hospital and a clinic. When people talk about setting up a clinic, he prefers to call them a hospital. He does send some signals out there that cause some questions with respect to the direction the minister and the Government are moving in.

Now, yes, the Government has every right to purchase the Pan Am Clinic. However, in terms of accountability, I think we have the right to ask the Government why we are spending \$4 million, \$7.3 million for that matter, in establishing a clinic where we have unused capacity in the system, and no matter where you go, whether it is to Grace Hospital or whether it is to Victoria or whether it is to Health Sciences or whether it is to St. Boniface, there is still unused capacity in the system that could accommodate the needs of Manitobans.

So now the question arises why are we going to expand the Pan Am Clinic if in fact the minister does not want to see an institution like this run by anybody but Manitoba Health and the Province? We have existing hospitals, we have existing surgery theatres in the system. In fact anybody you talk to in the system will tell you that there is unused capacity in our system as it presently exists. So where are we spending our money? Is it being spent in the most effective way?

We have questions about that, and this is the place we are going to raise these questions, not purely to criticize the minister but to give us I guess a flavour of the direction his department is moving under his direction and under the direction of this Government.

What was accomplished through the frozen food issue? That is a question I think Manitobans are asking. We saw a system that the minister felt he had to own before it would be credible. Anybody who saw through that situation understood exactly what the philosophy of the Government was with respect to moving in that direction. I guess my question to the minister is can he give us any indication of how he is moving in a general sense in terms of acquiring these facilities that did not have to be owned by the department but now are owned by the department?

We talk about regionalization as being a good concept, yet on the other hand, we are bringing more stuff into the bowels of the department, increasing if you like the overall complex of staff, I would suggest, and then saying that regions are going to have to manage some of these other issues and we are going to give the responsibility to them.

Within a general context as well, the whole issue of ambulance service comes up in the rural part of Manitoba. Where we used to rely significantly on volunteers, we are now talking about strictly hired personnel for ambulances, because we seem to be running out of volunteers. Why are we running out of volunteers? Have you asked them? The volunteers will give you a different story than what some of the paid personnel will tell you with respect to how they are treated and what expectations the system has of volunteers.

I guess these are issues of a general nature which we are trying to get a better understanding of in terms of the direction the minister and the Government are moving in. I hope the minister will forgive me if I am pressing a little too hard, but it is just for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the direction this Government is moving in.

Mr. Chomiak: Well, I am glad the member talked about frozen food because—

An Honourable Member: It is cook and chill now.

Mr. Chomiak: You know, Mr. Chairperson, the member does not seem to understand that we

had a \$30-million mortgage that we had guaranteed as a Province in a contract the members opposite would not make public that we were in debt to. We owed the money on it. We guaranteed it. In fact—

An Honourable Member: You bought it.

Mr. Chomiak: Well, Mr. Chairperson, we bought back the mortgage at a discount to the guarantee and we saved several million dollars. So I ask you, \$30 million in debt and owed, well, what, \$28 million or \$27 million, same issue, only we saved several million dollars.

I do not know if the member has owned a house. The member has owned a house. When you are in a mortgage, you generally owe that money or you give up the asset. The asset in this case would have been to give up Health Sciences Centre or St. Boniface Hospital to pay the debt. So we did not have much choice. We were in debt for that.

You know, it is interesting, because when I addressed the MMA, the first speaker that came up to the MMA said—he is a very respected physician, an award-winning physician across this country, I think he has the Order of Canada, he is world recognized—and he said: You will have to forgive me, I am going to be a bit personal. My mother is in a nursing home, and I think the best thing that your Government has done is get rid of the frozen food and the project you are undertaking. I know it is going to take some time because you are working on it, but that is the best move you can make on behalf of my mother and me.

That is what he said. And I was kind of taken aback by that, because I recognized and he recognized, I think the public recognized that we worked very hard to get us out of the difficulties we were in vis-à-vis frozen food. *[interjection]* The member indicated: Has the food changed? As we have indicated, the food will change and the member can judge—*[interjection]*—well, the member can shake his head but the point is if we were not in office, that bouncing pea would still be bouncing around. So, Mr. Chairperson—

Mr. Chairperson: The Member for Russell, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Derkach: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, the minister is now provoking some debate. I was simply asking a question with regard to the philosophy of his Government as it relates to the ownership of the frozen food lab and also the Pan Am Clinic. The minister goes on to talk about the bouncing pea, but the reality is that Manitobans do not see any change in the quality of food that is being served today as compared to what was being served prior to the issue.

We could have, Mr. Chair, as we toured the hospitals, drag cameras around with us as the minister used to do when he was in opposition. He would drag cameras with him to the hallways of hospitals. Also, with regard to the food being served in the cafeterias, he would have the cameras with him everyday. We could have done that, but we chose not to. We went on a tour of facilities, but we did not do that because I think that is the lowest form of politics one can experience. So we did not do that.

So I would like the minister to stay on topic and talk about what his direction is with respect to the facilities and the transfer of these facilities to public ones.

Mr. Chairperson: The Member for Russell has no point of order. It is a dispute of the facts.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, in fact his point of order, I think, could have garnered a point of order from me in terms of his provoking debate. But I understand; we do have these healthy conversations. I will continue my response with respect to frozen food and Pan Am when next we—

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

* (14:50)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Doug Martindale): Good afternoon. 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 for the Department of Agriculture and Food. Consideration of these Estimates left off on page 30 of the Estimates book, Resolution 3.2. Risk Management and Income Support Programs. The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Chairman, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) indicated yesterday that he had no further questions on Crop Insurance. If there are not any further questions on Crop Insurance, we had agreed that the next section that we would go to is the Agricultural Credit Corporation. We have the staff from the corporation here now.

I would like to introduce Mr. Gill Shaw, who is the general manager; Karen McEachern, director of Finance and Administration; and Charlene Kibbins, director, Corporate and Program Development.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Martindale): Is it the intention of the committee to pass 3.2.(a) Manitoba Crop Insurance?

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I just want to make one slight correction to the statement that the minister made of what I did say yesterday, that I had no further questions of Crop Insurance at this time. It was simply because I did not want to delay their procedure or process. I think we had indicated that we would not keep them here longer than a day. We were interrupted by the bells of the House in a vote to be concurred in, which happened, and the House then decided to call it six o'clock. Maybe during the course of concurrence I might have some further questions re Crop Insurance. There are a number of questions that I would have asked the corporation, but I can always take the opportunity to meet with them, ask for a meeting with them on my own to ask some of those kinds of operational questions.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

I am, however, very concerned that the minister take action to reflect the wishes and/or needs of the farm community. During the course

of public meetings that we have had, I have had virtually all winter, in various communities across the province, it is becoming more and more evident that people are not happy with the Crop Insurance Program as it is currently designed. I think that is a fair comment, and the minister should not feel threatened by that. It is not a reflection of her administration. It is simply a reflection of reality that is occurring in the agricultural sector and the realities of the costs that farmers incur and the differences in production practices that they are making.

We have talked about diversification. The minister has talked about diversification. The previous administration has talked about diversification for the last decade. Currently, I think many of the existing farmers that are still there, especially the young ones coming on-stream, are taking a real serious look at the traditional way in which they practised agriculture or their fathers practised agriculture and are making some very significant and massive changes in some operations. I think that needs to be reflected from a departmental standpoint.

I was somewhat encouraged, Madam Chairperson, that the minister, or that this Government, chose to include food in agriculture, although somewhat apprehensive of that application, because food in itself, the application of food and the integration of food within the Department of Agriculture, has some major connotations, if you want to allow the expansion of that word. Food, food and beverage, food and manufacturing, food and processing all go hand in hand. It becomes a very broad perspective if you choose to. So one has to wonder what the primary sector will have for an influence on this department in the future, and what this minister's vision then is of the department as it currently exists, and how she intends to take it forward. I think that includes Crop Insurance, maybe some significantly necessary changes in Crop Insurance, and many of the other branches within the Department of Agriculture.

I think that the group that is in front of us—and I welcome staff here of Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. I think they have

served Manitobans well in the past. Again, I reflect on the changes that are happening currently, the significant expansions of some operations, the incorporation of some family farms, the very structure and the current and maybe past perceptions we have had over the family farm and how we envision the family farm in the future, I think, are going to be important.

I am going to direct my questioning somewhat to the staff at Agricultural Credit Corporation as to what their views are, and I am going to ask the minister what her visions are and how she intends to direct the affairs of the Agricultural Credit Corporation in the past.

So the first question I would have of the minister is: Have you given any thought to the broad views of the needs and reflection of the hearings that the Standing Committee on Agriculture has had, and the presentations that were made on numerous occasions reflecting the need to broaden the scope of the Agricultural Credit Corporation? What has the minister done, or what is the minister contemplating in giving direction to Agricultural Credit Corporation in that respect?

Madam Chairperson: Just for clarification, are we going to be passing 3.2. Risk Management and Income Support Programs? *[interjection]* Okay.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I thought that we had come to an agreement that we would work through one section and then pass it.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, I think I clearly left the view on the table that I would prefer to have a global discussion on agriculture, and at the end of the day when I am satisfied as critic that I have asked the questions that I want from the various sectors, that I will then be willing to pass the whole encompassing budgetary proposals in Agriculture.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you for that clarification, but you also indicated that this particular one was going to be treated differently because of the staffing, and I just needed that.

Mr. Jack Penner: We can and probably will treat that one differently. However, I am not prepared to pass it at this moment.

Madam Chairperson: Technically speaking, we are still on 3.2. unless we have leave to skip ahead. So we need to have leave from the committee to skip to 3.3. Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. Does the committee give leave?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, I am prepared to give leave on this, but I would hope that by the end of the day we could pass certain sections of it so that staff can get some sense of where we are going in these Estimates, rather than having to go back and forth. I understand what the member is saying. He may have some questions he wants to come to, but at the end of the day, with all due respect to the staff, we are able to move on and give them indication of where we are going. So I am prepared to give leave and then work it that way.

With respect to the member's question, he talked about whether I reflected on the needs and on what I heard at the committee. I can say to the member that I took very seriously all of the comments that I heard at the committee and I would have to say that, looking back, I do not think that there were that many issues raised with the Agricultural Credit Corporation at the hearings, although there were some that had raised it.

The member asked about what our vision was for agriculture. Well, I can indicate to him very clearly the family farm is very important to this Government. If he would recall from the presentations that we heard, we heard many people talking about families leaving rural communities, the impact of not having families, on schools, on businesses, on health care systems, so I think that the family farm and people living in rural Manitoba are very important. Certainly there are changes that are taking place in agriculture, and I think the credit corporation plays a very important role in it.

We also recognize that there is a greater need for finances in the farming community, and that is why in the direct loan program, we have raised the level from, what was it, \$325,000, now to \$400,000. In the corporate and partnerships the level was \$650,000; that is now raised to \$800,000. On the loan diversification guarantee there was a limit of \$3 million. Now

there is no limit. The limit is set by the project, and each project is viewed on an individual basis to determine what level of loan guarantee will be provided. I can indicate clearly to the member that the corporation continues to look at agriculture, at the industry in Manitoba, look at where the changes are happening and review where there is need for changes in support and guarantees and loans. Those are the changes that have been made this year, and the board continues with the corporation to review the needs on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, reflecting on what was just said a little while ago about Crop Insurance and whether we had agreed to pass this section. I think we indicated yesterday that we would hope to deal with both Crop Insurance and MACC as the minister had requested so that staff could return to their positions either in Portage la Prairie or in Brandon, and I had concurred in that. However, there was, I believe, an hour's delay in the procedure, so therefore we were forced to consider today as a continuation of that, and I am glad to see MACC staff being able to be here today. Certainly we will not unduly try to disrupt the operations of the department.

However, this is the only chance that we as legislators and critics for the department get to question the department on operations, whether it be the Young Farmer Rebate program or whether it be the beef co-operative loans program or what happens in the pork sector, or what happens in the feathered sector or the grain sector or any of the other sectors, and I intend to fully pursue the rights and responsibilities of the critic to do that. So we will leave that line open, and I want to assure the minister if we require further attendance by staff of Manitoba Crop Insurance, I will notify her in time. We will not unduly disrupt or delay their presence here. There is no need for their presence here today. I doubt whether there will be tomorrow, but I want to retain that option if I need to, to bring them back at some point in time to further question them.

* (15:00)

If that is in concurrence with where we are at, then I would like to ask the minister whether

she has any intention of changing the rules for the beef industry in their programming to ensure proper expansion and proper financing abilities, respecting that operations have grown very dramatically in some areas and the needs for credit and/or cash flow. The new generation operations in our beef sector as well as our pork sector are significantly different than they were even three years ago.

I am wondering whether the minister can give us an overview as to what she intends to do and what her vision is in that respect for the Agricultural Credit Corporation, how she intends to flow money through the corporation to the livestock sector.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member raises the issue of the beef industry. Certainly that is a healthy industry right now and one that we hope will continue to stay at a healthy level. It is that beef industry that is helping many producers who have a mixed operation. It keeps their operations going. Given the high prices, there is a need for additional financing. That is why recently the financial level for cattle, for cows as breeding stock, was increased to a thousand dollars a head. The corporation continues to review the level of support needed for farmers to be able to diversify into these areas.

I would share with the member that on the Feeder Association and the stocker program, there are 50 000 head that are financed right now. There is \$16 million of financing in the Feeder Association; in the stocker program, there is \$26 million, for a total of \$42 million in support; in the Feeder Association, there are 19 000 head; in the direct lending or in the stocker loans, there are 31 000 head that are involved.

Mr. Jack Penner: There has been, Madam Chairperson, some questioning from the beef industry as to whether the minister is contemplating increasing the loans capability of some of the industry. I am not sure whether it is the feeder or stocker co-operatives that have been formed and what their ability to access funds through MACC will be and/or whether it is the individual's limits under the current. Can the minister inform us what those limits are in all three of those sectors? I think there is the

individual stocker loan program. There is also the co-operative stocker loan program. What is the terminology for the third one, the feeder stock and loan program?

Ms. Wowchuk: Under the direct loan for breeding stock the level is \$400,000 per individual or \$800,000 for a corporation. On the stocker loan the limit is \$175,000, and on the Feeder Association it is \$175,000. If individuals want to work together, there would be more than one person that could qualify for the loan as well. So it depends on who is applying, but that is the limit, \$175,000, both for the stocker and the Feeder Association loan.

Mr. Jack Penner: So that would mean that if there was a family of four, let us say, two sons, a wife and a husband, they could each qualify for the \$175,000 in a joint operation.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, there is a maximum of three applicants per site at \$175,000 each.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, the question that has been put to me in this regard, Madam Chairperson, the statement was made like this. In recognition of the fact that we have seen some very dramatic changes in agriculture, especially the livestock sector, that small producers are almost being put into a non-competitive kind of a position, in order for those small producers to expand, that they be able to be competitive in the marketplace. It is imperative that the loan limits need to be reviewed and raised to reflect the realities of the current marketplace and the price of the cattle in these stocker programs and/or feeder programs and that the corporation needs to be encouraged to expand those loan limits to reflect today's reality. Is the minister considering giving direction to MACC to review that position and, indeed, look at the possibility of expanding the limits on those stocker loans programs?

* (15:10)

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, the member is talking about the importance of small farmers. I think small farmers are very important and are very competitive in the whole scheme of things. Small farmers can participate in the

stocker loan, in the feeder loan and in the direct loan. So they can participate. They do not have to participate to the full amount, if they do not want to become that large. They can participate at a much smaller level.

I do not think that the call for more money is coming from smaller operations. I think it would be from some of the larger ones, but the limits are under review. In some cases, we have been asked to raise the limit, to consider raising it from \$175,000 per individual, but the majority of the clients who were recently surveyed have said and are saying that they are served well with the \$175,000 limit.

Mr. Jack Penner: That is interesting because the meeting I had in my office with a group of small family farm operations—these people were in the beef-cattle industry—indicated clearly that, if they wanted to bring their sons into the business in a meaningful way, they would have to have a significant increase in the limits to allow them to expand their operations to truly reflect the family involvement in the operations. They asked specifically whether our party would review those loan limits and take a realistic view of today's financial reality in the marketplace and whether we would consider expanding those limits.

These were I would consider not large operators. These were probably family operations that were between maybe 100 and 300 head of cattle on feed on their farms, which would have included cows, I would suspect. So I would not consider them large operators in today's environment, probably relatively small operators. I would ask again whether the minister is seriously going to take a look at this and give some direction to staff at the Credit Corporation to take another hard look at this.

Ms. Wowchuk: As I indicated to the member, the corporation is always reviewing the levels of support that are there and the level of loans that are available, but I would like to tell the member that on average the loans are about \$80,000.

Also he talks about a father-son operation. The loan is available to both partners, up to three partners per site. So that doubles the amount of money that would then be available. If it was a

father-son, it would be \$350,000. If it was three producers who were on one site, that is over \$500,000, \$525,000. The money is available there. As I indicate to the member, there is always review and this is one of the areas that the corporation is looking at.

Mr. Jack Penner: This is exactly the reason I raised this whole issue. In today's real world, a small family farm operation can in fact very often exceed investment limits of beyond \$5 million, and they need not be terribly large operations in that sense. If you are an operation with a father and three sons and respect the fact that they are going to have to make some capital investments by a land base that will support four families and buy equipment and stock this farm, especially in a feeder-type operation, stock it properly and bring in the inventories to reflect a real net return of what would be consistent with enough revenue to support a four-family base, I think you would respect that the limits under which your program would allow for monies to be borrowed would not be nearly enough to cover what is needed as an investment to bring this family operation into—I call a family with three sons in an operation not a large corporate operation; it is a small family operation—might be construed by some as a large capital base, but it is still a small family operation.

I think therein lies the problem sometimes, that the general public perceives an acreage amount of significance and/or a livestock amount of significance as large, yet the family unit be very small. We need to, I think, sometimes as government and from a political perspective, as well as an administrative perspective, take a realistic look at this, at this issue.

If it takes \$40,000 of net income to support a family in the city of Winnipeg, I think that is now—the poverty level is, what, \$32,000, \$38,000, somewhere in the neighbourhood. That is what they call the poverty level now. If you want to reflect on the fact that farmers should at least be able to live just beyond the poverty level, you want to bring that kind of a net income base into an operation of four families, that would mean \$120,000 net income at \$40,000 per family. If you respect that as a requirement from society, then one would have

to assume that based on average net incomes determined by the Department of Agriculture and others, have indicated as what has been returned to farm based on capital, that we are far beyond or far below what would really be required to set up an economical viable base in agriculture.

For that reason, I bring this point. I bring it from another perspective, and this really is outside of the realm of the cattle industry. When some farm operations are being put up for sale at current land values without cattle involved, current land values of somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$700 to \$800 an acre in the Red River Valley. If you want to pick up an acreage of, a neighbour's acreage, a neighbour leaves and you want to pick that up, MACC will simply not borrow enough money to make the transaction, and I can personally speak of that. I have three sons. We bought out, my sons bought out a neighbour, and they were told: Sorry, you have too much capital.

I raise the capital base requirement or analysis that MACC has held in the past as something that needs some serious reconsideration because, if a father wants to bring sons into an operation and/or even set them up as their own separate operation, and if the father's equity is required to underpin the loan as security, then the question becomes: Is there more equity than we will allow under our equity limits under the loans, and why is that? I say to myself, when I look at this from a business perspective, I ask myself the question: Why would a lending agency be concerned about too much equity to underpin a loan? It is almost to the point of being a bit funny, quite frankly, from a truly sound economical perspective because, on the one hand, economists and, I think, fathers in many instances counsel their sons and daughters that, in order to be able to be viable over the long term, you must ensure yourself to have a sound base of equity.

On the other hand, the MACC comes along and says you have too much equity. We cannot borrow you money. I find that somewhat contradictory in nature from a policy perspective. So I ask whether the minister is giving some serious thought about removing the

equity base limitations that are currently prevalent in their policy.

* (15:20)

Ms. Wowchuk: I think if we look at what the role of MACC was and the intent of it, it was never intended to be all things to all people. There are financial institutions out there that take on the major lending. The MACC was intended as a gap financing in those areas where people could not get the financing that they needed from financial institutions. There is only a certain level that the corporation can go to. The maximum allowed to a borrower is \$825,000 to an individual. That is not including the direct loan guarantee. To a corporation it is a little over \$1.2 million. So it is not the intent of the corporation to take over from direct lenders. The corporation works with direct lenders and helps secure funds for producers, but it is not the intention of the corporation to replace the lending that is available through direct lending institution.

Mr. Jack Penner: I think the minister missed the question. Maybe I rambled for too long. The question I ask is: What about the equity base requirements, the limitation of equity that is currently in place from MACC? Is the minister intending to change that?

Ms. Wowchuk: The goal of the corporation is to support entry farmers or low-end farmers, those who do not have the level of equity to get financing in other places, but the corporation continues on a regular basis to review its requirements and will continue to work in that direction, but, again, it is not the intention of this Government to change the goal of MACC, that is, to meet the needs of those producers who are getting into the industry and those who have a lower level of equity.

Mr. Jack Penner: I want to reflect on that statement, because I think that is a statement that is consistent with what has happened in the past. However, I say to the minister that there are times when a minister must review policies and mix them with reality. I also want to impress upon the minister the need to realize that there have been very significant economic changes and requirements in the agricultural sector.

When a combine alone can cost up to \$300,000 and when a tractor alone can cost up to \$300,000 and when a seeder alone can cost up to \$125,000, I mean, it does not take long before you hit a million dollars just to equip a moderate farm operation. So there will be no financial institution nor a government lending agency that will touch a producer that has not got at least some equity in base.

I think it is a bit of a contradiction, as I said before, to assume that one must build an equity base to be able to expand further to bring sons and daughters into the operation. You must have at least some equity to be able to look at an expansion, and then once you have come to that equitable position, one is very often faced at MACC with the response: Sorry, you have too much equity. I speak from a personal experience only a very, very short time ago. I think that is unfortunate. I think one should encourage by policy the building of a base equity that would sometimes exceed the financial requirements of a lending institution.

As a matter of fact in my view that would be preferable. So I ask the minister again, without reference to the corporation and what their current policies are. They have to state what their current policies are, and I understand that. Until the direction is given from the minister, nothing changes. We have always known that. That is the way government operates.

So I am asking the minister: Is it her view and is it her party's policy to allow for the expansion of equity and the extension of loans, the expansion of the equity base and the extension of loans, to those farms, be they small family operations or large family operations, no matter how you want to couch that, to expand that equity base and extend money through MACC to expand their operation and bring sons and daughters into the operation?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member talks about young people coming into agriculture. If we look at the age of our farming population and the amount of land that is going to change hands in the next decade, it is certainly a challenge and one that we have to look at. It is an issue that we take very seriously. It is an issue that we are looking

at in how to find a way that we can facilitate that transfer of land, that transfer of an operation from one generation to the next. Definitely we recognize that as a serious challenge that is facing us and one that we are working at.

The member talked about equipment, the purchase of equipment. He talked about the prices of equipment. That would be new equipment he is talking about. That has not been an issue. Purchase of equipment has not been an issue for the corporation. Certainly we will continue to look at ways that we can partnership with the private-sector lending institutes in order to ensure that young people can get into agriculture. We will continue to work, to address the challenge that I think is ahead of all of us, and that is the next generation.

I guess, to the member, the financing is readily available for producers who represent the top 25 percent of Manitoba producers.

An Honourable Member: No, it is not.

Ms. Wowchuk: It is available. The top 25 percent of producers can get financing through the banks, through credit unions, through the EPCC. So in my understanding and when talking to the banking institutes, if the top end of the farming community, the top 25 percent is not—it has the ability to work with financial institutions to get that money.

It is the lower beginning farmer, new entrants, the ones with lower income that are the ones that are having the challenge, but the issue also is the next generation. That was the member's question, and yes, that is one that we are taking very seriously and working to develop policy that will facilitate that transfer and the establishment of the next generation.

* (15:30)

Mr. Jack Penner: I am going to make this question very short because the minister seems to reflect on the comments I make more than on the question. So I will ask the question. Where the equity base is more than what is required or deemed necessary by MACC, and where there are young entrants into the farm operation, will the minister review that position and will she

review the equity base limitations that are now set by MACC policy, the limitations of equity at the upper end, when young farmers come in to make loans and they require the equity of their dads to be brought in and MACC says, sorry, you have too much equity in your base and you cannot borrow money. Yes, that is the case. There is a policy in place that when, as a unit, a father and a son come in to make a loan, the total unit is looked at as an equity base. As a matter of fact, it has been required to be brought in as an equity base. They look at it, and say, sorry, you have too much equity, we cannot borrow you any money. Are you going to change that?

Ms. Wowchuk: MACC reviews the net worth cap on a regular basis, and it was recently changed. When a father is working either with a new entrant who might be a son or a daughter, because there are women that will get into it, the net worth—it is the son's net worth that is looked at separately, and it may be that a guarantee is required from the other partner, but it is the new entrant's net worth that is looked at when a decision is being made on whether or not that individual, be it son or daughter, qualifies for a loan.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, I am not going to sit here and argue long because that is not the case. What I will say to the minister is that if and when a family farm incorporates and the sons and daughters are brought into the corporation and the corporation goes and makes the loan, and the corporation is told, sorry, you have too much equity, we cannot borrow you money, then that certainly does not apply.

All I am suggesting to the minister is that under the current circumstances, economic circumstances that farm families face in the reality of transferring assets, and in fact doing proper, long-term family planning, that it is very often in the best interests of the family to do that incorporation in order to transfer in a smooth manner the assets of the family to the ensuing generation. What I am suggesting to you is real because it happened in a case that I know a lot about.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member is raising a different issue than he raised in his first question. He is talking about incorporated farms. In the

first question he was talking about transfers between father and son. The issue he raised with incorporated farms is a real issue and one that is being reviewed.

So, if we are talking about individuals, the maximum net worth is \$650,000, but if you are looking at an incorporated corporation of four partners, then the corporate net worth could be \$2.6 million. That is a different issue than we were talking about earlier, but it is one that is being reviewed.

Mr. Jack Penner: I am glad to hear that, because if you go back to the Red River Valley and you take a half-section of land that is paid for at \$800 an acre and if there is a line of equipment that is paid for and that father and that son, be they incorporated or not, come to MACC right now and want to borrow money, they will be told, sorry, you have too much equity. That is reality and that needs to change, in my view.

I would strongly suggest to the minister to encourage the entry of young farmers into the agriculture sector that she takes a good, hard look at the limitations of equity that are currently in place in MACC and review them and change them to adequately reflect today's economic reality. That is all I have been suggesting.

Ms. Wowchuk: As I indicated to the member, that is something that is being reviewed, but I guess we all have to remember that the MACC cannot be all things to all people. There are other financial institutions that are out there that welcome agricultural financing. The intent of the corporation is the gap financing. It has not the capacity to be all things to all people.

Mr. Jack Penner: Therein I think lies the problem. Maybe what this Government needs to assess is whether they fully want to be in the business of financing agriculture or not and then make its position known in that respect, because once one finances with a certain financial group, very often there is a continuation of the financial needs on an ongoing basis. Especially if it is a successful operation, there needs to be lines of credit established and there needs to be an ongoing cash flow requirement established that one wants to deal with a financial institution that

you have started with. What you are really doing in many cases is saying to young farmers, I am sorry, we cannot help you, because either your father's or mother's equity base is too high, and, therefore, we cannot accommodate you into the entrance.

I would strongly suggest that if MACC or the Government of Manitoba wants to remain in financing of agriculture, wants to remain in that business, be it for small, starting farmers or larger starting operations, you will find, and I think your staff will support this, that once you have established an institution that you like doing business with on an ongoing basis, farmers seldom would want to change from that institution, be it a bank or be it the Farm Credit Corporation, be it MACC or a credit union. That is the simple nature of the beast.

I would strongly suggest if the Government of Manitoba wants to be involved in financing of agricultural units and operations, they should strongly consider changing their policy in that respect and encourage, once you have started with the corporation, to continue in good faith in the ongoing operation of that farm. If they do not want to do that, then I would strongly suggest that they reconsider their whole policy on ag finance.

* (15:40)

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I want to indicate to the member, if he has any doubt whatsoever that this Government is committed to the Agricultural Credit Corporation, I can assure him that there is a very strong commitment to the farming community, and it continues. If he looks at the steps we have taken, raising the direct loan limits from \$325,000 to \$400,000 for individuals, going from \$650,000 to \$800,000 for corporations, the increase from the Diversification Loan Guarantee from \$3 million to an unlimited amount, based on the project, the portfolio of the Credit Corporation continues to grow. It is a corporation that has a total portfolio of \$432.9 million. This is not going down. As I indicated to the member, the lending and the capacity of the corporation continue to grow, from 1999 to 2000 went up by 8.1 percent. That is not a small increase.

As I indicated to the member, we continue to look at how we can improve the programs. The member has touched on an area that is one that the corporation is reviewing. There are other areas that we are reviewing. When we look at the whole issue of the next generation of farmers, it is one that we are giving very serious consideration to.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): On the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, my question deals with the fact that you have kind of a window on what is happening in the farm community at the moment, because you have a portfolio of \$400-plus million which is out spread around the province in different areas of agriculture. There is a lot of concern that there are problems with young farmers getting in.

Can you tell us in the last year how things would compare with the last 10 years, for example, or the last 20, whether there are trends in terms of loans to young farmers and young farmers starting out? There is a lot of concern about farmers this year having difficulties getting into the field and getting credit. Can you tell us something about the profile of those who are in particular grains and oilseeds where the primary concern is in terms of loans, whether in fact this bears up, that there is a real problem in this community with people leaving and debts falling into arrears? Thirdly, can you tell us whether the problem, as it would seem, is much worse in western and southwestern Manitoba, whether when you map things out you can or cannot see a differentiation in terms of what is happening to loans in different parts of the province to grain or oilseeds producers?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, I thank the member for the question. With respect to direct loans, there was a total of \$39.3 million in direct loans, and 72 percent of those loans are to farmers under 40 years of age. So the younger farmers use the majority of the services and have the majority of the loans through the corporations. Of those, approximately 80 percent of the loans were from zero to \$100,000. That is the range of the loans.

With respect to arrears, the member is asking whether or not the grains and oilseeds are worse off or lagging behind more in their

payments than the others. From what I have here, we cannot compare that, but in actual fact, the arrears on loans were worse last year than they are this year. Last year there was 1.2 percent in arrears. In 2000-2001 there are 2.1 percent in arrears, and if you look at the southwest part of the province—I am sorry. I have to correct a number here.

In 1999 the arrears were 1.2 percent; in 2000 it was 1.1 percent. I turned those numbers around. I do not want to indicate that there are more arrears. There are in fact less arrears in 2001 than in the previous year.

The member asks about the southwest part of the province and staff indicates, no, there are not more arrears in the southwest part of the province than there are in other parts of the province.

Mr. Gerrard: It would seem to me we hear a lot about the crisis in agriculture in the province. But from what you are telling me, you are saying, well, we look at the situation at MACC, there is not a crisis, there is not a particular problem.

I think that it would be important to have an accurate picture one way or the other, particularly as we are in the last stages of finalizing a resolution seeking for additional help.

Ms. Wowchuk: I would not want the member to think at all that I am trying to paint a picture that there is not a serious situation out in rural Manitoba where in fact there is, and we have heard many times from the producers.

I want to reflect back on the southwest part of the province where I said that their situation was not worse as far as arrears go than in other parts of the province, but there is also a slowdown in activity in the southwest part of the province, so that is there. I think what we have to look at is the amount of money that has come in through various programs in support of farmers, so that has helped somewhat for the producers.

* (15:50)

I think when we look at it, over the last three years there has been money coming in and that is

helping farmers. What we see is that farmers are managing their debt. Farmers are working within what they have and making decisions within the framework that they have, and many are not expanding, many are not spending. They are managing within the resources that they have. That is a credit to the farming community and we have known that for years.

We talked about the level of income for farmers. Many farmers are living on very small amounts of money. That is just the nature of a farmer. You live within what you have, so they are managing. The option for people is the mediation board, and the number of cases under the mediation board is about the same as the last two years but there is a little bit of increase. I think there are about 30 per year in the last two years and that is up slightly, so that is an indication that there is—*[interjection]* Thirty per region, not 30 in total, so somewhere between 90 and 100, but there is a slight increase.

Many of the problems are in the short-term operating loans. MACC is in long-term lending in most cases. What we have done to help producers is to defer payments. There has been the deferral of payments in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. So the corporation continues to work with producers to help them through this situation. By no means do we want to see producers having an unnecessary burden if there is a way we can work with them. With respect to the situation facing our farming community and the low commodity prices, high input costs, it is very serious, and this is going to be another very difficult year for producers given that input costs continue to be at a very high level.

Mr. Gerrard: Just a follow-up point, and that would be that given the seriousness of the case that we are trying to make jointly as an all-party committee, it would seem to me that it is beholden on us to work with the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corp. and get as clear a picture as we can of what is actually happening because we are asking for some major new dollars. We have at least a window on what is happening with farm financing, and we cannot be crying crisis on the one hand and showing figures on the other hand which will say that everything is okay. I think if you are right, Madam Minister, and the indications are indeed

that there is a huge crisis out there, it must show up somewhere, somehow in the figures if it is a real crisis.

Ms. Wowchuk: I go back to what I said earlier, and that is within the financial situation we have now, farmers are managing their debt. Some of them are not able to do that, but some of them are working within that. Farmers are not making the purchases that they would normally be making. Farmers, I am sure, this year are going to make some very difficult decisions with respect to the kinds of farming practices they use, the kind of fertilizer they are going to buy and chemical applications because of the limited resources that they have.

We have heard many times from producers that the situation is difficult. Some have managed for the last couple of years, but some may be hitting the wall this year. When we look at MACC, MACC is the long-term lender. We have producer recovery loans. We have talked about deferring payments for producers, and all of those are being reviewed, but by no means am I saying in any way that there is not a serious situation. What I am saying is that farmers are managing their long-term debt, and the corporation is working with them to defer payments in cases where they have to, and we are working along with the producers. But we do recognize, and it is very obvious from the prices that producers are receiving and the costs that they are having to pay out that, in the grains and oilseeds sector, the situation is very serious. We have to continue to work with those producers, and that is why we have a variety of loans that are available, that will help them in a variety of areas, whether it is expanding at the livestock, whether it is diversifying their operations.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): I appreciate that the committee is currently reviewing the operations of the Agricultural Credit Corporation, which is continuing to do a great job for our farmers, and I am pleased to hear that from the brief moment that I was here.

But I promised some of my constituents, Madam Minister, that I would, at the earliest possible opportunity, lay to rest the recurring rumour that I hear through different parts of rural Manitoba, that she is about to replace her

current deputy minister, Dr. Don Zasada, who has had a distinguished public service career both in Ottawa and here in Manitoba, under both New Democratic Party and Conservative governments, with one Vicki Burns from the Winnipeg Humane Society. Could the minister confirm that rumour or lay it to rest?

Ms. Wowchuk: This is breaking news. The member from Lakeside always brings interesting information to the table. I would have to concur with him that the deputy minister in this department is doing a very good job, and I can assure you that there are no plans to have him replaced at this time. I would encourage you not to shock him with such news while he is sitting at the table. If this was going to happen, I would want to be better prepared than that.

Mr. Jack Penner: It is always enlightening to have the former minister of the department to come and ask a very directed and very pointed question. But it leads one to wonder, Madam Chairperson, whether, with all the noises that one Vicki Burns of the Winnipeg Humane Society has made lately about a certification process within the province of Manitoba, and that she and her society would set up a process of registration for certification of certain farms in this province, is the minister currently contemplating designating the Winnipeg Humane Society as the certifying agency for legitimately constituted farm operations in this province?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate, he is talking about this certification of certain farms that has been proposed by a group, and I can tell the member that I have not had any discussion with the organization with respect to that certification.

*(16:00)

If I recall the article correctly, the group was talking about niche markets, and if the organization has identified some niche markets, I would look forward to hearing from them on what their proposal is. Any market that opens up for producers that gives them another avenue, we have organic producers who are looking to certify their products, and they found niche markets. If there is organic production of

livestock that meets the needs in a certain market that will open doors and increase revenues for particular producers, then that is something to be considered. But at this time, I have had no discussion with the organization.

Mr. Jack Penner: Is the minister then saying she would welcome a proposal from the Winnipeg Humane Society, and if they should then request to become the certifying agency for these kinds of farm operations, she might consider using them as a certifying agency?

Madam Chairperson: I am just wondering, just for clarification for myself. I have been kind of looking through here. I am not sure if we are on topic or just where this might fit in.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, let me assure you we are dead on topic because this has everything to do with the financial liability of a farm and the future financing of these farm operations.

Madam Chairperson: Okay. We will accept that for the moment.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member raises an issue about certification of products and I will tell the member that that direction would come from farmers. If the farmers said that they were looking for a particular type of certification that would then allow them to come into some niche market and supply a commodity that the consumer was looking for, then I would have that discussion with the farmers. At this point I have not had a farmer organization or a commodity group come to my office or talk to staff about this particular issue.

We will wait until we hear from producers, but ultimately producers are always looking for niche markets and a way to add value to their commodity. If they raise the issue we will have a discussion with them.

Mr. Jack Penner: That says to me that if the Winnipeg Humane Society would join forces with the Farmers' Union and they jointly would come in to request a certifying agency to be established to designate certain operations as a given operation, she would consider using the

Winnipeg Humane Society as the certifying agency. Is that correct?

Ms. Wowchuk: That is not what I have said at all. What I have said to the member is that if there was a farm organization that was looking for a type of certification for their product to meet the needs of a niche market that would allow the farmer to increase the value of their commodity, and if they came forward with a proposal, that I would consider that proposal. If the beef grower producers or the vegetable growers or someone said that they had a commodity that they thought they could supply a niche market, I would be willing to sit down and have that discussion with them.

Mr. Jack Penner: We will get back to the operations of some of the agricultural industries. One of the most recent establishments in the province has been the entry into exactly what the minister was talking about currently, such as niche markets. One of them has become a fairly substantive industry and maybe the former minister could give us an indication as to how many animals were in fact being farmed today in the bison industry, or maybe the minister could tell us how many bison we currently have in the province of Manitoba or maybe even western Canada.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, bison are one of the important components under MACC. We do lending to bison operations. I can indicate to the member, under the stocker loans, that there are three feeder loans to three different clients for \$140,064 for 205 head. There is a direct loan for breeding stock and there were 10 loans under that program to eight clients, for a total of \$803,645, and that covers 183 animals. Under the direct loan guarantee program, there are two loans, for a total of \$675,000. In Manitoba there are about 14 000 bison and about 180 farmers. It is a growing industry in Manitoba, and I think one that we will continue to see grow in this province. MACC is very interested and willing to work with those people who are interested in expanding their operations.

Mr. Jack Penner: Having just recently met with the bison growers on a number of occasions, one has to reflect on their concern about the limitations through the MACC loans program to

the bison industry. Could the minister give me an overview as to the program that is currently available to the bison industry and how that reflects on other commodities such as the cattle industry? Is there significant differentiation in borrowing policy to the bison industry versus the cattle industry?

Ms. Wowchuk: The criteria for the loans is the same, whether it is for beef cattle, for dairy cattle, or whether it is for bison. The level of financing available varies. For example, for beef cattle we cover a maximum level of 80 percent financing. So for beef cattle the maximum financing available is \$1,000. A dairy cow with no records, it is \$700. For a dairy cow with records and good production, the maximum level of financing is \$960. For unbred beef heifers, it is \$700. When you go to bison, the bred heifers or cows at 80 percent, the maximum financing amount is \$4,800. In the yearlings, it is \$3,600, and in heifer calves—again all of these are at 80 percent—it is \$2,400, the maximum level of financing that is available. Certainly, given the cost of the animals, the level of support for the bison industry is much higher than in the beef industry, but in each case the total loan is the same and the maximum level of financing in each case is to 80 percent of the cost of the purchase.

Mr. Jack Penner: Just for clarification's sake, under the bison loan, at 80 percent, and the maximum amount is \$4,800 per animal. Is that for a bull or a cow?

Ms. Wowchuk: For the bred heifers or cows, that is \$4,800.

Mr. Jack Penner: And for heifers it is \$3,600?

Ms. Wowchuk: Is it for the yearling? For yearlings, it is \$3,600 and for heifer calves it is \$2,400.

Mr. Jack Penner: And the maximum amount per borrowing would be how much?

Ms. Wowchuk: The maximum amount is 80 percent of the cost.

Mr. Jack Penner: Are there any maximums other than that?

Ms. Wowchuk: If it is under the direct loan, the maximum amount is \$400,000. If it is under a stocker loan, it is \$175,000. The member was also talking about bison bulls. Through MACC, the full purchase price of a bull is financed.

Mr. Jack Penner: So the 80% level does not apply to the purchase of a bull?

Ms. Wowchuk: Under the stocker loan.

Mr. Jack Penner: Okay. I understand that. Now how about for a breeding bull? If the farmer wants to go out and buy a breeding bull.

Ms. Wowchuk: The corporation does not finance breeding bulls.

Mr. Jack Penner: I understand the migratory nature of these animals, and therefore, I hear what the minister is saying. I want to, however, go back to the stocker loan program and the limitation of \$175,000. If animals in fact are selling at \$3,600 and a \$175 limit, the question I have is—unless I have my information wrong, I understand that the yearlings are being financed at \$3,600?

Ms. Wowchuk: Just to clarify for the member, those are the females.

Mr. Jack Penner: And what would the yearling bulls be financed at?

Ms. Wowchuk: The price we have now is bulls are selling somewhere in the range of \$1.45 to \$2 a pound, so it will depend on the age of the animal and the size of the animal as to the price that will be paid.

* (16:10)

Mr. Jack Penner: Does the same principle apply to the bulls as it does to the—can they be purchased under the stocker loan program, or how would they be purchased?

Ms. Wowchuk: Feeder bulls can be purchased under the stocker loan program. It is the breeding bulls that are not covered through MACC.

Mr. Jack Penner: The limitation under the feeder loans program would be \$400,000.

Ms. Wowchuk: The breeding program would come under the Direct Loan Program. The limit on the Direct Loan Program is \$400,000.

Mr. Jack Penner: So the feeders could be bought under the Direct Loan Program. The limitation there would be \$400,000. Is that correct? Is that what the minister is saying?

Ms. Wowchuk: No. The breeding stock can be bought under the Direct Loan Program. The feeders, male or female feeders, would be bought under the stocker program and the limit on the stocker program is \$175,000.

Mr. Jack Penner: The yearling bulls would not be allowed to breed.

Okay, would I be able to request from the minister a paper identifying this, because, I think, at least I am not quite clear that I am quite clear on this? In order for clarity to prevail and that I am able to have a somewhat intelligent discussion with the association when I meet with them on this matter, could she, for clarification purposes, give me a paper that would describe exactly what the program is all about?

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, we will review all of the questions when we get through Hansard, that the member asked, and put together a package to outline for him the level of financial assistance through the various programs under which category the various species or classes fit.

Mr. Jack Penner: The concerns that the Bison Association had when we met with them was that the limitations on the stocker loan program were too low. They were asking whether Government might consider increasing the limits of the loan on the stocker program to reflect what is currently happening.

Ms. Wowchuk: I have been advised that the corporation has not had any requests for raising the level of the stocker loans from the Bison Association, but I will certainly have that discussion with them. Certainly the corporation is always interested in hearing what the various associations are saying, seeing what their financial needs are, and we will continue to look at how we can improve on programs to assist producers.

Mr. Jack Penner: We also met with the members of the elk producers association, and similar kinds of concerns were raised from their perspective as far as MACC's policies and borrowing policies. I think the major concern that we heard in both instances was that the price of the individual animal was substantively higher in the specialty breeding class of elk and bison compared to beef, and whether the corporation, MACC, correctly reflected the values of their stock that they had to acquire, and whether the same limits should apply. I do not know whether the corporation has had that discussion with either one of the associations in that respect, and/or if the corporation has had requests from those producer organizations to look at their loans program. They asked whether we would raise this concern for their industry.

Ms. Wowchuk: When I look at the numbers that I read to the member of the level of financing for beef and dairy cows versus bison, those levels of financing are in my view very generous because, if you look at financing of \$4,800 and this is 80 percent of it, in that case the financing is quite generous.

With respect to the need to raise the level of the loans, I am told that in the stocker loans with a limit of \$175,000 the average loan for bison is about \$47,000. So I think we are in the range of being able to accommodate the needs of the producers. It is something that the corporation follows. Should there be an increase in price and need to adjust those numbers? That is the discussion that takes place with the various associations, and we will continue to have those discussions with the Bison Association, with the Elk Growers Association and work to meeting their needs through the corporation.

Mr. Jack Penner: What sort of limitations are applied to the elk industry as far as loans are concerned. Are they similar in nature?

Ms. Wowchuk: The elk industry is a very new industry in Manitoba and the corporation does not have the data. It has not been that long-term industry to set those prices so we do not have those kinds of numbers at the present time. There is no individual level set for elk and loans for the elk industry are based on the overall viability of the operation. It is looked at as a

whole farm package rather than having a price set for a specific animal whether it be breeding stock or young stock.

Mr. Jack Penner: Maybe while we are on elk, basically what the minister has said then, is there is no criteria that has currently been established, and the corporation evaluates each application on its own merit based on numbers and the kind of an operation they have set. They go out and do the evaluation of the enterprise and base their assertions on what you see from the economic side as well as the actual establishment. Is that correct?

* (16:20)

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, with the elk industry. Because it is a new industry, it is based on the whole operation. That is how it is done now.

Mr. Jack Penner: This has nothing to do with MACC. Can the minister give me a bit of information as to what is happening to those elk that have been in captivity for a while and how the minister is contemplating dealing with the elk in captivity? How is she intending to dispose of them?

Ms. Wowchuk: I would just indicate to the member that we are waiting for some test results on the animals that are being held in captivity. CFIA is involved in the testing. When the testing is complete and the results are in, then a decision will be made. I would encourage the member to, if he wants to, get a little bit more information on that particular issue. When we have the Animal Industry branch here, I might be able to provide him with a little more detail.

Mr. Jack Penner: Just a few more questions for MACC. The provisions for impaired loans has not changed at all this year. Does that mean that the outstanding loans are similar to what they were last year? Has there been any increase or decline in delinquent loans?

Ms. Wowchuk: If you look at the number of clients in arrears in 1999-2000 versus the number of clients in arrears in 2000-2001, in 1999-2000 we had 353 clients in arrears for an amount of \$3.1 million. In 2000-2001, there are 339 clients in arrears for an amount of

Three thousand one. So the amount is virtually the same in both years.

Loans are reviewed loan by loan. There is an analysis done. As the corporation prepares for the provision that is provided for in the Budget, it is the view that the \$800,000 that was in last year's Budget and the amount in this year's Budget will adequately cover what is required this year.

Mr. Jack Penner: The delinquent loans have actually declined, then, in number.

Ms. Wowchuk: The number of clients has declined, but the amount of delinquent loans is very much the same.

Mr. Jack Penner: Does that mean that there has been a significant adjustment made to some of the loans by the corporation and/or by Government through mediation and/or otherwise to some of these delinquent loans?

Ms. Wowchuk: There is virtually the same amount. There has been no dramatic change in the last couple of years in the amount of loans that have to be reworked or worked through.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder if the minister could give me the actual numbers as to the amount of money that has been allotted through mediated process by Government.

Ms. Wowchuk: Could the member clarify? Are you looking for the operating loans? Which area is the member looking at? For refinancing?

Mr. Jack Penner: What I am really asking for is can the minister give me an amount of money that has been extended by Government, either through MACC or other agencies, to underpin the delinquent loans that have been mediated, gone through mediation and mediated to a lower level of liability.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: If I look at the refinancing approvals, there were 15 loans, that is last year, and a total of \$954,000 was approved in refinancing.

* (16:30)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Nevakshonoff): Who is on first here?

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Acting Chairperson, could the minister then tell me whether there were any direct write-downs of liabilities in some of these? If so, how many cases were there, and what was the amount of write-downs on these deficient loans?

Ms. Wowchuk: The amount of write-off in 2000-2001 was \$190,981, for a total of 13 clients.

Mr. Jack Penner: What about the special farm assistance amount? What was that designated for, and what does that line mean?

Ms. Wowchuk: Those are mediation board guarantees that are paid to financial institutions and could be paid to MACC as well.

Mr. Jack Penner: Could you tell me what that amount last year was, what the total amount expended there was? I see the amount of \$200,000 budgeted, but I do not have access to the direct expenditures.

Ms. Wowchuk: The information I have, Mr. Acting Chairman, is up to December 31, 2000, and there were a total of three payments. The total payment was for \$19,139, and I cannot indicate to the member—of that, \$6,087 went to MACC, and \$13,052 went to other lending institutes—\$13,052.

Mr. Jack Penner: The floodproofing loan assistance program, has that almost come to a close now, or how many outstanding accounts do you have there?

Ms. Wowchuk: There were, through both offices, in Morris and Winnipeg, 608 applications made, and, of those, 28 were withdrawn by the clients, and four of the applicants were in Winnipeg, so there is application approval for 595 applicants, for a total of \$33,279,056. Applications can still be made until this September.

Mr. Jack Penner: For a total of \$33 million, almost \$34 million.

Ms. Wowchuk: \$33.3 million.

Mr. Jack Penner: Simple mathematics—that would make it about \$150,000 a loan, \$160,000 a loan.

Ms. Wowchuk: The average would be about \$55,900. So I would say in the range of \$60,000 would be the average loan.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Minister, I think that concludes my questioning as far as—oh, no, one further one. How much money is expended every year on the Young Farmer Rebate program?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I will give the member an overview, a couple of them. In 1999, the amount was \$1,368,282. In 2000, it was \$1,271,175. For 2001, this is just an estimate because it is not quite complete, but it is \$1,518,198. The number of clients is increasing, as well. In 1999, there were 1209 clients; in 2000, there were 1267; and in 2001, it is 1341 clients.

Mr. Jack Penner: The total expended or total amount of interest forgiven would have been—

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Chair, \$1,518,198 is the estimate. The budget is for \$1.7 million.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Acting Chairman, that would be the total amount of money that would be forgiven as far as loans are concerned under the Young Farmer Rebate program.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is correct.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Minister, I think that is a loan that is well received and, I think, serves the purposes that it was intended for. I commend the minister and the MACC for continuing that program, because I think that reflects the realities of what is needed out there, that is to encourage young farmers to enter the business of agriculture.

I think we need sometimes a lot of encouragement to encourage the young people to

stay on the farms, because it is a good way of life, a good way to raise a family, a good place to raise a family. I would certainly encourage any young person wanting to enter a career to strongly consider agriculture. Even though it is tough at times and even though one has to watch the skies all the time and wonder and worry, at the end of the day it is still a great pleasure to sit out on the back deck and listen to the birds sing on Sunday morning.

Thank you very much, Madam Minister, for answering the questions that I had, and I encourage the corporation to continue the good work that they are doing.

* (16:40)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Chairman, I, too, would like to thank the staff, but I also want to thank the member for his encouraging words on the industry. It is one that faces many challenges, but we can see from the numbers that the Credit Corporation has put forward that there definitely is an interest of young people. There are more people applying for the young farmer rebate. It is a challenging time, but I think that it is also an industry of much opportunity. I look forward to continuing work through the corporation and developing policy and programs that will meet the needs of our young producers.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Nevakshonoff): Is there the will of the committee to take a five minute break? [*Agreed*]

The committee recessed at 4:41 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:46 p.m.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Nevakshonoff): Will the committee come to order, please.

3.3. Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, Administration \$4,351,200—pass; Net Interest Cost and Loan Guarantees \$550,000—pass; Provision for Impaired Loans \$800,000—pass; Special Farm Assistance \$200,000—pass; Flood Proofing Loan Assistance \$185,300—pass; Manitoba Producer Recovery Program \$197,600—pass.

Resolution 3.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,284,100 for Agriculture and Food, Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to

3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing. What is the will of the committee? To return to 3.1. Administration and Finance? *[Agreed]*

3. Administration and Finance 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$496,600.

Before I recognize the Member for Emerson, is it the will of the committee to revert back to this line, since we were at 3.3? *[Agreed]*

* (16:50)

Mr. Jack Penner: I think we had tentatively agreed that we would allow for leniency to jump all over the place, except for those two departments that we had initially indicated, which was MACC and Crop Insurance, which the minister intended to walk through first off so that those staff, because they were out of town, could proceed in that manner. I would in fact prefer to revert back to Administration and Finance. However, I would also like to ask that we be allowed some leniency in asking questions on a fairly broad basis, if that is in concurrence with the minister's wishes.

Ms. Wowchuk: Again, it would be my preference if we could follow the sections as they are laid out in the Estimates book, just for the ease of staff. The member knows that there is staff from various sections here and rather than be bringing them back and forth to the table, if the member could get his questions into sections then it would be easier for staff that way.

My preference would be that if the member has issues on the financial and administration services, which is under 3.1, work through those and then try to follow the book, and it is a lot easier for everyone else. Should we pass a section and the member have a question, to revert back to that is not going to be a big issue.

But, if we could move along in an orderly fashion, it would be a lot easier for everyone.

Mr. Jack Penner: I certainly do not intend to be disruptive in my approach. I am going to be fairly easy on this one, so I think there should be no problem in that matter.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Nevakshonoff): Okay, then, just for clarification. Is it the will of the committee to begin going through the Estimates book in a progressive fashion, beginning with 3.1. Administration and Finance, bearing in mind that there will be some flexibility accorded to members? Is that agreeable? *[Agreed]* Okay, thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner: As long as we progressively move in a conservative manner, then I think that will work well.

Could the minister indicate to me and to the committee what level of staffing is currently in place in the department, in its entirety, and could she also probably give me an overview as to what the vacancies currently are?

Ms. Wowchuk: Presently the staff component is 606.18. The vacancy rate is around 8 percent, and we are in the process of various stages of filling a variety of those vacant positions.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Acting Chair, 8 percent of 606 would be roughly 50. So you would have roughly about 50 vacancies in there. Is that indicative of the normal procedure within the department, to have roughly about 50, about 8 percent of its staffing positions vacant at this time of year?

Ms. Wowchuk: The vacancy rate over the past five years has run between 4 and 6 percent. We have had quite a large amount of turnover. We are in the process of filling about 20 of those vacancies at the present time. Those are at various stages of being completed. Certainly the level of 8 percent is a little higher than is normal, or it has been in the past 5 years. We are looking to fill several of those now.

Mr. Jack Penner: They would not have been kept open in contemplation of a specific event in the country, would they?

Ms. Wowchuk: No, Mr. Acting Chairman, these were not kept open for a specific event. As I indicated, there is normally a vacancy over the past five years of somewhere between 4 and 6 percent. We have had an unusual amount of turnover. We are trying, working to address that. A large number of those positions are in the process of being filled.

Mr. Jack Penner: I understand that there is at least one Ag rep vacancy. I know of one because it is in my hometown. Is the department attempting to fill that vacancy. What is the status of that position?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member is correct. The Ag rep from Altona left to seek greener pastures and move into a field that he is quite familiar with in the broadcasting field. That position has been given priority and will be filled in the next round of recruiting.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder if the minister could tell me roughly when that is going to happen.

Ms. Wowchuk: There is a process to go through to fill these positions. They usually take about two months to fill.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder if the minister could indicate to me whether the normal process of competition—will it be an advertised competition or will it be an inside-outside? Can you give me an overview as to how that is going to be done?

Ms. Wowchuk: The position will be filled through open competition.

Mr. Jack Penner: Could the minister tell me how many executive staff she currently has in her office?

* (17:00)

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: I have a special assistant, an executive assistant and three secretarial staff in my office.

Mr. Jack Penner: At what salary range would these positions be filled?

Ms. Wowchuk: My secretary is paid at an AYM level. The other secretary is paid at an AY3 level. My special assistant is paid at an SPA level. My executive assistant is paid at the executive assistant level, and the other secretary, as well, is paid at the AY3 level. So they all fit into the normal level of compensation as to where their classification is.

Mr. Jack Penner: So the special assistant and the executive assistant are both at the FTA level?

Ms. Wowchuk: The special assistant is at the SPA level and the executive assistant is at the EXA level.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, are they at the upper level of the scale, or where would they be at in the scale?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, I do not have that information here, but I believe that they still have room to move up in their classification scale.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder if the minister could provide me tomorrow with that information?

Ms. Wowchuk: I will be able to get more detail for the member.

Mr. Jack Penner: I note that in the documentation provided for us, the division branches, the position summary by appropriation on page 12, Schedule 5, indicates that in Administration and Support there are nine executive position levels there.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, there are nine positions. I was outlining them to the member. The staff in my office I was not, but the nine also include the staff in the deputy minister's office as well.

Mr. Jack Penner: That would mean that there would be five in the minister's office and four in the deputy minister's office?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, there are three in the deputy's office, but there is an additional person here who is on long-term disability that is included in this line in the Budget.

Mr. Jack Penner: That position has not been filled with a body in the department?

Ms. Wowchuk: No, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, so in essence there is one vacancy currently?

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, Madam Chairperson, there is one vacancy.

Mr. Jack Penner: Does the salary line then reflect that one vacancy, or is that person on full salary while on leave?

Ms. Wowchuk: The person is on long-term disability, but the dollars are reflected in this Budget.

Mr. Jack Penner: This question I ask out of simply not knowing, from a knowledge base. Is it normal practice that the department reflects the salaries of staff that are incapacitated in one way or another, that they would normally be reflected there? I should know this, but I have forgot. Having been a minister before, I should know that.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, we still budget for the person because, even though they are on long-term disability, they could come back.

I would like to also take the opportunity to introduce staff that has joined us at the table. We have Mr. Craig Lee, who is Assistant Deputy Minister, and Mr. Gord Brunette, who is Acting Director of Human Resource Management Services in the Consolidated unit.

Mr. Jack Penner: Thank you for the introduction.

Does that mean then that the salary would come out of a disability-type of fund somewhere other, and that the department would at the end of the year have a surplus amount in the salary range? How does the department work that?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, the dollars are there allocated to that person. Should the person come back, then the money is there available. If the money is not used, it could

lapse, but should the department have to hire someone on a casual basis, that money could be used. If we want to reallocate it, we have to go back to Treasury Board for approval to use that money.

Mr. Jack Penner: Has the department then filled that position on a temporary basis now? No, it is a vacant position.

Ms. Wowchuk: No, that position has not been filled. It is still being held should that individual be able to come back.

Mr. Jack Penner: Going on to Information Technology Services, are these six staff identified here, are they communications people within the department?

* (17:10)

Ms. Wowchuk: No, they are not communication people; they are people who operate the computers. They are tech people to keep the systems in the department going, the computer systems.

Mr. Jack Penner: The reason I ask is Information Technology Services normally might spell out a communications type of a person.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want the member to know that we have no communication people in the department. These are the tech people that keep the computers and the systems going. Certainly there is not a large number and with the Internet and Web sites there is a lot of work that has to be done to maintain them and ensure that the systems can be running, and that is the job of those six people.

Mr. Jack Penner: The financial services branch, what sort of services do they actually provide?

Ms. Wowchuk: The Administrative and Accounting branch provides administrative and financial support services to the department, does the preparation work for Treasury Board submissions and does the preparation for the Budget process. They are involved in administration of the department fleet vehicle

service. So there are wide varieties. They develop and administrate controllership model of the SAP financial and procurement and human resources systems. They co-ordinate office space. So there is a wide variety of activities. They manage records, all of those kinds of things that are done within the department.

Mr. Jack Penner: Could the minister probably indicate to me what sort of savings could be derived to that administrative services branch if in fact there were no requirement by a minister or a deputy minister to run to Treasury Board every time they wanted to spend an amount of money? How much effort really goes into the preparation of Treasury Board documents and on the demonstration of what is being contemplated by the department in a given expenditure?

Ms. Wowchuk: There is a lot of work that has to be done in preparation for Treasury Board, in preparation of Estimates and in preparation of a budget. All of those things take a lot of work, and I am sure some departments would probably not want to have to do all of that work, but that is the system that we have and departments will continue to analyze and put a dollar value on programs. I have no figure or idea of what kind of savings. I am sure that in one end there might be some savings, but there would be costs in another area. There has been no discussion or evaluation on the amount of time that is spent in preparation of Treasury Board documents.

Mr. Jack Penner: Let me editorialize for just a short moment.

Having been in your position, Madam Minister, once before, not in Agriculture but another department, it was always my view when I first came to government that there was a huge amount of waste in government, and I think this is one area that I see an absolute waste. Many would not agree with me, including those members who sit on Treasury Board and those staff that sit on Treasury Board, which I believe sometimes generate a self-fulfilling prophecy. It costs a huge amount of money and time, a waste of time. It has always been my view that we hire managers to manage departments. We hire deputy ministers to run and guide the departments, and we hire assistant deputy

ministers and directors to, in fact, direct the department.

I believe, Madam Minister, if you were charged with the responsibility by your Premier (Mr. Doer) and by your Cabinet when they give you an amount of money, when an amount of money is designated as your budgetary amount, if you were charged with the responsibility of spending it wisely and directing your staff to spend it wisely or else, that they be given the responsibility if and when they exceeded the responsibility, the minister would have the option of dealing with staff in an appropriate manner, and there could be agreement struck between management and the minister, the minister's office.

It has always been my view that, if that were done in an appropriate manner, in a wise manner, government would, in my view, operate much, much more efficiently, especially if the incentive were that, if an excess at the end of the year occurred, in other words that a surplus occurred, that the surplus could be designated within that department for special types of projects if the department chose to do that. If they chose to just give it up at the end of the year, so be it. But if they chose to do special programs and if they had a little account somewhere that they could set this aside and knew it was there and the budget amount would again occur to them next year, I would suspect that deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and the directors would act much differently, would be allowed to act much differently than they are allowed to act now.

I sometimes find it difficult to even assume that we call them deputy ministers and/or directors or managers without letting them be true managers, and I think that is unfortunate that government must or is designated, by some process, to operate that way. That is why I talk about the self-serving being of Treasury Board, and I think, in a large part, they contribute to the inefficiencies within government under the auspices of having to have absolute iron-clad control of expenditures. I know the reason for that, too, but I think, if we truly gave responsibility to our staffing, I think we would not.

So much for the editorializing, but that is my view on the economics of the world. I cannot understand, I cannot simply understand how, in our operation at home, if we had set up a separate structure that would look after the financing, in other words, our Treasury Board, that we would ever come to a decision or ever get anything done. I think we would waste far too much time waiting for somebody else to make the decisions that we have to make on an ongoing basis, and I think our upper-level management staff in government very often feels that way. I do not expect a response to that, but I can judge on the smiles that are there that that is probably correct.

We had dealt with—

* (17:20)

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, I cannot let those kind of comments be put on the record without addressing them. You know, the member was part of a government for 11 years. In those 11 years, I do not think that there was any dramatic change made in removing the authority away from the Treasury Board. In fact, if we look at it, I think that it might have even, during that time period, the role of Treasury Board might have increased and the supervision over departmental spending changed. So it is very interesting that the member is making those statements now that he is not in government and offering advice to the present Government. But I think the member talks about running a family operation or business versus running government. The two are completely different. The Government is like many businesses having to work together. There really have to be checks and balances in place.

Certainly, I do not want to take any credit away from deputy ministers or assistant deputy ministers, because I think they work very hard and give very good advice and help us make very good decisions. I think that many of the decisions would be the same. I am sure that there is frustration on the part of deputy ministers sometimes in the slowness of things. There is frustration on the part of a minister as well, because you may have something that you want to work on, but it has to go through the steps, to the Treasury Board to get the approval that is needed.

Again, I think that it is important that we do have checks and balances in place. That is what we have with the system. But I thank the member for his suggestions. I am sure that others will read it with interest.

Mr. Jack Penner: I respect the minister's acknowledgement of her need for guidance and assistance. I think many ministers appreciate that and do, as we all did when we were a minister.

However, there were some ministers that had the nerve to go out and suggest making some fairly significant changes, but sometimes their careers were terminated prematurely, some might expect. That should not preclude one from making those suggestions, because I think they are real. I think there are some real economies of scales to be gained by doing that. I will never change my mind on that. I think we are very inefficient in our operations sometimes simply because of our perceived need to be far too careful. I think if we trusted and gave credence to the management ability that we have within our staffing component, we would operate differently in government. It is unfortunate we do not.

Agricultural Development and Marketing, Marketing and Farm Business Management, could the minister give me a bit of an overview as to what her views are of the Marketing and Farm Business Management that her department drives?

Ms. Wowchuk: I wonder if we could pass the Administration and Finance and then we would get the next staff up here.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): While you are dealing with this particular section, Madam Minister, if you could, if the minister could tell me, just give me a quick update on the status of Agriculture representatives in some of the southwest communities that I am involved in, that I am representing, particularly in Souris. I know the former Agriculture representative there has moved to Carman to look after the organic section and will do a good job there, John Hollinger. But I wonder if they could indicate to me what will transpire in that community of Souris.

Ms. Wowchuk: The position at Souris is in the same group as the position in Altona. It is one of the positions that we hope to be able to fill fairly soon. When we are ready to fill it, it will be advertised, and there will be a competition to fill that position.

Mr. Maguire: Just an update then on Melita, Deloraine and Boissevain, I do not believe there has been any change there, but Mr. Day, I believe, is still the Ag rep in those communities.

Ms. Wowchuk: There has been no change. I am not advised of any changes. Many times individuals make a decision, as we talked about the vacancies that we have in the department. There have been several who have decided to take early retirements, but I am not aware of any changes in the near future in that area.

Mr. Jack Penner: We can proceed with the passing of 3.1. Administration and Finance.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$496,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$68,300—pass; (3) Policy Studies \$71,200—pass.

1.(c) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$791,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$466,200—pass.

1.(d) Information Technology Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$431,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$68,600—pass.

1.(e) Human Resource Management Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$282,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$51,300—pass.

Are we ready to pass 3.2?

An Honourable Member: 3.2., well, we can pass it. If I need staff later on, you'll call them in, sure.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.2. Risk Management and Income Support Programs (a) Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation (1) Administration \$4,465,600—pass; (2) Premiums

\$24,000,000—pass; (3) Wildlife Damage Compensation \$1,034,000—pass.

2. (b) Net Income Stabilization Account \$19,265,000—pass.

Resolution 3.2.: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$48,764,600 for Agriculture and Food, Risk Management and Income Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

We have already passed 3.3. We will now proceed to 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, I would like to introduce the staff that has joined us at the table. To my left is Dr. Dave Donaghy, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agricultural Development and Marketing division and Dori Gingera-Beauchemin, Director of the Marketing and Farm Business Management branch.

Mr. Jack Penner: Could the minister explain to me what the Marketing and Farm Business Management branch, in fact, does and what all is entailed in that branch?

* (17:30)

Ms. Wowchuk: The Agricultural Development and Marketing branch provides a wide range of services to producers and to the agrifood industry. It provides technical support, specialized services and information to department staff and producers to enhance the economic profitability and marketing knowledge and skills of Manitoba producers.

The branch also provides advice on the control and prevention of crop and livestock diseases and administers various labs, including the diagnostic lab. It provides technical leadership in the creation, expansion and diversification of the agrifood industry by supporting the production of wholesome and safe food supplies in Manitoba and also works in promoting the use of current and emerging technologies in food processing and also

provides technical and consulting services to people involved in the industry.

Mr. Jack Penner: When the minister looks at the total responsibility of the department and the minister looks at developing policies on an ongoing basis and looks for giving guidance and direction to the department—and I reflect on the Activity Identification within the branch and Destination 2010—could the minister give us an overview of what her vision is over the next 10 years and how she intends to implement the programming identified under 2010?

Ms. Wowchuk: I am very pleased that the member raised Destination 2010. It is a document that I am very proud of, and I am pleased with the work that staff has done. I want to tell the member that it was not staff alone. It was staff working with producers, processors and people throughout the province. Farm families were involved in it, put a lot of effort into it and collected a lot of information from producers as to what their view was as to where agriculture would be going in the next decade.

Now that the document has been developed, a variety of teams have been developed, again with departmental staff throughout the regions, looking at the routes that have been outlined and the goals that have been outlined in the document. We are working to put a plan in place as to how these goals can be implemented. Again, this is being dealt with across the management team and involving people from the various regions as we develop a plan.

I see the plan as a very good plan and one that will take us through the decade. I look forward to seeing how we can work with producers in all aspects of the industry, whether it is the grassroots producer, or the processor in building a healthier agriculture and agrifood industry in this province.

Mr. Jack Penner: Could the minister explain to me what process was used to initiate the discussion on Destination 2010 and where and when she held the meetings that she talks about with producers, industry and processors in these discussions? I have listened very carefully, and I have not seen nor heard of any discussion groups

initiated by the Department of Agriculture in all of southern Manitoba. I find that interesting that when this kind of initiative would have been taken that the region that is probably one of the most progressive regions in the province in value-added and other initiatives taken in diversification, that this whole area of the province would have been not consulted.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, I would like to tell the member that this process began a year ago, last spring. There were over 100 industry groups, 80 farm families who were involved in this process. There were 6 task teams that were distributed across the province, in all of the regions. Through that process, they consulted and talked about, got views from the public and from the industry. People involved in the industry gave their views on what they saw was needed in the industry and where it should be going.

The member may have a copy of the document. At the back of the document all the groups are listed. I am not sure where all of the meetings were held, but one of the meetings was held in Morris. There was a meeting with agribusiness and with farm families in Morris. I can get for the member the other locations where those meetings were held, but they were held across the province. Over 80 farm families were involved in this.

I want to add that the member said he had never heard about the meetings. These were not publicly advertised meetings. Groups were invited. The Ag reps in the area might be the ones who identified families who would be interested in participating. So then all people were brought together in a room from various regions. That is where the discussion took place. It was the local Ag reps and the Agriculture staff who were involved in the region that played a role in pulling some of the people together.

Mr. Jack Penner: No consideration of a political affiliation was given to the participants in the formation of the group.

* (17:40)

Ms. Wowchuk: I am shocked that the member would even imply that there was any political

interference in this process. I tell the member, no, absolutely not. This was done by the Department of Agriculture and Food staff, who worked in their regions and pulled together people who they thought would have an interest in participating in the discussion, and perhaps who they thought would be people who would have good ideas, but it was run strictly within the regions and through the department.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder whether the minister could give us names and addresses of the participants in the process.

Ms. Wowchuk: Again, I can provide the member with a copy of the document, and on the back page of the document is listed all of the individuals who participated in the process.

If I look at it, I can give the member some examples of the industry partners: Agricore; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Ag in the Classroom, Manitoba; the Bank of Montreal; Canada Food Inspection Agency; Can Oat Milling; Ducks Unlimited; the Flax Council of Canada; Kelsey Conservation District; Manitoba 4H Council; Manitoba Chamber of Commerce; Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre; Manitoba Forage Council; Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council; Manitoba Turkey Producers; Organic Producers of Manitoba; Peak of the Market; Red River College; Rigby orchards; United Grain Growers; University of Manitoba Faculty of Human Ecology, Faculty of Agriculture and Food; White Horse Plains CFDC; the Crowns with the department; and I am trying to look at some names that the member might recognize from his area.

There is a Henry Penner, Mary Ann Penner. There is a Bert Hop, Justina Hop. Some members, I think, might be from the member's area. Ernie Sirski, whom I recognize from Dauphin. Bev Stober, whom I recognize from my part of the country. So there is a distribution of people from across the province.

Mr. Jack Penner: Thank you very much for that information. I have taken a look at the Destination 2010, and I think there are some possibilities in the approach if the department is given the wherewithal to initiate some of the

processes that are identified. Some of them are not new. Most of them, quite frankly, I think have been tried before. Most of the suggestions there have some history to it, and I have heard this comment from more people than one, that they have seen most of that before, and I would suspect that if there was a real initiative taken to develop value-added processing and value-added initiatives in the department, the government of the day would have kept the Department of Rural Development in place. The minister laughs at that. I think, quite frankly, many people in rural Manitoba would be offended by hearing the minister laugh at the suggestion that the Department of Rural Development should have been kept in place.

I think the department did a wonderful job of initiating programs and very often initiating industries and businesses, helping them establish in more ways than one through infrastructure kind of arrangements, funding arrangements, and all those kinds of things.

I think it is unfortunate that the NDP administration saw fit to not allow the department—as a matter of fact, encouraged the Department of Rural Development to expand. It was always my view that there could have been a great partnership formed between the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Rural Development if a government would have had the foresight to do that. Yet I see very little change when I look through this document, very little change from what I saw last year as far as developmental initiatives, even though we have seen Destination 2010, and we have seen the demise of the Department of Rural Development, which would have given the Minister of Agriculture, I think, an opportunity to bring some of those initiatives on-stream within her department, and add to the department's ability to better service that area in that respect. I think it is unfortunate that the political will was not there to further drive in that direction.

When I look at the next statement in this Activity Identification: "In partnership with producers, associations and the agrifood industry, participate in the development of strategies that focus on diversification and market development of value-added food

products," I think in large part that is where the initiative lay in the Department of Rural Development, which area I would have hoped could have been transferred to the Department of Agriculture. I think it is a good home for it.

However, in my view, it needs some significant financial and human resource support in order to make things happen in that department. I think it will be up to the minister to convince her Cabinet colleagues that, in fact, the communities in rural Manitoba, maybe even in the city of Winnipeg, need that kind of an initiative and that we need that kind of expansionary mode in agrifood industry expansion, and when I look at what is happening in this province currently over the last two years, I see the exact opposite happening.

I see businesses closing. I see industries closing. I see large businesses being sold, Schneider's, to other corporations, and the \$125-million initiative that Schneider's had announced before the new Government was elected went by the wayside and it disappeared. The 1400 jobs, additional jobs, that they were going to establish in the province have disappeared. One of the largest hog-killing operations in the city of Winnipeg has again migrated out of the city of Winnipeg. The Buhler tractor factory operation, I think, is a direct victim of the economic downturn in rural Manitoba, and automobile dealerships, truck dealerships, are calling and saying, you know, if something does not happen in rural Manitoba, we are going to face real difficulties. Some of them out of this city of Winnipeg, some of the larger dealers out of this city of Winnipeg are reflecting that now. We just saw in my own home town the Chrysler dealership close last week. A large dealership is gone by the wayside. He said farmers were simply not buying.

I think what we need to do is take many of the products, encourage livestock production, encourage livestock processing in a major way in this province, or else if we do not, somebody else will, Madam Minister. Alberta will not sit idly by and watch this. They will buy the hog industry again as they bought the beef industry. The government of the day, when we lost the beef industry in this province sat idly by and did

nothing to try and prevent it, and it has been a major loss to this province ever since.

We should make every attempt and effort to try and bring that industry back to this province. It will take some government initiative and government direction in order for that to happen. But it is not happening under the administration that we see now, or else they would not have unceremoniously killed the Department of Rural Development. I believe there are rural businesses and industries together with producers that are quite willing to build partnerships if they have any indication at all from a government that they see as being supportive of those kinds of actions.

Yet we have seen just the reverse, because very little effort has been made to underpin, for instance, the hog industry. The minister has said: Yes, we are encouraging, we are encouraging. Yet actions taken are just the opposite, and we find it rather disheartening that our industry in this province is really declining in a very significant way. Our small family farms are disappearing one by one in a very significant number even over last year, and I think that is unfortunate.

So I would ask the minister whether her Premier (Mr. Doer) and her Cabinet had given her direction to fill the void that they have created by disbanding the Department of Rural Development, and whether the actual addition of the word "food" means that the department will see a significant expansion of its activity in the processing and value-added activities and in market development of the diversified sector.

Madam Chairperson: I would just remind the member to please address the minister through the Chair.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chair, I will ask the Chair then to ask the minister whether it is her view that the Premier and the Cabinet have given her latitude to expand the Department of Agriculture to fill the void that has been created by the death of the Department of Rural Development, and whether she has been given the initiative to give substance to the additional word "food" in the Department of Agriculture and cause a greater degree of activity in processing in value-added production.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you. I am sure the member can appreciate this is in order to avoid provocation.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, with respect to the question or the comments put forward by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), every once in a while this member gets on a rant, and he starts to talk about the loss of the Department of Rural Development—

An Honourable Member: It is called a rave.

Ms. Wowchuk: —or a rage about the loss of Rural Development and the loss of services, and every time he does it, I have to correct the member. What we did when we formed government was change the department to the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs. There is no less service; in fact, I think there has been some enhancement of services. The functions that were under the Department of Rural Development are under the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), and I am very pleased with the efforts of the minister and the steps that she is taking with respect to development in rural Manitoba.

Certainly, there is interest in our department as well. Value-added and food production is a very important step.

Now the member also goes on a rant, and if you would really listen to him, you would think that rural Manitoba was dying. I just really regret that I have not got an editorial here, and I will have to bring it tomorrow, where the editor I believe from—I cannot remember, I do not want to put the wrong name on the record—but in fact the editor chastised the Member for Emerson for his spouting off about rural Manitoba dying, and in fact criticizing him. Tomorrow, I can assure the member that I will bring that editorial here and put it on the record just clearly indicating what rural Manitobans are feeling about what this member is saying. He is going out there and saying all doom and gloom, and people in rural Manitoba are saying it is not all doom and gloom out there.

* (17:50)

Yes, we have a serious problem in the grains and oilseeds sector, and our department is working very closely with that sector, but there are areas in Manitoba and in the agriculture sector that are doing well. The livestock sector, which we just had a long discussion about, and there are opportunities for additional growth and diversification, but I want to share with the member some of the recent investments in Manitoba's agriculture industry in the last little while, just to set the record straight, that it is not all doom and gloom out there.

I look at N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited. They are targeting completing construction of a \$5-million to \$6-million feed mill near Killarney for August 2001. It will initially employ 10 people with a capacity of processing 200 000 tonnes of grain each year, which will make it the largest feed mill in western Canada.

logen, an Ottawa biotech company, is investing \$200 million in an ethanol plant in Killarney. That would be the first in the world to produce fuel from straw. We expect that this plant will be going in by mid 2001. Our Government has been involved with that.

Ag Pro Grain is opening a 42 000-tonne crop handling and storage facility and farm services near Forrest, an investment of over \$18 million.

Dominion Malt Limited has invested \$5 million in a three-storey, 70 000 metric tonne kiln at its Transcona plant. Again, this construction is scheduled for this summer.

In February of 2000, Keystone Grain Limited, which is located in Winkler, Manitoba, invested \$1.6 million in additional storage and upgrading of equipment to its sunflower handling facility.

Pea-Can Meal Producers Co-operative and New Generation Co-op announced its plan to build a \$700,000 pea processing plant in Miniota. The plant's main products will be pea, bean, Canola meal for animal rations.

An Honourable Member: It is called Pea-Can.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is right. The member says it is called Pea-Can. That is the name of it. Construction has not already started, but there are plans in place for that facility.

In January 2000 Venture Seeds Limited opened a mustard seed processing plant in Brunkild. The company purchased and renovated an existing grain elevator and trans-formed it into a processing facility.

McKenzie Seeds, Canada's leading supplier of packaged seeds and related garden products, located in Brandon, announced its plans to build a new production plant and diversify its production line to suit the needs of North America and U.S. And there are others.

Vita Health Products completed its expansion and upgrade of its manufacturing plant in Winnipeg. Vita Health Products, which is based in Manitoba, is Canada's largest private label manufacturer of vitamins, herbal products, nutritional supplements. The investment of \$5.4 million on this project has transformed the facility into a world-class manufacturing site and is anticipated to create 74 new jobs over the next three years.

Candmera Foods is spending \$15.5 million to add refining capacity to its Harrowby oil processing facility.

J. R. Simplot in December 2000 announced plans to construct a potato processing facility in Portage la Prairie. The new plant is scheduled to open in the summer of 2003. It is anticipated that there will be a capacity to process 300 million pounds of fries and will employ 230 people. Capital cost is estimated at \$120 million.

Another one, Red River Brewing Company here in Winnipeg, a made-in-Manitoba brewery, has invested \$900,000 to upgrade and expand its bottling line and to add fermentation tanks.

Again, all of these are projects that our Government, our department have worked with. Certainly these add value to the agriculture products. So for the member to paint the picture of doom and gloom and that nothing is happening in agriculture and that it is all a disaster is not completely true.

I talked about the Steinbach *Carillon*. I was not sure of the name of the paper. I will quote part of it, where it says: Emerson MLA Jack Penner, in his recent comments in the Manitoba Legislature, painted an absolutely dismal picture about the effects of the current agriculture in rural communities. Young people are leaving, businesses and jobs are disappearing, and the population is becoming concentrated in the 60-and-over bracket. To listen to him, one might get the impression things are downright terrible in the countryside. So nothing will be left but gophers and fence posts.

Not quite. Penner, a politician sometimes given to hyperbole, is right in some respects. Those areas of the province, particularly in the southwest region, where agriculture activity has long focused on cereal crops, is indeed in trouble. The generations-old practice of planting in the spring and harvesting in the fall is no longer paying the bills, and there is little likelihood that prices will get better anytime soon. These farmers and their communities, heavily dependent on grain production, could well see themselves increasingly squeezed to the point where existence becomes tenuous. To this extent, Penner is right.

However, he fails to mention that there is a whole other sector of agriculture, several sectors actually, where the picture is much better, if not downright rosy. In the Pembina Valley farmers have long diversified to root crops such as vegetables.

Further on it says: In the southwest region, in fact, population is not declining in the southwest. In fact it has shown increase in the past decade, and some have grown almost explosively.

I point this out to the member because he tends to paint a whole gloom-and-doom story and that our Government is not doing anything, that we have removed the services from rural development, when in fact all of those services are there, services have been enhanced, and, yes, my department is working very closely with the food sector to ensure that we have continued value-added.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being six o'clock, committee rise.

SENIORS DIRECTORATE

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Seniors Directorate. Does the honourable Minister responsible for Seniors (Ms. McGifford) have an opening statement?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for Seniors): Shall I proceed?

Mr. Chairperson: Proceed, please.

Ms. McGifford: As Minister responsible for Seniors, I am pleased to present the 2001-2002 Budget Estimates for the Seniors Directorate.

Manitoba seniors are a diverse group with lifestyles and personal and social needs that can vary dramatically. We know that seniors are generally living longer, are healthier and are better off financially than previous generations were. However, we also know that the older people grow the more likely they are to live alone, be women, have health-related problems and be less affluent.

For all of us, our health and well-being is determined by a broad range of interconnected factors. For our seniors, these determinants of healthy aging come into play before and during the senior years. They include factors such as gender, income and education, as well as personal health practices, social interactions and one's ability to develop coping skills.

The impact of these factors is influenced by the individual, by one's family, through community-based organizations and through the broad range of programs and services offered by the various levels of government.

If we are to be effective in supporting our seniors, we need new approaches to policy and program development. These new approaches

must include effective collaboration of cross sectors, the active involvement of organizations that serve seniors and meaningful consultation with seniors across the province.

My Cabinet colleagues and I remain committed to the establishment of these new approaches. I am pleased to inform you that a number of initiatives are underway to support our efforts and to ensure that we are effective.

I have recently had the great pleasure of appointing Mr. Murray Smith as Chairperson of the Manitoba Council on Aging. The council plays an integral role in providing perspective and advice in all matters of interest to our seniors population, and Mr. Smith brings a wealth of experience to his new role. Nine other new council members will join him, each of whom brings unique experiences to the table.

I would also like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Dr. Stuart Hampton, the previous chair of the council, and thank him for his dedication and leadership. Indeed, I, of course, have already called and personally thanked Doctor Hampton for his work.

The Seniors Directorate is currently in the process of recruiting a new executive director. This role is central to our interests in developing intersectoral partnerships and engaging the broader community and supporting the varied needs of our seniors population.

I would also like to thank the former executive director, Mrs. Kathy Yurkowski, for her significant contributions during her years of service.

We will initiate a consultative process with key stakeholders to seek input and direction to insure that the efforts of the Seniors Directorate are effective.

The Seniors Directorate has moved quickly and effectively during the past four months to establish a new Seniors Inter-agency Network of major seniors organizations. The network is meeting on a regular basis and provides a forum to share information and ideas and to better comprehend common issues and solutions. It also aids indirect two-way communication

between government and community leaders to assist me in my role as Minister responsible for Seniors.

Many departments of government are keenly interested in addressing the needs of older persons but have not always been clear about what approach to use. The Seniors Directorate has made impressive changes in building new relationships with government departments, including Justice, Finance, Health and Family Services and Housing, to name a few. As these links with the Directorate continue to grow and develop, policies and services for seniors will be better co-ordinated and integrated into an effective delivery system.

In fact, the Directorate plays a critical role in this Government's plans to ensure seniors in Manitoba are considered in the planning and resource allocation decisions made within government. Staff of the Directorate is also actively involved and provides leadership in a variety of initiatives within government and in the community to represent the interests of our senior population. By way of example, the executive director has been appointed as a member of the Minister of Health's (Mr. Chomiak) Advisory Committee on Diabetes. Staff sit on the Aboriginal Continuing Care Committee, comprised of government and community-based members, to provide advice and information on creating holistic, culturally-based health services.

The Directorate worked closely with the Public Utilities Board, Manitoba Hydro, Centra Gas and Manitoba Conservation to identify and inform seniors of their options in the face of increased utility costs this past winter. The Directorate is a member of the national advisory committee for community care for seniors, helping family caregivers of seniors overcome barriers to using respite services, which is a national project of the Canadian Association for Community Care.

The Directorate co-ordinated one of six national focus groups consisting of professional and family caregivers in Winnipeg in March 2001. The Directorate is an active member of the review committee established by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority in 2000-2001 to review the mission, goals and structure of the

support services to seniors programs within Winnipeg. The Directorate is a member of the Manitoba Alzheimer's Strategy Steering Committee, a joint initiative of Manitoba Health and Manitoba Alzheimer's Society, and co-chairs the working group on direct services provided and accessed through a formal support system.

The Manitoba Seniors Directorate supported the Summit on Healthy Active Living in recognition of the International Year of Older Persons in the fall of 1999. The Manitoba Seniors Directorate is continuing its support of healthy, active living for seniors through the work of the newly established Active Living Coalition for Older Adults-Manitoba.

The Directorate has a representative on the Volunteer Initiatives Manitoba Inc. Steering Committee, a provincial committee for the International Year of Volunteers 2001. The Directorate hosted with the International Year of Volunteers seniors subcommittee two seniors forums on February 12, 2001 and April 11, 2001. The Directorate, in consultation with the IYV seniors committee, is planning a special celebration on October 1, 2001 in support of seniors and volunteering. The celebration will also recognize the International Day of Older Persons and Seniors' and Elders' Month. Details are currently being developed with a focus on events and/or activities that are inclusive of all seniors in the province.

The Directorate is also active in public education and the dissemination of information to help ensure seniors and the organizations which serve them are well-informed. The Seniors Information Line continues to be well-used by Manitoba seniors and their families who view it as a convenient way to access information and assistance. During 2000-2001 there were 4700 calls from seniors and their families. The Directorate develops and distributes educational materials in both official languages about services, resources and issues identified as important by seniors, their families, seniors organizations and the community. These include publications, videos, workshops and conferences designed for seniors and service providers.

* (14:50)

In March 2001, the Council on Aging, with support from the Directorate, issued the ninth edition of the *Manitoba Seniors' Guide*. Approximately 40 000 copies of the popular guide were given to seniors, their families and seniors organizations over the last two years. For the first time the guide contains an extensive insert on safety and security. The Directorate reprinted and distributed copies of the highly popular *Older and Wiser Driver* booklet first released in January 2000 with assistance from the division of Driver and Vehicle Licensing and the RCMP. Staff has presented information about driving to over 30 seniors groups.

The Directorate revised and printed *A Legal Information Guide for Seniors*, which was first printed in April 1997. The Public Trustee in Manitoba Justice and the Community Legal Education Association, as well as Manitoba Health, have been invaluable partners in compiling and updating this document. Two printings were needed during the fiscal year to meet the demand.

My columns in *Prime Time News* and the *MSOS Journal* continue to receive positive responses from seniors who tell me that they find these articles a good way to obtain information about programs and new initiatives.

The Directorate continues to take a lead role in addressing elder abuse. Over the past two years our Elder Abuse Line has received 211 calls. Staff provides confidential information and referral not only to victims but also to families and professionals. Staff also conducted 63 elder abuse presentations during 2000-2001, up from 46 the previous year. As well, the Directorate re-established the interdepartmental Working Group on Abuse of the Elderly, which last met in 1994. Elderly abuse community response teams have been established in the North Eastman Health Association region, and similar initiatives are being considered by a number of regional health authorities.

The Seniors Directorate and Manitoba Health provided seniors abuse training to 11 of the 12 regional health authorities in preparation for proclamation of The Protection for Persons in Care Act.

Money Matters is a training session designed by seniors and personnel of financial institutions regarding the financial abuse of older adults. The Directorate is working with the Canadian Bankers' Association to provide training to financial institution personnel that receive a high number of senior clientele.

The Directorate continues to provide Through Other Eyes, a training workshop designed to foster increased interaction between generations and promote a better understanding of the needs of older people. We have delivered workshops to retail, banking and government departments that have identified extensive interaction with seniors.

As Minister responsible for Seniors, I have a unique role to play both in advocating on behalf of seniors within government and, secondly, in liaising with seniors in the community. The range and variety of activities I have just outlined reflects the unique characteristics of this mandate within government.

As I look into the future, I am excited about the many opportunities to improve and strengthen the links and bonds that are essential in my work with seniors. As noted earlier, staff at the Directorate are increasingly taking more of a leadership role and showing greater initiative in critical areas of policy development and review within departments and public sector agencies.

At the federal-provincial/territorial level, the Seniors Directorate works continuously to ensure that national policies and programs meet the needs of older Canadians regardless of locality. This fall my colleagues and I will meet to discuss a number of important issues including technology and aging, and safety and security. We will also continue to make the National Framework on Aging available throughout government as a guide to develop policy that addresses five principles: dignity, fairness, independence, participation and security for older persons. These express the shared values and concerns identified by seniors and approved by federal-provincial/territorial ministers responsible for seniors.

October will be an important month this year as Manitobans celebrate International Year of Volunteers and recognize International Day of Older Persons on October 1. In conjunction with the seniors subcommittee for the International Year of Volunteers, the Directorate is planning a special celebration on that date. After consulting with seniors' organizations, we have also decided to celebrate Seniors and Elders Month in October, providing us the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of older Manitobans and recognize the extent to which they have shaped our lives.

It would not be possible to work effectively towards better programs and services for seniors without advice directly from them. I am indeed fortunate to have a strong, vital and committed group of advisers on the Manitoba Council on Aging. Their ideas and knowledge under the leadership of Murray Smith as Chair are going to be invaluable to government.

As I stated at the onset, seniors today are a highly diverse group whose needs can vary dramatically and Manitoba's older population is no exception. As a result, we must find an approach to policy and program development that accurately reflects this diversity. If necessary, we must modify policies and practices to respond flexibly to a full range of seniors needs.

The Seniors Directorate is committed to working with this Government to ensure that the interests of Manitoba seniors continue to be acknowledged and that their changing needs continue to be met. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the honourable minister for those comments. Does the Official Opposition critic, the honourable Member for Southdale, have any opening comments?

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Just a few brief comments, Mr. Chairperson. I want to thank the minister for her comments regarding the seniors and recognizing the fact that the seniors here in Manitoba particularly play a very significant part, and a significant role in the makeup of Manitoba and its population.

I think she is well aware, or the minister is well aware, I should say, that the seniors here in Manitoba are making up a larger and larger part of the population and the aging population of Manitoba. I believe that within the next year or two, or within the next short while, Manitoba will have one of the highest proportions of seniors of any other province in Canada. This indeed does open up the possibilities and the realm of concern as to the advocacy and for the problems and the concerns in regard to addressing seniors here in Manitoba.

I am glad to hear some of the initiatives in regard to what the minister is talking about, and to the continuation of some of the programs that were started under our previous administration, and the success that we had in regard to dealing with seniors, in particular the council of aging, and some of the other working relationships with some of the groups in Manitoba in regard to seniors.

I am sure that she will find, just as I found, that working with seniors and the seniors associations throughout Manitoba are not only rewarding but very satisfying in the fact of the contact, and the involvement, and the energy that is within the seniors population that a lot of people do not have the ability to recognize. And she in her position as minister and my position as the minister previously, I think these are experiences that we will carry forth in also looking at how they affect Manitoba.

I congratulate her in the efforts that are put forth in regard to what has been proposed in some of the areas. I do have some questions in regard to some of the areas that she has mentioned and some of the Estimates process. So with that, Mr. Chairperson, I will conclude my opening remarks.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the critic from the Official Opposition for those remarks. At this point in time, we would like to invite the minister's staff to take their places in the Chamber.

Is the honourable minister prepared to introduce her staff members to the committee?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair. May I first introduce Mr. Jim Hamilton who is the acting executive director of the Seniors Directorate and secondly, Patti Chiappetta, who is a policy analyst with the Seniors Directorate.

* (15:00)

Mr. Chairperson: The item before this committee is item 1. Seniors Directorate (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$476,800.

Mr. Reimer: I wonder, Mr. Chairperson, I seek some guidance from the minister as to whether we could just ask questions in general. I am prepared to pass the Estimates. It is just that there are some questions in general that I would like to ask. It may not be particular to the particular line that is in question right now.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, we would certainly be prepared to proceed in the global way described by the member opposite.

Mr. Chairperson: The Chair takes it there is an agreement to proceed globally, and then we will approve the items.

Mr. Reimer: In reference to the minister's opening statements, the minister mentioned that there has been cross-sectional initiatives that have taken place or are in the process of taking place between the various departments within seniors and other departments of government. Maybe I could get an update as to what some of those initiatives may be and what possibly the timetables are and the direction that the results might be looked for.

Ms. McGifford: Most of them I did describe in the speech. I think I described that our executive director is a member of the Minister of Health Advisory Committee on Diabetes, for one. I do not know if the member recalls, but I went through a series that we have staff who sit on the Aboriginal Continuing Care committee. The Directorate worked closely with the Public Utility Board of Manitoba Hydro, Centra Gas and Manitoba Conservation this winter so that seniors could be receiving information to help them with their gas bills so that they were not so horrendous.

We have a member on the National Advisory Committee for Community Care. This particular committee is helping family caregivers of seniors overcome barriers to using respite services.

We have an active member on the review committee established by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, a member on Manitoba's Alzheimer Strategy Steering committee. I think I mentioned that the Seniors Directorate has also established an inter-agency group which meet on an ongoing basis, and it consists of organizations like Manitoba Society of Seniors, Age and Opportunity and Creative Retirement.

I know, when I was first minister, I would meet with these organizations from time to time, maybe once or twice a year, and I am still prepared to do that, but the advantage now is that they are meeting on an ongoing basis with staff so that they can communicate their concerns and help staff as far as establishing direction, et cetera, for the Directorate. I hope that answers the member's questions.

Mr. Reimer: On the Council on Aging, I have a few questions on that. The minister mentioned that there has been a change with Mr. Murray Smith being the new chairperson of the council. She also mentioned the, I believe it was, nine new members of the board. Would the names of the board members and the new board members, could they be made available to me?

Ms. McGifford: Would the member, Mr. Chair, like me to read out the names, or would he be happy if we made sure that he got them in the very near future?

Mr. Reimer: I do not need them read into the record as long as I had a copy forwarded to me within the next reasonable time period. A follow-up on that question, the membership on the board, what was the total membership on that board?

Ms. McGifford: I believe that the act—no, is there an act? No, there is not an act, but I believe that, generally speaking, there are 15 members, and currently we have, I believe we do have 15 members, 10 new, 2 returning and 3 positions

which are vacant. I do intend to make appointments to those, three appointments, in the near future.

Mr. Reimer: Just as a point of clarification then, all 15 positions will be filled within the next reasonable short period of time or whenever the minister sees appropriate.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, as far as the three vacant positions, we are soliciting nominations from communities which we believe are not represented on the council and we like to have represented. So it will take a little time to work with the various representatives from the communities to get exactly the right and proper mix. So, yes, they will be filled. I did also want to assure the member that we will make sure he gets the complete list that we have, our complete list, that is, of 12 people, and he knows there are three vacancies now. We will get that to him as soon as possible.

Mr. Reimer: I thank the minister for that information. Moving on to the executive director position, I believe the minister had mentioned that there is a search in the process right now. Would she be able to give me an update as to the time frame or the expected filling of that position within the Seniors Directorate?

Ms. McGifford: My advice from officials is that mid-June will be the time for interviews.

Mr. Reimer: I believe the minister said "for interviews." Is that what the minister said?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I did say "for interviews." All applications have been received and the application date concluded some time ago.

Mr. Reimer: Is there a tentative date for finalization and the announcement of a new director?

Ms. McGifford: If everything proceeds as we hope it will, we hope to have that position permanently filled by mid-July.

Mr. Reimer: On a different question, in the minister's chart of organization within the Seniors Directorate, there is the one box, if you want to call it, or program for elder abuse

consultant. Could the minister tell me who that person is?

* (15:10)

Ms. McGifford: I am advised that we have just seconded a person to fill that position from Age and Opportunity. Her name is Susan Crichton, and I understand that the secondment will be for two years.

Mr. Reimer: On the flow chart that I believe we are both referring to, are all positions filled in regard to the policy analysts and the policy manager and the elder abuse worker and the PCH hotline? Are all those positions filled?

Ms. McGifford: As the member can see, we have a deputy minister and an acting executive director, and the Elder Abuse Consultant we have already discussed. The second Elder Abuse for the PCH line is filled. The policy manager position is vacant, and we are considering various possibilities for that position. We are not quite sure where we are going with it yet. The policy analyst to the right of the policy manager is, of course, the young woman whom I have already introduced the member to.

The two positions below that are both vacant. We have bulletined for one of those positions, and we are preparing a second bulletin for the other position. So, as the member can see, there has been some turnover in the Directorate.

Mr. Reimer: I think that is about all I had on that page. I was wanting to ask the minister have there been discussions with the Francophone seniors association in regard to an allocation of funding or a grant being given to that association?

Ms. McGifford: I understand that two years ago there was \$5,000 given to Francophone seniors in Manitoba in order that they could do a survey to ascertain some of their needs, et cetera, and that money came from the Seniors Directorate. It was during the tenure of the former executive director, Kathy Yurkowski, who was able to flow this money because of just the way the Budget was that year. She found \$5,000 in the Budget.

I understand that this year there is \$25,000 going to French seniors. However, that money is coming from the Minister of French Language Services, and so if the member has questions about that money, I think he could better direct his questions to the Minister for French Language Services.

Mr. Reimer: Then my interpretation would be that there is no money coming from the Seniors Directorate going to the Francophone seniors association.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, the member's observation is correct, and I think I should take the opportunity to put on the record that the Seniors Directorate, of course, is not a funding body for seniors groups in the province.

The Seniors Directorate does a number of things, but funding is not one of them, other than I believe we do provide some funding for the Elder Abuse line at Age and Opportunity. I am advised that the amount is \$60,500, but that is to purchase a service.

* (15:20)

Mr. Reimer: One of the parameters that is outlined in the appropriation book is in regard to the activities identified and the Operational Overview, and there is Community Development. There is Policy Review and Development, and one of the topics there is talk for legislation and for the accommodations of seniors. Is there any type of legislation that the minister would be able to indicate that is geared specifically for seniors that is possibly in consideration through her department?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, at this point, there is no legislation planned.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time, I really have no other questions that I have for the minister.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 24.1. Seniors Directorate (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$476,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$292,000—pass.

Resolution 24.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$768,800 for Seniors Directorate for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Reimer: Just before you do the final windup, I just wanted to reconfirm with the minister the requests in regard to the lists of the members, would they be able to be forthcoming in the next short, reasonable time?

Ms. McGifford: I thought I had said so, but, yes, definitely. I cannot imagine it will take more than a couple of days.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 24.2. Amortization of Capital Assets \$18,700—pass.

Resolution 24.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$18,700 for Seniors Directorate, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: This concludes our Estimates for Seniors Directorate. Next department to be considered is Civil Service Commission. Shall we take a recess? [*Agreed*] For how long?

An Honourable Member: 10 minutes.

Mr. Chairperson: 10 minutes, so ordered.

The committee recessed at 3:20 p.m.

The committee resumed at 3:28 p.m.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission. Does the honourable minister responsible for the commission have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister responsible for the Civil Service): Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed.

* (15:30)

Mr. Selinger: With respect to the Civil Service Commission Estimates of Expenditure, I want to start by thanking and recognizing the service of Paul Hart who served as the Civil Service Commissioner from 1979 until his retirement and the appointment of Shirley Strutt as the Civil Service Commissioner within the last year. Mr. Hart was the Commissioner at a time of tremendous change within the Civil Service. Many issues were being confronted during the '90s and the '80s as well, the '80s and the '90s. Some might describe them as issues on both sides of the supply curve, a growth in Civil Service to respond to programs and a reduction in the Civil Service to deal with issues of balanced budgets. Through all of those times I think Mr. Hart was regarded as a person who took his job seriously and endeavoured to provide a service to Manitobans through the role he played as the Civil Service Commissioner.

Mr. Chairperson, I am pleased to present the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year March 31, 2002; that is when it will end. There is an increase in the Budget. This is mainly due to seven new staff years and the accompanying budget dollars to support the expansion of the employment equity programming of the Commission. The Commission has successfully operated several internship and equity programs over the past number of years and this Budget enhances our opportunity with the Civil Service Commission to address equity programming with further opportunities and further chances for people to enter the Civil Service.

In 1983, the Government adopted an employment equity policy and set employment targets for groups covered by the policy. Those groups included women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities and people with disabilities. Progress has been made, but more progress is obviously needed. We are looking to the commission to continue to show leadership in this important area.

Also I would like to mention that all of the funding for the internship and equity programming has now been consolidated in the commission's budget in appropriation 17.1.(e). In the past, funding was in appropriation 26.4.(4), otherwise known as Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases. In this Budget all the funding has been consolidated in 17.1.(e).

As members will know, all governments are expecting a substantial number of retirements over the next five to ten years. We need to ensure that we have knowledgeable people ready to meet the challenge of taking over senior management positions as our current group of senior managers reaches retirement age. As well, because we will be competing with other employers to attract new talent to government, we will need effective recruitment strategies. We will need to ensure that new employees receive effective orientation and training. We will need to ensure that existing employees receive the development they need to effectively carry out their responsibilities and to move on to take on other responsibilities.

The Commission will be working with senior managers and human resource professionals in the Government to develop strategies to address these challenges and opportunities. In this Budget, funds have been added to enable commission staff to work with the Enterprise Systems Management group and the Office of Information Technology of the Department of Finance to develop a human resource planning tool for government. This tool will provide managers with a mechanism for matching employee skills with position requirements in a fast and effective way. The tool will allow managers to identify employees with the skills necessary to take on a new position, and will allow managers and employees to quickly identify where development is necessary and to plan for that development.

Government must work consistently to ensure that we are ready to change as Manitoba's needs change. Our workforce must be a knowledge-based workforce ready to make changes quickly and effectively to better serve people of the province. We need to work co-operatively with our employees, our unions and

our managers to be sure that the Manitoba civil service is ready to meet the challenges of the new millennium.

There are important challenges upon us and ahead. We hope that with the improvements in funding for the commission in the Budget, we continue to make progress towards developing a comprehensive human resource strategy for the Manitoba government that will provide not only a fair representation of Manitoba's population in the civil service, but an effective, competent civil service to respond to the needs of Manitobans.

With that opening remark, I will turn it back over to you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for those comments. Does the Official Opposition critic, the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), have any opening comments?

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Very brief.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed.

Mr. Schuler: I would like to thank the minister for his comments. Certainly what happens within the civil service is of great interest not just to the members of the Legislature but also to all Manitobans. Last year I had the opportunity to sit in on the Estimates. Of course at that time it was under a different minister. I look forward to asking some questions of the minister.

Like the minister, I would like to congratulate the staff, in particular the retirement of one of the key individuals who led in the Civil Service Commission. Certainly that kind of time commitment and the effort that is put in, I think probably most people in the public do not even see the kind of time that our staff do put in.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask if it would now be the pleasure of the committee that we could move on to questions.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the critic for those brief remarks. At this point in time, we would like to invite the minister's staff to take their places in the Chamber. Is the minister prepared to introduce his staff members to the committee?

Mr. Selinger: Yes. What I will do, Mr. Chairperson, is I will introduce the Commissioner of the Civil Service Commission, Shirley Strutt, recently appointed. I will ask her to introduce her directors, and we will take it from there.

Mr. Chairperson: Before anybody else can speak, he needs leave. Is there leave for the Civil Service Commissioner to speak. *[Agreed]* Please proceed.

Ms. Shirley Strutt (Commissioner of the Civil Service Commission): Mr. Chairperson, this is Bob Pollock, Director of Human Resource programs in the Civil Service Commission; and Mr. Ray Chase, Director of Management Information systems, the Administrative Services section of the commission.

Mr. Selinger: I believe there are two other members of the management team. There is the Employee Assistance Program, Mr. Frank Cantafio; and the Organization and Staff Development, which operates as a special agency. That is headed by Herb Robertson.

Mr. Schuler: My first question to the minister is more as a guideline for the short time that we will be together. Is it the pleasure of the committee that we would just ask a series of global questions and then work our way through the financial pages? Could we start on a more global perspective first?

Mr. Selinger: I would be open to that suggestion in the interests of facilitating a proper discussion and moving the Estimates forward.

Mr. Chairperson: The Chair takes it there is an agreement that we will proceed globally and then will approve the items, item by item, as necessary.

Mr. Schuler: My first question is: Can the minister please table a list of all departmental and political staff, including name, position and full-time equivalent?

Mr. Selinger: Maybe the member could clarify which staff he is referring to.

Mr. Schuler: That would be for the Civil Service Commission. That would be the departmental and political staff.

Mr. Selinger: There are no political staff under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Schuler: I would like to thank the minister for his answer. Could he just explain for the committee what is the make-up of the staff of the Civil Service Commission?

Mr. Selinger: I think in the Estimates there is an organizational chart, and I would refer the member to page 5 in the Estimates book. These are the people we just recently introduced who are the senior people in the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Schuler: I would like to thank the minister. Could the minister please table a list of all the staff in the minister's and deputy minister's offices?

Mr. Selinger: I just want to clarify, is the member opposite looking for the staff in my ministerial office or the staff in all ministerial offices?

Mr. Schuler: Just to clarify that, just in the minister's.

Mr. Selinger: Yes, we could provide a list of all the people that work in my ministerial office.

* (15:40)

Mr. Schuler: Can the minister tell the committee how many vacancies there would be within the Civil Service Commission just within the Civil Service Commission itself? How many vacant positions would there be?

Mr. Selinger: I am informed that there are presently 1.5 vacant positions within the Civil Service Commission. One of them is a full-time systems person and a half-time program co-ordinator position.

Mr. Schuler: Can the minister then also tell the committee: Within the public service, how many vacant full-time equivalent positions are there?

Mr. Selinger: The number of vacant positions, the Civil Service Commission does not have with them at the moment. We could take that as notice and try to determine that. What is available is the number of active Civil Service employees as of March 31, 2001. That would include regular, term and technical officers, contract employment, departmental and casual employees, a total of 13 431. I can break that down for the member if he wishes. The breakdown would be of the regular, term and technical officers there are 11 976 employees; contract employment, there are 34; departmental and casual employees, there are 1421.

Mr. Schuler: With the contract employees, I believe the minister said there were 34. Is it possible to get an indication of where those 34 contract employees might be?

Mr. Selinger: We will endeavour to break out for the member where these 34 contract employees are located, which departments they are located within.

Mr. Schuler: Could the committee also ask if we could have the names of those individuals?

Mr. Selinger: We will take that as notice and endeavour to compile those names and which departments they are in.

Mr. Schuler: The contracts that are signed, are those contracts that are available or are they contracts that are deemed to be secret? What I am asking, what we are asking of the minister: is it possible to get copies of the contracts?

Mr. Selinger: Normally, I am informed, the specific contracts are not made available as they contain personnel information specific to the person engaged in the contract.

Mr. Schuler: Clearly that is not something we necessarily want, is personal information. Would it be possible for the minister then to just get us the salary that the individuals are at?

Mr. Selinger: Yes, I believe we could break out those positions by classifications and the salary range that those classifications encompass.

Mr. Schuler: The minister mentioned that there are 13 431 public servants as of March 2001. Could the minister tell us what the component of the public service was as of March 2000?

Mr. Selinger: In both cases, the numbers were done from March 31 in the years 2000 and 2001. I indicated 13 431 for 2001, and the number for March 31, 2000, was 13 473.

Mr. Schuler: Just on hiring, whether it be by contract or for the public service, has there been any change in the policy in regard to how hiring is done?

Mr. Selinger: No.

Mr. Schuler: When there are contract jobs available, how are those filled?

Mr. Selinger: I believe the practice for hiring contract employees has been in place for several years, and there have been no changes in it. It is usually the department that determines they need a contract employee, and they are to follow criteria established in the policy manual of the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Schuler: The minister mentioned there are 34 contract employers right now. How many were there as of the end of last year's fiscal, March 31, 2000?

Mr. Selinger: As of March 31, 2000, there were 39, five more than there were as of March 31, 2001.

Mr. Schuler: The political staff of the Government, do they also come under the Civil Service Commission, or is that all done by Order-in-Council?

Mr. Selinger: Political appointees or political staff are hired through Order-in-Council and are not hired by the Civil Service Commission. The procedure for hiring political staff is covered under section 32 of The Civil Service Act.

Mr. Schuler: Could the minister tell the committee have there been direct appointments to the public service and, if so, how many?

Mr. Selinger: Our staff will endeavour to get the specific numbers of the people appointed by direct competition. They are looking for that data right now. Direct appointment is used in cases where there has been a competition and they have not been able to find somebody that met the qualifications and then subsequently they do find somebody that meets the criteria of the job, the job specifications.

In all cases, direct appointments, the people have to meet the job specifications as determined by the Civil Service Commission for that particular position. Sometimes direct appointments are done where specialized skills or knowledge are needed and there is a very limited market of people available to do that.

The only other additional point I would like to add is that it requires authorization from the Civil Service Commission, a Civil Service Commission officer to proceed by way of direct appointment.

Mr. Schuler: I take it then that the minister will table that or send that information to us at a later date. Then I would also like to ask: Can we have that broken down by department, how many were direct appointments by department?

Mr. Selinger: Yes, we will take those requests as notice and endeavour to compile that information.

Mr. Schuler: We have asked for different areas, and I am wondering, should I be writing a letter to the minister to just go over all these different areas or will the minister, through his department, endeavour that—

Mr. Selinger: We have taken note of the requests and as I indicated will pull the information together and make it available to the member.

Mr. Schuler: If I can just defer to my colleague.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I was just wondering if I might ask the minister: How many positions throughout the civil service have been reclassified in this past year?

Mr. Selinger: The latest statistics I have are for the year '99-2000. I have everything from '94-95 to '99-2000, if you want. The number of class changes were 354, '99-2000; and the class moved up; the number of cases were 576; and the class moved down; the number of cases were 139, for a total number of changes of 1 069. Would the member want the previous year for comparative purposes?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would not mind the previous year being read into the record, but I guess my question would be why do we not have information on the 2000-2001 year? If we do not have it now, when would it be available?

Mr. Selinger: We will get that information as soon as possible and provide it to the member. Do you want the previous years? *[interjection]* For the previous year, the number of class changes was 501 compared to the—this is for '98 and '99, and that compared to 354 for '99-2000. The number of classes moved up, the number of cases was 551 in '98-99, compared to 576 for '99-2000. The number of classes moved down was 109 for '98 and '99, compared to 139 for '99-2000, for a total number of cases in '98-99 of 1 161 versus 1 069 for '99-2000.

As soon as we can, we will get the information for the year 2000-2001 and make it available to the member.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would just like to thank the minister for that. I just want to be clear. We have asked the question and we will be getting the information on whether there has been an increase in the number of positions within the Civil Service over the last year. Did we ask that question?

Mr. Selinger: I believe the question was how many vacancies there were, so if there is a supplemental.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, if the minister could undertake to provide us with information on whether, in fact, the number of positions within the Civil Service, maybe the last three-year history of the number of positions, because I do know in some instances I have been following some of the Estimates of some of the departments, and I know there have been

increases in different lines, increases in the number of staff years in different departments.

So I would like some information on—besides the vacancies, how many actual positions, full-time equivalents, there are for this year, last year and maybe for the last four years.

Mr. Selinger: Technically the Civil Service Commission just tracks the number of employees. They do not actually track the number of positions created or not created. That is looked after by Treasury Board, and inasmuch as I have some working connection with them, and it is outside of this Estimates, I would be happy to undertake to try and do that and provide it outside of this Estimates procedure for general purposes to the member opposite.

* (16:00)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would certainly appreciate that, and I want to thank the minister for that. I know that that kind of flexibility and co-operation always goes a long way in trying to ensure that we are able to ask questions and answers are received.

Mr. Selinger: What I would like to do, with respect to that last request, which I will direct the Treasury Board for follow-up, is I would like to indicate the number of positions added and deleted so we can get an accurate balance. I think that would be a fair representation. I did have that in my other Estimates book. We did not get to it, but I think I do have it for the last year. We will try to see what we have for the previous three years.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I also wonder whether the minister—and he probably does not have this information or his staff probably does not at their fingertips, but I would like to know how many individuals who were members of the Civil Service either were terminated or let go or severed over the last year, what positions they filled, and how many were dismissed or how many voluntarily left the Civil Service for their own reasons.

Mr. Selinger: The Civil Service Commission does keep track of all the people leaving the Civil Service and the reasons for which they left,

and we will pull that together for you. We will get it for you.

Mr. Schuler: If it so pleases the minister, we would now be more than willing to go by department.

Mr. Selinger: Are you wanting to start on page 7, the question to the member opposite, and go through the various budget appropriations?

Mr. Schuler: Yes, that is what I would like to do. I just want to defer to my colleague, and then we are ready to proceed.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): I appreciate that. While we have three committees going, it is sometimes difficult to keep track of what is going on. The one issue that I want to raise with the minister with respect to the Liquor Commission is one that has been before the commission for a number of years, one that the past government had intentions on acting upon but never did, and that has to do with the rural vendors and the—

An Honourable Member: No, we are in the Civil Service.

Mr. Enns: Oh, pardon me. I thought we were in the Liquor Commission. I will go back to bison in Agriculture. Thank you.

Mr. Schuler: As the minister mentioned, page 7.

Mr. Selinger: I think we are ready to start going line by line.

Mr. Chairperson: Item No. 17.1. Civil Service Commission (a) Executive Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$186,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$59,000—pass.

17.1.(b) Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$440,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$309,700—pass.

17.1. (c) Human Resource Management Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$766,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$533,400—pass.

17.1. (d) Employee Assistance Programs (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$423,500—pass;

(2) Other Expenditures \$112,800—pass (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$67,600)—pass.

17.1. (e) Internship, Equity and Employee Development Programs \$1,285,000—pass.

17.1. (f) Organization and Staff Development Agency, no amount—pass.

Resolution 17.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,049,400 for Civil Service Commission, Civil Service Commission, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

17.2. Amortization of Capital Assets \$101,100—pass.

Resolution 17.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$101,100 for Civil Service Commission, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission. The next set of Estimates will be for the Status of Women. We need some recess, do we? Yes. How long? Ten minutes. So ordered.

The committee recessed at 4:09 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:18 p.m.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of the Status of Women.

Does the honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women have an opening statement?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Yes, Mr. Chair, I do.

Today I am pleased to have the opportunity to present the Estimates for the Department of the Status of Women for the fiscal year 2001-2002. The Status of Women includes the Manitoba Women's Directorate and the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. I will speak first to the activities of the Women's Directorate and then to those of the Women's Advisory Council.

The Women's Directorate works within government to influence government decision making through research support, policy development, and evaluation of government programs, policies and legislation in order to ascertain their impact on women. It also interacts with various departments of government, the business sector, the community and federal-provincial-territorial ministries of the Status of Women to raise awareness with the reality of women's lives and to ensure that the differential impact of proposed programs and services, employment practices or other initiatives is considered.

Emphasis on the Directorate's work is placed on women living in poverty and marginalized women. Toward that end, the Directorate has identified four main goals that represent its priority areas. I will speak to each of these in turn.

* (16:20)

First, enhance the capacity for Manitoba women to attain economic self-sufficiency and/or economic security. The Directorate hosted a symposium on the economic Status of Women in Manitoba on September 28, 2000. The day offered participants from across Manitoba a chance to share and discuss their views of women's current economic circumstances and a view of the future. It is hoped that the issues raised by the participants will help to inform future public policy development in support of women's efforts to achieve economic security. The Manitoba Women's Directorate has prepared a report of proceedings that was shared with ministers and symposium attendees. The next steps include

further research and analytical work in support of the issues raised and a report to be presented to government.

With the support of the Employment and Training Services Branch of Manitoba Education and Training, the Women's Directorate developed a basic computer training program for women to address the disproportionate number of women lacking computer skills. Power Up, therefore, aims to enhance women's employment opportunities through knowledge of computers and the Internet. More than 3700 women from across the province have now been served through the Power Up program.

Trade Up To Your Future is a pre-employment trades training program for women on social assistance and employment insurance, developed in partnership with Manitoba Education and Training, Employment and Training Services Branch, Tec Voc High School and the Getaway Group of the Manufacturers and Exporters associations. This program offers five months of shops training, upgrading classes and workplace readiness, followed by 30 weeks of workplace experience, preparing the participants for entry to apprenticeship programs in high-skill, high-demand jobs. The first pilot project began in September of 1999, and a second got underway in September of 2000. The graduates of the second pilot are now entering the workforce. We are very pleased with the success of this program and note that our partners have been very supportive of the women enrolled in the program.

To facilitate greater access to education and well-paid, high-demand occupations, the Training for Tomorrow Scholarship Awards Program offers 50 \$1,000 scholarships each year to women entering two-year diploma programs in maths, science, technology courses at the province's community colleges. To date, 341 scholarships have been awarded, and tracking of graduates shows that over 90 percent of recipients are employed in jobs related to their training. The deadline for entry for this year's award is September 15, 2001.

To support women seeking to start their own business or seeking to grow an existing business, the Women's Directorate has developed a

mentorship program for business women. The program offers women an opportunity to interact with successful women business owners who will offer guidance in developing and maintaining viable businesses.

Our second major initiative: to promote efforts to provide a violence-free environment for women and children. The Directorate has commissioned a violence survey to help us to monitor public awareness and attitudes respecting violence against women. I am pleased to report that Manitobans have a very high level of concern regarding the issue of violence against women. This complements the work the Directorate is doing at the national level to develop a set of indicators to track our progress over time. That work is expected to be completed in the fall of 2001.

Locally the Directorate participates in interdepartmental committees that deal with violence issues such as the Family Violence Court steering committee and The Domestic Violence and Stalking Protection, Prevention and Consequential Amendments Act developmental committee. It also sits on the interdepartmental committee on family violence prevention chaired by the family violence prevention program and the change of identify in life-threatening situations committee.

The Directorate conducted a gender-inclusive analysis of the Victims' Bill of Rights legislation to help ensure it contemplates the circumstances of women victims as well as males since women are far more likely than males to be criminally victimized by someone they know. Neighbourhoods Alive!, a new initiative announced last year by our Government, is a long-term, community-based developmental strategy which will provide community organizations the support they need to rebuild their neighbourhoods. It will focus on housing, employment, training and education and recreation, as well as safety and crime prevention.

The Directorate's Keeping Safe at Work campaign will support this community development initiative by helping to prevent criminal victimizations of women in the workplace, working alone or on their way to and from work. Keeping Safe at Work consists of posters to call attention to the issue, a pamphlet

and information sessions. The information sessions focus on how to prevent becoming the victim of a crime of opportunity.

Third initiative: raise awareness of women's health issues and advocate for the recognition of women's needs in public health policy. The Directorate has worked in co-operation with Manitoba Health to develop and implement the Manitoba women's health strategy. To inaugurate the emphasis on women's health, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women has begun a series of consultations with women around the province. The minister has conducted two health consultations this spring, one in Winnipeg and one in Thompson. A third consultation is planned for Brandon. A second northern consultation will take place in The Pas, and others are planned for next year.

To encourage more women to assume decision-making roles in health care, the Directorate plans to distribute information to women's groups across the province regarding the functions of regional health authority boards and the important contribution that women can make to these boards. As well, the September issue of *About Women* will contain the same information.

* (16:30)

To promote the routine use of gender-inclusive analysis in government decision-making policies and programs.

As part of its mandate to promote women's equal participation in society and the workplace, the Manitoba Women's Directorate seeks to identify and address differential impacts on women related to policies and programs.

The Women's Directorate has developed a training program to assist program developers and policy makers in government departments with the implementation of a gender-inclusive analytical approach. The aim of the training is to help departments integrate GIA, that is gender-inclusive analysis, into their programs, services and legislation, thereby ensuring that they serve Manitoba's women and men more equitably.

To date, the Directorate has offered both general and group-specific training workshops to civil servants, and is assisting in raising awareness of the importance of incorporating a gendered perspective into the community health needs assessments of regional health authorities. The Directorate carries out gender-inclusive analysis of proposed legislation, policies and programs on its own and in consultation with departments.

I now want to talk about the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. The Manitoba Women's Advisory Council is the other branch with the Status of Women. Its role is to be an arm's-length advisory body to government on issues of concern to women and their families. The council's work to enhance the status of Manitoba women is accomplished by promoting women's equal participation in society and facilitating change in economic, legal and social structures.

Currently, the Advisory Council is comprised of 13 government-appointed members who are representative of Manitoba's diverse population base and geographic distribution. Kim Clare has been the Chairperson since January 3, 2000. There were a number of new appointments to the council in January 2001 to fill vacant positions created by the expiration of terms. The new members are Sue Anderson from Flin Flon, Pauline Charriere Ndiaye of Winnipeg, Nahanni Fontaine of Winnipeg, Elaine Huberdeau of Winnipeg, Margaret Platte of Winnipeg, Gisèle Saurette Roch of Winnipeg, and Rae Smith of Brandon. They joined seasoned council members Gisèle Barnabé of Ste. Agathe, Keith Louise Fulton of Winnipeg, Esther Fyk of Garland, Crystal Laborero of Winnipeg, Cecile Lesage of St. Pierre-Jolys.

Council's work focusses on improving the lives, welfare and status of women. There are six major areas where council concentrates its efforts to enhance the status of women. First, the council provides recommendations to government in support of the development of gender-sensitive policies and legislation, as well as information in response to existing equality

issues and the emerging priorities of women. Second, the council facilitates the building of effective and collaborative partnerships among women, community organizations and government departments, while providing consultation and a process to give more voice to women's concerns. Third, the council assists in better educating the community on research and issues that affect the formation of public policy which has an impact on women and their families. Fourth, the council emphasizes its outreach to marginalized women, and offers support and opportunities to voice their concerns through community consultations or strategic alliances with service providers or advocacy groups. Fifth, the council also serves as a clearing house to provincial communities by sharing information on events, resources and programs of interest to women. Sixth, the council functions as a storefront operation that provides administrative support to not-for-profit women's organizations, and acts as a referral base to women seeking assistance with problems.

The Manitoba Women's Advisory Council has worked diligently over the past years to accomplish these work goals and to effect meaningful changes for the enhancement of the status of women. For example, to facilitate the building of effective and collaborative partnerships among women, community groups and government, the council is liaising with well over 200 community groups and organizations; continuing its outreach to rural and northern Manitoba by holding meetings in Carman, Thompson and Brandon; reaching out to marginalized groups such as women in conflict with the law and poor women; attending numerous community events, workshops and conferences focussing on issues of concern to women; participating on several multidisciplinary steering committees and public awareness campaigns; maintaining a mailing list of over 2000 individuals and organizations; and sharing a best practices and information on issues of common concern with the provincial and territorial coalition of women's advisory councils in order to gain a national perspective on issues of concern to women. As a means of better educating the public on the issues and research developments affecting the formation of public policy, the council organized the

following events last year: Lunch and Learn, community and informational presentations held monthly which have drawn an average of 35 participants per session. Presentations are linked to the council's two themes. Year 1999-2000's theme was women's economic security, changes in child care over the last decade, Employment Insurance and its gender bias. Year 2000-2001's theme was women's health and wellness. The Lunch and Learn included: women and HIV/AIDS; women and weight training for health; incarcerated women and self-harm; women and heart health; the importance of screening for cervical cancer; let's talk mental health; an annual sunrise breakfast held on the grand staircase at the Legislature, an annual tradition to mark the anniversary of the date of the Montréal massacre in 1989 and to commemorate Canada's Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Some 200 attended.

The council also provided information and made recommendations to government on a variety of issues identified by the community as areas of concern. This was accomplished by giving voice to women's concerns and focussing on community liaison and outreach to women in Manitoba. As a result, the council's priority issues are: the economic status of women; women's health and wellness; violence against women; childcare; and women in conflict with the law.

Some other areas addressed by council include: outreach to marginalized rural and northern women; human rights; the generation of gender sensitive public policy; sexism in the media; senior women's issues; and the sexual exploitation of children. The council understands the inter-relatedness of these issues with each other and the resultant need for a holistic perspective on women's equality issues.

In the council's role as a provincial clearing house or information resource to the community, the following was undertaken: the publication and distribution of a resource guide called *Parenting on Your Own: A Handbook for One Parent Families*; the provision of a weekly "Did You Know" fax and e-mail on information and community events of interest to women; the provision of sponsorships to individuals of low income to attend informational sessions and community events of interest to women;

expertise and consultation as well as participation on planning committees for community driven events; a one-stop library resource with Internet accessible to the public.

To ensure maximum access for individual women and women's organizations, the council operated as a storefront operation by providing administrative support to women's not-for-profit organizations, acting as an information resource to the hundreds of women who call the office for information on public policy or government programs and guidelines, assistance in accessing government departments, referrals to appropriate service providers, or help in locating funding sources.

The council has expanded its work beyond their six priority areas to include some new initiatives, the expansion of its consultative role and the recognition of the contributions of women to the quality of life in Manitoba. For example, it has continued to collaborate with government departments, community members and service providers in non-profit organizations on the following initiatives: a public awareness campaign to mark November as domestic violence prevention month; tracking the impact of health reform on women's health; a public awareness campaign on teen pregnancy that resulted in the development of a TV ad campaign; a child care regulatory review process that created the child care vision document currently being reviewed by the public for input to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale); the planning of a well-attended symposium on the economic status of women in partnership with the Women's Directorate; policy development on harassment and abuse in sports; policy development to address the sexual exploitation of children that resulted in a report to the Minister of Family Services; participation in a regional network of the Prairie Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Communities; and the development of a Web site to interconnect agencies working with women's business owners, the Women BizNet.

* (16:40)

To recognize the contributions that Manitobans, particularly women, have made to their community, the council has undertaken to encourage and support the nomination of women for prestigious awards such as the Justice Crime

Prevention Award, the Citizens' Hall of Fame, and the Women's Entrepreneur of the Year awards.

Council will continue to work with the community on issues of concern to women and their families by providing recommendations to government in support of the development of gender-sensitive policies and legislation, education to the public on research and issues affecting women, informational sessions and events of interest to women, consultation, expertise and participation on planning committees for community events of interest to women, support services to individuals and non-profit women's organizations, information and referral services to women accessing council's office for assistance, a weekly fax and e-mail list of information and upcoming events to women's organizations and interested community members and, again, a one-stop library resource and Internet access to the public.

With another productive year, the council is looking forward to the challenge of improving the status of women in Manitoba. By advising government on issues of concern to women and participating in the women's community, Council will continue to play a key role in the advancement of women's equality.

In conclusion, I am proud of the work of both the Women's Directorate and the Women's Advisory Council. They have worked to inform government on issues of concern to women. I am confident that both organizations will continue to work towards the goal of ensuring equal opportunities and equal participation in all aspects of our society and for all Manitoba women. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for those comments. Does the Official Opposition critic, the honourable Member for Seine River, have any opening comments?

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Yes, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have some very brief opening remarks. It is a pleasure to examine the

Estimates for the Department of Status of Women for the fiscal year 2001-2002. This department has an important role to play in trying to meet the varied needs of Manitoba's women. I would like to thank the minister and her departmental staff for the considerable work they do in trying to meet these needs.

I will have some questions relative to the minister's statement regarding the initiatives by both the Manitoba Women's Directorate and the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. I also want to re-examine how far the Government has come in terms of actually achieving the aims and goals of the Women's Advisory Council. I also want to ask the minister a few questions about the report released on International Women's Day on March 8: *Women's Economic Independence and Security: A Federal-Provincial-Territorial Strategic Framework*. Although I recognize that this report is not intended to reflect an official position of any government, I note that it is designed to assist ministers responsible for the Status of Women in guiding their work towards economic gender equality.

The report raises a number of interesting points that over the past 20 years some of the gains that some women have achieved have not been shared equally among all women. Some women have been successful in accessing higher education and higher paying jobs that have contributed to their economic independence. Others continue to face challenges in achieving economic independence and securing their financial security.

All of these challenges are long-term issues that slow progress towards economic and social equity for women. It is my hope that the Manitoba government remains dedicated to trying to find innovative solutions to these challenges.

I will also have questions in terms of some of the initiatives. I did not have an opportunity to go through all of them, both by the Women's Directorate and the Women's Advisory Council. My understanding is that the Women's Directorate is the paid staff component that assists the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council

in hosting and putting on seminars and regular meetings on various issues related to women.

On a personal note, back in March I had the pleasure of attending the Brandon YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards, and a couple of weeks ago now the YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards in Winnipeg at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. These events are very important because they recognize the many and varied roles played by Manitoba women. Although these types of awards single out a limited number of women, it should be remembered that Manitoba women play a significant role in all aspects of our society, and all deserve our respect and admiration. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the critic of the Official Opposition for those remarks. At this point in time, we would invite the minister's staff to take their places in the Chamber. Is the minister prepared to introduce her staff members present to the committee?

Ms. McGifford: On my left-hand side and furthest away from me is Sue Barnsley, who is the executive director of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. Seated next to her is Kim Clare, who is the Chair of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. On my right is Theresa Harvey, who is the ADM for the Status of Women and the Women's Directorate. Seated beside Theresa is Ruth Mitchell, who is the policy manager. So these four women are the chief staff persons from the Manitoba Status of Women, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: The item before this committee is 22.1. Status of Women (a) Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$189,200.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am looking at the org chart on page 5 of the Supplementary Information. I am wondering if the minister can provide me with the names of those involved under Administration.

* (16:50)

Ms. McGifford: First of all, if I could deal with the Manitoba Advisory Council staff, although

the administrative persons are subsumed in the title executive director and staff. The executive director, as I have indicated, is Sue Barnsley. The administrative assistant is Norma Jean Ciglar and the second administrative assistant is Lynda Saelens that is in the Advisory Council.

Now, to turn to the Women's Directorate, there are two administrative positions. One is held by Marg Kirstein, and the second by Heather Sheardown.

Mrs. Dacquay: Could the minister confirm whether these are full-time equivalent positions?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, in relation to the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, the administrative assistant, Norma Jean Ciglar, is a .75 position, and the administrative assistant, Lynda Saelens is a full-time position.

To speak about the Women's Directorate, the two positions there, Marg Kirstein is a full-time position. Heather Sheardown was previously a part-time position, but she received full-time status in this year's Budget.

Mrs. Dacquay: Are any of these new positions or new employees in these positions?

Ms. McGifford: None of the persons employed are new positions, but just to indicate again that Heather Sheardown used to work .5 and now she works full time, but it is the same person who was previously employed in the Women's Directorate.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister for that response, and that is what I was going to ask, recognizing I was adding it after I had been recognized.

Does the minister herself have a political assistant in her office who handles primarily—I know she has a dual role—the functions and the Department for the Status of Women, as well as act as liaison with the minister and the Women's Advisory Council?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, in my office I have two persons who work with me. One of them is

Judith Baldwin, who is my special assistant, and she provides services or, among other things, works with me on Advanced Education and works with the Seniors Directorate.

I also have an executive assistant who works almost entirely in my community, but she does also work alongside with me with the Status of Women. However, I do want to add that that really is not her major task. So I think the answer to the member's question would be, no, I do not have a specific person whose work is to act as a liaison or a link between my office and the Status of Women. I have somebody who does that as a small part of a great number of responsibilities.

Mrs. Dacquay: Are there any vacant positions in the department?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, there are no vacant positions in the Advisory Council. In the Women's Directorate, there is one full-time vacant position, policy analyst position. That position has been vacant for 16 months.

Mrs. Dacquay: Then I assume if there is one full-time equivalent, there has been no change, then, in the number of full-time equivalent positions in the Directorate.

Ms. McGifford: Just to correct something on the record, Mr. Chair, we have made a little bit of an error. The situation is that Heather Sheardown used to be a half time, and we had a half-time policy analyst. Now Heather has become a full-time employee, so what we have vacant is actually a half-time policy analyst.

Mr. Chair, we have a half-time occupied policy analyst position, but we do have a full-time vacant policy analyst position.

Mrs. Dacquay: Just a question that I think I know the answer to, as opposed to passing something, in case I have to go back, this is all the staff that is required to assist the minister either from the Directorate or from the Advisory Council. Is that correct?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair, that is correct.

Mrs. Dacquay: Would the minister then be willing to let me do as much review line by line

but then maybe revert back if it should be addressed to the Directorate, as opposed to the Advisory Council?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, that would be fine.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister. I am prepared to start, Mr. Chair, with the line by line.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 22.1. Status of Women (a) Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (1) Salaries and Employees Benefits \$189,200. Shall the item pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I have a question relative to the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, specific to that line 1.(a)(1). The minister indicated that the board is comprised of 13 individuals, and my question is: Is there an honorarium paid to board members?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair, there is an honorarium.

Mrs. Dacquay: Has the amount of the honorarium changed year over year?

Ms. McGifford: No, Mr. Chair, it has not changed.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister then indicate what the \$8,200 year over year reflects? I think I know what it is. I think it is the shift from half time to full time of the—was it the policy analyst? Is that the title of that position? Heather's title, whatever that might be.

* (17:00)

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I believe the member is talking about the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council currently, and Sheardown works for the Manitoba Women's Directorate. If I might say so, I think the member understands that although the Advisory Council is a council appointed by government with the Chair, there is also a small coterie of office persons who are in paid positions. As the member can see, there are 3.75 paid positions. I think that the member—she can correct me—is talking about the difference in the salaries of those paid persons. I would assume, although I will check with staff—I am sort of asking them as I am speaking—those were

the increases in the contract negotiated last year. The staff is saying, yes, that accounts for that \$8,000 increase.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister for that response. Can the minister also identify how much of the increase year over year—I think if my calculations are right it is plus 58.1. I am referring specifically now for the Women's Directorate. I assume a portion of that reflects the change from the half-time position to the full-time position. Can she tell me how much of that is contained in that figure?

Ms. McGifford: In relation to that \$58,100, Mr. Chair, 27.8 has been earmarked for retirement severance, 14.1 for conversion of a half-time clerk to full time, and that is the person that we talked about earlier, and 16.2 for the JSI merit increments and benefits.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister for that breakdown. Can she explain what the first figure was, 27.8, for retirement?

Ms. McGifford: In accordance with the collective agreement, Mr. Chair, employees who retire from government get one week's pay for each year of service. It becomes the retirement severance. This year we have a long-time member who served many years who is retiring.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass 22.1. (a), Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 22.1. (a) Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$189,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$119,400. Shall this item pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Do we not have to do 22.1. (b) Women's Directorate salaries?

Mr. Chairperson: We have not reached it yet.

Mrs. Dacquay: Oh, I am sorry. Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 22.1. (a) Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (2) Other Expenditures \$119,400—pass.

Now we are there. Item 22.1. (b) Women's Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mrs. Dacquay: I believe I have all the information. I am prepared to pass that line.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 22.1. (b) Women's Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$561,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$215,500—pass.

The member has a question.

Mrs. Dacquay: Just because there are very few actual lines to be passed, I do not want to pass them all and then not be able to ask some of the policy questions I referred to earlier. With your co-operation, I will defer passing that line and just ask some of the other questions I had here relative to both the Directorate and the Women's Advisory Council.

In the minister's opening statement, she alluded to, and I believe it was under the initiatives of the Women's Directorate, one of the recent initiatives was the program entitled Neighbourhoods Alive!, Mr. Chair. I understood that program was an initiative of the Department of Justice, and I recognize and appreciate that there is some co-ordination in terms of consultation and advice flowing between the two departments, but, if I am wrong, where in this Budget is there an allocation for that program?

Ms. McGifford: Neighbourhoods Alive! is not a specific program of the Women's Directorate, but the Women's Directorate has a role to play in Neighbourhoods Alive!, and that is the Keeping Safe at Work program for which they receive some funding through Neighbourhoods Alive!, Mr. Chair. So the point was not that the Women's Directorate run Neighbourhoods Alive! but that we work collaboratively with other wings of government and participate in that program.

Mrs. Dacquay: Last year I indicated that I was very concerned that, with the new Healthy Child Initiative, I believe it is, a Cabinet committee, that there was no female representation, no female Cabinet ministers on that committee. I expressed my concern at that time and asked the Minister responsible for the Status of Women if she would take that to her colleagues, and I am wondering now if she was successful in her

attempts to convince them to have a female Cabinet minister at that table on that committee.

Ms. McGifford: It has been public information for quite some time that I am a member of the Healthy Child Committee to Cabinet. First of all, I was a member as the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and then, when I was given the new portfolio of Advanced Education, I remained on the committee as a representative for the Status of Women. I am advised by my ADM that there is a move afoot and that she will soon be appointed as a support person for me on that committee.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am pleased to hear that because I think it is exceedingly important so that there can be proper co-ordination and consultation between the respective departments of government.

I have a question for the minister regarding one of the roles played by the Women's Advisory Council. Could she please repeat what specific awards—I was not able to write that quickly—that the council submits nominees for—I think there were about four different awards that she indicated the council played a role in putting forth women nominees.

Ms. McGifford: My information is that the council has supported the nomination of women for these awards; justice-crime prevention awards, the Citizens' Hall of Fame and the Women's Entrepreneur of the Year Awards.

* (17:10)

Mrs. Dacquay: Has the Advisory Council entertained the possibility of submitting names for the Women of Distinction Awards? This year they have gone back to respective categories that they went away from for a few years, but this year they are now recognizing women in specific categories.

I was a little concerned because I noticed in one of the categories on the program there was only one nominee. I find that a little disappointing because I am sure there are hundreds of women out there. I think if it is left up to an individual, they sometimes just do not put the time, energy and effort into it unless they

feel strongly about that particular candidate in submitting a name. I am pleased that the Women's Advisory role is taking a more active role in doing some research and in promoting more women as nominees for these awards.

Ms. McGifford: I am advised by my staff members that they have definitely submitted names in the past. This year they did not, but in previous years they have. In fact, their nominations have been well-received and they have had three winners.

I also would encourage the member opposite to nominate people, unless there is a stipulation against politicians nominating individuals. I know that before I was in politics I certainly was part and parcel of the nomination of several women. So I do not know, the member may want to check and see if she is allowed to nominate people.

I am also having difficulty reading my staff's writing, but I believe that we have made nominations for Governor General's Awards for the Order of Manitoba, and, of course, we have been called upon to support nominations from women's organizations, and we have done that as well.

I might also add, Mr. Chair, that it was extremely upsetting to me that I was not able to attend the YW Women of Distinction Awards this year because of a death in my family. I know the Premier (Mr. Doer) attended and spoke on behalf of government, and I was very sorry not to be there with him.

Mrs. Dacquay: To just address the minister's concern as to my nominating people, I have signed several letters of endorsement and letters of support for people, but I think it is probably much more meaningful and keeps the politics out of it if the nomination comes from the community group that the individual is associated or involved with.

There used to be a political category, and I would have no hesitation, but I think Gerrie Hammond, in fact, was the last nominee under that category, if memory serves me correctly, and a number of women who played a very integral role in the Manitoba Legislature were

recognized over the years. I would have no hesitation in bringing forth nominees for that category should it once again appear as a possible category.

But just to reiterate, as a politician I am always just a little reluctant to take the initiative to put forward the names, because some people read, and not necessarily accurately, political connotations in it, but I have written numerous letters of reference and support for individual nominees that I know, when I am approached.

Could the minister provide me with more details about the Web site? Is it under the Directorate, or is it under the Advisory Council?

Ms. McGifford: Both the Women's Directorate and the Advisory Council do have a Web site. The Women's Directorate has the Government Web site. I am told by the Advisory Council that they are just beginning their Web site. They hope to add to it, and they hope it will grow and include more information. But it is in its infancy at this point.

Mrs. Dacquay: The minister referenced that in her opening remarks. I know about the Directorate's Web site. I assume what she was alluding to was the new initiative of the Women's Advisory Council in terms of the Web site.

Can I ask more specifically what kinds of information—

Ms. McGifford: Yes, the Women's Directorate Web site includes, obviously, information about government initiatives. One of the other features of this Web site is that it has hyperlinks to other Web sites that would be of interest to women. For example, links to women's health issues and women's health organizations. I am just giving that as an example. There would be obviously other links on matters pertaining to women and of interest to women. Also, the Directorate is very fortunate to have a summer student who works on the Web site and updates it and prepares it.

I am told by the Advisory Council that they are hoping to add links for the *Parenting on Your Own* handbook and a calendar of events.

They hope that on their Web site—I mentioned the *Parenting on Your Own*—to have the capacity to update that handbook, with which I am sure the member is familiar, because it changes the sources and reference material—well, not the reference material, but the resources change. So it is important to change it without having to republish it all the time. One of the ways of doing that—and I am sure the Advisory Council people would see it as a cost-saver—would be to update it on the Web site.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister for that response. I guess my concern at the outset was: Would there be a lot of duplication and perhaps cause confusion? If I understand it correctly, the Advisory's Web site, when it is up and running—is it running now? I have not checked recently.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, the Advisory's Web site is running. As I was indicating earlier, it is in its preliminary stages, and I just explained some of the hopes. Just to reiterate, in fact it is not a cost-driver; it is a cost-saver, or at least we conceive it to be a cost-saver.

Mrs. Dacquay: First of all, you indicated there were approximately 35 people involved in those luncheon meetings. Do you find that that is a really ideal time of the day to be holding them? Have you held them at any other time and done any comparisons?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I am advised by staff that the Lunch and Learn have included anywhere from 35 to 95 individuals, depending on the topic. I know I went for the session on Employment Insurance and the court challenges, and it was very, very well attended that day. I do not know if there were 95, but it was well attended. I am sure the member can understand that some topics are more pertinent to certain women than others. Staff really feel that the deciding factor is the topic more than the time. However, adding to that, I am also told that there have been workshops for seniors, which go from about 10 until 2, so a wider time frame. Of course it is easier for seniors to attend between those hours. I understand the attendance has been quite similar.

The very good news is I am informed a decision has been made to videotape the Lunch

and Learn so that they will be available for distribution to those women who cannot make the current Lunch and Learn time.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am pleased that is being done. I guess just from a personal, selfish perspective, it could not be at a worse time for me. I think the minister can appreciate that we have regular daily meetings 11 to 12. We get about a 20-minute break, and we are right back into caucus and CUPE reviews. So it is not from lack of interest, but I am finding it very difficult to make those luncheon meetings.

I am not sure if anyone made the minister aware, and I recognize that it does not fall completely under her department, but from a perspective of assisting women and women's groups, I want to raise it here. That is the immigrant women and the difficulties they are experiencing with some of their programming and the allocation of the program dollars. I know full well that the programs that I am referring to specifically are funded by Family Services. There have been some ongoing problems. I am just wondering if anybody has consulted with the minister and asked her for any advice as to how this perhaps could be resolved.

* (17:20)

Ms. McGifford: I do want to point out to the member opposite that she has quite rightly identified this is not primarily or even secondarily my responsibility, since neither the Advisory Council nor the Women's Directorate provide funding to women's organizations. In fact we are not a funding body. The member has identified, I believe, that funding comes through Family Services and Housing, and also through the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism.

I am advised, and I think it is worth putting on the record, that all three programs that were controversial at the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba are funded, the funding will be the same, and the staffing will be by immigrant women. I think that the services have been put in place.

The member also asked if I had been consulted, and the answer is yes. I do believe

that there was a meeting of ministers on Friday afternoon. Unfortunately, I was in The Pas consulting with the community there on issues related to advanced education, so I was not able to attend that meeting, but I do know women who have been involved in the Immigrant Women's Association, and I have spoken to women as well as I have obviously spoken to the Minister of Family Services and Housing and the Minister of Immigration. So, yes, I have been consulted.

Mrs. Dacquay: I want to refer now to the report that I referenced in my opening remarks, the *Women's Economic Independence and Security: A Strategic Framework* and ask the minister what steps she is taking and her department is taking to address the concerns that were identified in the report.

Ms. McGifford: Of course, the report cited by the member opposite, as she knows, was released on International Women's Day, which was a very timely release of that document. The document deals in part, of course, with the education and training and the unevenness in women's access to education and training, and particularly women living in poverty or women who are part of a minority groups, et cetera. There are three initiatives or programs within the Women's Directorate that I could cite: first of all, our trades training work; secondly, the computer literacy that I cited in the speech—and I think, when I spoke, I said that there were 3700 women who had had that training, but I am now advised that, including our current enrollment by the end of this year, it will be closer to 5500—and then Mr. Chair, there are scholarships in the Training for Tomorrow program which offer scholarships to young women attending colleges who are enrolled in programs related to sciences. There are 50 scholarships, and they are worth \$1500 for each year.

I might also point out as Minister of Advanced Education that this Government has got many initiatives that are important. I know the member is aware that one of the first things that this Government did on assuming office was to co-operate with universities and ask our universities to reduce tuition fees by 10 percent. We have been able to maintain that reduction for the current year, and we have compensated our

universities and colleges with an extra \$13 million. So they will not be disadvantaged by this request.

We have also introduced in April 2000 a \$6-million Manitoba bursary. That is in the Budget again for this year. So that is over \$12 million, and we also work with the Canadian millennium scholarship program in awarding these bursaries.

You know, I could go on. There have been doublings by the Manitoba and Canadian governments of the monthly amount used to calculate the non-refundable tax credits, and the Manitoba non-refundable tax credit rate increased from 8 percent to 10 percent.

There has been increased support for Access programs for the second consecutive year. I think Access programs, I was just in fact visiting the Winnipeg Education Centre this morning, visiting the education component there. I was very struck by the comments of the students who pointed out that they really value this program and thank government for this program because it changes their lives.

Mr. Chair, I could also point out the Government's determination to introduce legislation, specifically The Student Aid Act, which will enshrine bursaries in legislation.

So these are some of the things that have been done to promote women, both by my Department of Advanced Education and by the Women's Directorate.

Mrs. Dacquay: Does the minister know what the breakdown of women representation is on boards and commissions?

Ms. McGifford: I do not know what those figures are. I know that the goal is 50 percent, and in some areas we have exceeded it and in some areas we have not met that target, but that is certainly the goal. If the member wants information, we can endeavour to get it for her.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister, and I would be interested in seeing the information with the breakdown.

Relative to my last question, the breakdown on the boards and commissions, I am still quite

concerned because what I have heard is that there still is not a strong female representation on the regional and district health boards. I wonder if the minister has any numbers or information relative to that specifically.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair, I do. My understanding is that we have now achieved 40 percent representation, which I think is certainly progress. During my speech, the member might have noticed that the Women's Directorate is endeavouring to inform women of the importance of their sitting on these particular boards and nominating women to these particular boards. In fact, in our fall issue of *About Women*, we will include an article about nominations, about the importance, so we will be bringing it to the attention of women once again.

I could point out, while we are speaking about boards, that one great source of satisfaction and pride to this Government is that we have four major Crown corporations with women board chairs: the Lotteries board, Liquor, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority board and MPI. I think that really is a first and we are very proud of that progress, and so I would like to put that on the record.

*(17:30)

Mrs. Dacquay: Has the minister identified any programs, other than the existing programs to assist rural women, particularly women on farms, recognizing the very difficult situation that a lot of farm families are in right now? I know the stress line has been reopened, but, beyond that, the minister alluded earlier to a meeting that she had relative to wellness, I believe, in the rural areas.

Ms. McGifford: I am advised by staff that the Department of Agriculture has quite a large coterie of home economists who provide services for farm women, training and other kinds of supports. So the member might want to speak to the Minister of Agriculture about some of those programs. Also, I would like to tell the member that we will be in Brandon, we hope, sometime this spring or early summer to continue with our health consultations, and there will be continuing health consultations throughout Manitoba. Of course, we are very

pleased that the rural stress line was reinstated and we know that it is well used by farm women and by other rural people.

Mrs. Dacquay: Recently I read a federal article stating some statistics that were pretty alarming. That year over year there had been more women seeking shelter from abuse than the previous year and this was a global statistic. Can the minister tell me what—I recognize again that it may not be her direct responsibility, but I cannot help but think that there must be some dialogue and some sharing of information between the Minister of Family Services and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Mr. Jim Rondeau, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. McGifford: Before I discuss this federal report and the picture in Manitoba, I might add that when I was speaking about rural women I neglected to point out to the member opposite that about half of the persons enrolled in our computer training live in rural Manitoba, and we have provided services in more than 60 rural communities. So I thought that that might be interesting information.

As far as the exact figures of women seeking shelter, I am advised by staff that there are more women seeking various kinds of supports, phoning the police, et cetera, in Manitoba—there are more women seeking these services—and the sense is that women have more confidence in the system in Manitoba because it is quite highly evolved. But I do want to bring to the attention of the member opposite that I am advised that the actual number of nights in shelters is slightly down. If the member wanted exact and specific information, I am sure that Family Services would provide it.

* (17:40)

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister for that response and, as I indicated at the beginning of my comments, I recognize it is not her direct ministerial responsibility. Is the minister aware that Manitoba is probably in line with the national average of the number of women seeking shelter, that approximately 55 percent are women with children? I just want to know if

she knows that that statistic is very different for Manitoba.

Ms. McGifford: I understand that the percentage of women in Manitoba seeking shelter and also having children mirrors pretty well the 55 percent.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass the next line, Mr. Acting Chair.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Rondeau): Item 22.1. Status of Women (b) Women's Directorate (3) Grants \$104,000—pass.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under the project grants, can the minister give me some indication of which programs were funded, and are they pretty comparable to last year's listing?

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Ms. McGifford: I would like to respond to the member's question. The grants are very comparable to last year. The project grants: \$50,000 has been reserved for RESOLVE, the research institute at the University of Manitoba; \$4,000 is reserved by the department to support grassroots initiatives. For example, I believe we purchased tickets to the Women of Distinction dinner, for one thing. That kind of thing, leaf tickets. The \$50,000 under Scholarships is obviously the training for tomorrow's scholarships.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under the \$50,000 for scholarships, can the minister identify how many actual scholarships were awarded through the program last year?

Ms. McGifford: It is \$50,000, \$1,000 each. They were all awarded last year.

Mrs. Dacquay: Were the amounts expended last year pretty much in line within last year's Budget?

* (17:50)

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Dacquay: I neglected to ask one question. I wonder if I could have the minister's

permission to move back to other expenditures. There is an increase year over year under the Supplies and Services line. I wonder if the minister would be willing to let me revert back there to ask that question.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair.

The increase in Supplies and Services is accounted for by an increase in desktop and an increase in rent, and the decrease in communications, I am told, is accounted for by a decrease in printing documents for the Power Up program which had been printed previously and, therefore, did not have to be printed again.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 22.1. Status of Women (b) Women's Directorate (2) Other Expenditures \$215,500—pass; (3) Grants \$104,000—pass.

Resolution 22.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,189,700 for the Status of Women for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

Item 22.2. Amortization of Capital Assets \$27,900.

Mrs. Dacquay: As this is the last line here, I will not have an opportunity to make a statement after this. So, before passing this, I just want to thank the staff of both the Women's Directorate and the Advisory Council, as well as the Chair, the Advisory Council and the minister for her

co-operation. Regrettably, I have been told how much time I can expend on this department, and it is regrettable that there is not more time because I know I would have many more answers. I appreciate and recognize how busy everybody is and that we all have to share and have equal opportunity at questioning ministers on their respective departments. I would just like to, in closing, thank the minister for her co-operation and for her responses.

Ms. McGifford: I thank the member for her comments.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 22.2. Amortization of Capital Assets \$27,900—pass.

Resolution 22.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$27,900 for the Status of Women, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

That completes the Estimates for the Status of Women Directorate.

What is the will of the committee?

Committee rise.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being six o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 15, 2001

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Introduction of Bills	
Presenting Petitions		Bill 10—The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act	
Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes		Mackintosh	1724
Schuler	1723		
Kenaston Underpass		Oral Questions	
Pitura	1723	Arena/Entertainment Complex	
Loewen	1723	Murray; Doer	1725
Driedger	1723		
Reading and Receiving Petitions		Highways Capital Program	
Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes		Murray; Doer	1726
Schuler	1723	Flood Prone Areas	
Kenaston Underpass		Dacquay; Lathlin	1728
Pitura	1723	Lake Manitoba	
Loewen	1724	Cummings; Lathlin	1729
		Cummings; Ashton	1729
Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees		Knapp Dam and Pump Station	
Committee of Supply		Gerrard; Lathlin	1730
Santos	1724	Education Facilities	
		Rondeau; Caldwell	1730
Tabling of Reports		Big Grass Marsh	
Annual Report of the Red River College for the year ending June 30, 2000		Cummings; Doer	1732
McGifford	1724	Devils Lake Diversion	
		Penner; Doer	1732
Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2001–2002 – Departmental Expenditure Estimates – Culture, Heritage and Tourism		Members' Statements	
Lemieux	1724	Order of Manitoba Recipients	
		Mitchelson	1733
Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2001–2002 – Departmental Expenditure Estimates – Community Support Programs		Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal	
Lemieux	1724	Korzeniowski	1734
		Oak Park High School Fundraiser	
Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2001–2002 – Departmental Expenditure estimates – Sport		Driedger	1734
Lemieux	1724	Royal Bank Cup	
		Jennissen	1735
		Canada Day Poster Challenge	
		Reimer	1735

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Committee of Supply
(Concurrent Sections)**

Conservation

1736

Health

1736

Agriculture and Food
Seniors Directorate

1768
1796

Civil Service Commission

1802

Status of Women

1808