



Second Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES

and

PROCEEDINGS

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*



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.
FAURSCIOU, 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.	Rupertsland	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 29, 2001

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Angie Trinder, Pat Phillips, Chris Phillips 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.

Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Anna-Marie Glesmann, Kevin Comrie and Chelsey Comrie 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

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Lois Steele, Tom Antonick, Lynn Garrioch 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. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Steve Zilinyk, Pamela Dixon, Bob Matias 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. Frank Pitura (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Ken Uruski, V. Paseschnikoff, Paul Pfrimmer 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.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), I have reviewed the petition. 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 Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), I have reviewed the petition. 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 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 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?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The 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.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), 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?

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.

The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Riel (Ms. Asper), 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?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned, The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba, head office in the city of Winnipeg, in the province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth:

THAT The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba Incorporation Act, R.S.M. 1990, c. 81, be amended to provide for a change in the constitution of the board to amend the investment powers of the board, to allow the board to determine its own committee structure and to provide for various technical changes so as to clarify the powers of the board in carrying out the affairs of The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba.

WHEREFORE your petitioner humbly prays that the Legislature of the province of Manitoba may be pleased to pass an act amending The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba Incorporation Act, R.S.M. 1990, c. 81, for the purposes above mentioned.

And as in duty bound your petitioner will ever pray.

* (13:40)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 38—The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), that leave be given to introduce Bill 38, The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'élection des autorités locales, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 40—The Podiatrists Act

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that leave be given to introduce Bill 40, The Podiatrists Act; Loi sur les podiatres, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

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 members of the Order of the Eastern Star. This group is under the direction of Mr. Norman Clark and is the guest of the honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau).

Also in the public gallery we have Mr. Rafie and Mrs. Elsa Jose, children Tristan, Anthony and Stefie, who are guests of the honourable Member for The Maples (Mr. Aglugub).

Also in the public gallery and the Speaker's Gallery we have from Balmoral Hall School 33 Grade 4 students under the direction of Mrs. Carolyn Knowles. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen).

Also in the public gallery we have from Twin Rivers Country School 14 Grades 4 to 6 students under the direction of Ms. Bonita Toews. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik).

Also we have in the public gallery from Austin Elementary School 17 Grade 6 students under the direction of Mrs. Janina McKinnon. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed).

Also we have in the public gallery from Morden Collegiate 20 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Erica Stechesen. This

school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Esso Terminal—Henderson Highway Gas Spill—Premier's Awareness

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, there have been a tremendous number of environmental incidents in the province since the Doer government took office. For example, in Brandon, Brandon residents have been waiting some year and a half about answers about a wash-water spill; Pointe du Bois, residents there have been waiting some six months for answers on an oil spill. Now the residents of East St. Paul are waiting for answers about a gas spill.

Perhaps the Premier's policy is not to notify residents when a dangerous spill occurs. Perhaps he does not care. So I would ask the Premier: When did his Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) and his minister responsible for the Fire Commissioner's office inform him of the 10 000-litre gas spill in East St. Paul?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the protocols and policies that are in the department of environment dealing with spills have been in place for some time now, and we understand that those procedures were followed.

Cabinet Ministers Misinformation

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): It would be interesting if the protocol is there. They should tell the residents. They should tell the people. Come clean.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday—

Some Honourable Members: Why?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I believe somebody on the other side said, "Why?" I believe that is

what Manitobans are asking of this Government. Yesterday the Premier's ministers were scrambling around looking for answers. His minister, the Premier's minister, brought misinformation to this House by incorrectly stating that the Winnipeg fire department was on standby, thereby giving residents a false sense of hope.

I would ask the Premier: Does his ministers' level of incompetence, their pattern of putting misinformation on the record, the policy of not informing Manitobans of dangerous environmental spills, does this meet his standards of acceptable behaviour of ministers of the Crown?

* (13:45)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there have been over the years, after the MacGregor incident in the late '70s, laws passed and regulations put in place by previous governments, including members' opposite. There is a certain level of procedures that is followed by the local environmental officers; for example, I believe and my recollections indicate that on the tire fire burning incident that resulted in public concern, the notification was made to the public immediately.

There are policies that are followed in terms of the containment of various spills and their level of impact on the public. Those decisions are not made by elected politicians. They are made by experts at the site. If the Leader of the Opposition is saying that the expert sent to the site at the time of the incident did not follow good public policy, we will investigate it. Having said that, we believe that the protocols were followed.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe I made any reference at all to the experts. I was looking for some kind of leadership from this Government. This is a very, very serious issue.

His Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) knew about this 10 000-litre spill more than a month and told no one. This same minister promised long ago to provide answers on two previous spills, yet numerous months have passed and still we have heard nothing. His minister responsible for the Fire Commissioner's

office gave a false sense of security to the people of East St. Paul, claiming time and time again in this House that the Winnipeg fire department was on standby. This same minister is of the opinion that Manitobans do not need to be informed of such dangerous spills. Misinformation by the minister, incompetence by another minister, is this the low level of policy that this Premier's Office allows for Manitobans?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Leader of the Opposition is getting paid by insult instead of dealing with substance.

We have a private company, an oil and gas company that had a spill. I am sure the leader opposite is aware of those situations. The spill was reported, Mr. Speaker, to the East St. Paul Fire Department and the Department of Conservation. The Department of Conservation visited the site. I believe it took place on a non-working day. I will investigate the time, but they visited the site. They had two incidents in the last couple of months adjacent to the city of Winnipeg. One was in the area that dealt with tire storage and a situation there where an accident caused a fire. There was immediate public notification and immediate public awareness of what had happened. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the regulations—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the staff on site, the professional staff on site made a decision based on the public requirements to notify the public. The conservation officer on the other site made a different decision. We have to hire good professional people. They have to attend to a lot of issues of spills in the private sector with oil companies, with other companies in the private sector. In the public sector we have to deal with a number of issues. We basically believe that discretion has to be used. If the Leader of the Opposition feels that the staff did not follow through on the procedures that were in place under their administration or under our administration, let him say so.

Esso Terminal—Henderson Highway Gas Spill—Minister's Comments

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Labour informed this

House six times that the City of Winnipeg fire department was (a) on standby, (b) notified immediately, or (c) notified virtually immediately. Yet all of these comments were wrong. Why did the minister give the residents of East St. Paul false comfort that she had actually done something to protect them?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member asked the question, because yesterday I did say in the House that the Office of the Fire Commissioner, and most particularly the Winnipeg fire department, was on standby. I was reflecting information that I had received from staff—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Barrett: The reality is that the environment department and the person who was on site immediately, the Esso staff who were there, determined that there was no fire. The spill was totally contained, as I have stated yesterday, on site. The 6400 litres were picked up there. The rest of it was in a self-contained water and sewer storage system. There was never a single bit of concern for the residents in the area. I apologize for the misinformation that was put on the record yesterday, but the people of East St. Paul were never in an unsafe situation.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Labour—yesterday she got it wrong about the City of Winnipeg fire department. Today the Premier (Mr. Doer) got it wrong on the East St. Paul Fire Department. They were not notified until almost four hours later.

I ask this Government: Who is in charge when a situation like that takes place, when the residents could have been in dire danger of a fire at the tank farm, when these ministers do not know what is going on? Who was in charge of the situation when the Premier cannot even get it right?

* (13:50)

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, never, never, in the entire length of that incident on April 11 was a single individual, whether a worker, a person in

charge, or residents in the area, in any danger whatsoever, and I think it is appalling that the Member for Springfield is fearmongering in this situation. As I stated yesterday in every single response, the protocols were followed. The spill was contained within the tank farm. All of the fuel was recovered and dealt with. There was no fire. There was no harm or danger to any residents, and all of the recommended procedures were followed.

Mr. Schuler: I ask the Minister of Labour if she stands by her comments of yesterday, that "I, too, have received some information from the Office of the Fire Commissioner." Did that information come from the Office of the Fire Commissioner or from her staff? Mr. Speaker, is this the kind of comfort that the residents of East St. Paul should have from a minister who cannot seem to keep herself straight on the record?

Ms. Barrett: The information that I received was through communications between the staff, the department of environment and the Office of the Fire Commissioner. As soon as staff realized that an error had been made that did not impact at all on the safety of any resident or any worker, all procedures were followed. The record was corrected. There was never a moment when any—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Barrett: There was never a moment when any resident of East St. Paul was under any danger at all. The only danger, Mr. Speaker, is the fearmongering that the Member for Springfield is trying to put on the record here.

Arbitrated Settlements Minister's Comments

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Manitobans are beginning to recognize a pattern with the Minister of Labour in that she has been factually incorrect numerous times. In November of the year 2000, the minister was quoted as saying that it would be unfair for one side in a labour dispute to be forced into an arbitrated settlement against its will. Does the minister still stand by her comment despite the fact that it is against her own legislation?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, that issue was an issue that I have addressed before. I have written a letter. I actually wrote a letter to the Leader of the Opposition outlining and explaining the situation that happened in an interview that took place. Actually it was not even an interview, it was a media scrum dealing with another issue and the reporter had one take on what I said. I had—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I would be allowed to finish my comments, the incident took place at the end of a media scrum on an entirely different matter. The reporter and I had a difference of understanding about the questions that were being asked. I am not saying the reporter was wrong but reported from his perspective. I explained the situation in a letter to the Leader of the Opposition.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know what is in the legislation. I stand by what was in the legislation. I think it has been proven since that legislation was passed last year to have been a very positive statement and has allowed for a very positive labour relations climate in the province of Manitoba.

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Minister's Comments

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): The minister claimed that she did not direct MPI to give \$20 million to the universities. The chair of MPI publicly disagreed. Who are Manitobans to believe, the minister or the chair of MPI?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (13:55)

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know that the minister to whom a question is directed must be responsible to the House for the

portfolio that is the subject of the question, and that is not the case here. The minister does not have responsibility for MPI.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 419. Is that the one the honourable minister just quoted? No, I am sorry. It is 418. The Speaker has stated, honourable members may not realize it, but questions are actually put to the Government.

The question was put to the Government, and, if any other minister chooses to answer it, we would appreciate to have a real answer anyway.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, all questions are put to the Government. Government can choose which ministers to answer the questions, and 409(6): A question must be within the administrative competence of the Government. The minister to whom the question is directed is responsible to the House for his or her present ministry and not for any decisions taken in a previous portfolio.

So, on the point of order raised, the Government can choose which minister to answer the question, but the former minister is not obligated to answer a question on their previously held portfolio.

* * *

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I am profoundly disappointed that the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) will not stand up and take some responsibility for comments that she has made. She has been factually incorrect on many, many occasions. She indicated that she did not direct MPI to give them \$20 million. The chairman of the board disagreed with that. I would ask her to clarify it for us.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order or to answer the question?

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order. I was just trying to catch your eye. The member was going on with the supplementary question. I understand a supplementary question should have no preamble. There was extensive preamble.

Mr. Gilleshammer: On the same point of order, the issue is the credibility of the Minister of Labour. I have asked her whether she was correct, whether she told this House the truth, whether she stands behind her statements on the \$20 million that MPI was going to donate to universities or not.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, I apologize for not noticing sooner because I pay very close attention to whoever has the floor. On the point of order raised, *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member, please put your question.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would ask the Minister of Labour: Did you direct MPI to give \$20 million to the universities or not?

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: I just raise this question again. *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(6), a question must be within the administrative competence of the Government. This is the important point, Mr. Speaker: The minister to whom the question is directed is responsible to the House for his or her present ministry and not for any decisions taken in a previous portfolio. The question is out of order.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

* (14:00)

Mr. Laurendeau: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. *Beauchesne's* 418 clearly states that it does not matter of whom we ask the question. This Government can have any minister attempt to answer a question if they know the answer. If they do not, they can just sit down because we are not getting any answers out of them today anyway.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, the question was put directly to the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett), not open to the Government. So, *Beauchesne's* 409(6): A

question must be within the administrative competence of the Government. The Minister to whom the question is directed is responsible to the House for his or her present Ministry and not for any decisions taken in a previous portfolio.

I would ask the honourable member to please rephrase his question.

* * *

Mr. Gilleshammer: Thank you. I would be pleased if anyone over there would answer the question. Did the Minister of Labour direct MPI to give \$20 million to the universities? She has denied it. The chair of the board has indicated that she was directed to do so.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): No, to answer the question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Oh, to answer the question.

Mr. Mackintosh: It is my understanding that this issue was canvassed at some length in a Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources which considered the report of the MPIC, and the answers can be found there in full, Mr. Speaker.

Minister of Labour Workers Compensation Case

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, as part of the blame game of this minister, for almost three years a family in Springfield has been waiting for the Workers Compensation Board to take action to help their injured son. This Minister of Labour, despite being asked to help, has not even had the respect to respond to this family in their time of need.

I would like to table a letter sent to the Minister of Labour regarding this issue.

Mr. Speaker, as a matter of competence, can the Minister of Labour explain to Manitobans why she cannot even respond to a plea for help from injured workers and their families?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to respond to the member's question, but the letter that has been tabled is a letter sent to myself by the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), where legitimately, for the tabling purposes, all of the names and identifying information has been whited out. So I have no way of knowing what the specifics of the situation are.

In general, the Workers Compensation Board is an arm's-length organization. Specific details of specific cases normally do not come before me, and I do not have specifics enough here to be able to address. I would certainly be glad to speak to the Member for Springfield on this particular issue in detail outside the Chamber.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, in this litany of incompetence can the minister explain to the injured workers of Manitoba, to all injured workers in Manitoba, how many other pleas for help she has ignored since becoming the Minister of Labour? This has been ongoing for over three years, Madam Minister.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, to address the first part of that question, I do not ignore, nor does the Workers Compensation Board ignore issues in regard to injured workers. We meet regularly with groups and individuals, and I have met on numerous occasions with groups and individuals who have concerns with the policies of the Workers Compensation Board. My door is always open to speak with them. On the general issue, if this particular case has been, as the member says, inactive and a concern for over three years, then more than half the time that it was a concern was under the former government where there were at least two ministers of Labour before myself.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this injured worker and his family and all injured workers of Manitoba, when will the ministers start to take their responsibilities as a government seriously under the Workers Compensation Board?

Ms. Barrett: I take my responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for The

Workers Compensation Act very seriously. As I have stated in my earlier responses, I am more than prepared to meet with the MLA for Springfield and any individual who has concerns with the Workers Compensation Board and the implementation of the benefits under The Workers Compensation Act. To say that we do not care about injured workers in the province of Manitoba flies in the face of all experience.

As I have said, I will be more than happy to discuss the specifics of this case with the MLA and with the injured worker himself or herself at a more appropriate time.

Minister of Labour Workers Compensation Case

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I find it incredible that this minister would try to say to Manitobans that she cares and will meet with injured workers and that she does not ignore the issues of injured workers in this province.

I would like to table the sender's copy of three letters sent to the Minister responsible for the WCB by myself as MLA regarding the case of Ms. Karen Button of Lac du Bonnet, a UFCW member. Ms. Button contacted the minister's office on the 20th of March. We wrote to the minister's office, not about the specifics of her case but about policy and the way it was being handled, for what the minister is responsible. We wrote to her on the 17th of July. No response. We wrote again on the 8th of September. No response. We wrote on the 1st of November. No response.

When will this minister do her job on behalf of injured workers?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): These letters, again with regard to Ms. Button, I will take the specifics under advisement and explore the situation. I do know that, as was the case with the former government, there is a person who works with individuals with workers compensation concerns, and I am sure this situation has been brought to her attention. I will undertake to find the specific answers to the member's questions as soon as I am able.

Mr. Praznik: I want to ask this minister what she says to Ms. Karen Button, who almost lost her home, who went for a year without income, who won her appeal unanimously, Mr. Speaker, with no help whatsoever from this minister. I want to know what this minister says to Ms. Karen Button, who ignored her pleas for help for almost a year.

Ms. Barrett: As the Member for Lac du Bonnet, who was Minister of Labour and responsible for The Workers Compensation Act under the previous government for an extended period of time, knows, it is inappropriate for the minister to become directly involved in appeals as they are underway. The minister works with the Workers Compensation Board in implementing the provisions of The Workers Compensation Act and dealing with policy issues.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said earlier, I will endeavour to follow up the specifics of this case, but policy issues are what we look at with the Workers Compensation Board. It would be inappropriate for a minister to become involved in an active case with Workers Compensation. There are avenues through the Worker Advisory office and through other means to have assistance given to individuals. But it is very inappropriate for the minister to become involved in an active case.

Mr. Praznik: I would ask the minister, since it is obvious she did not read the letter, because it says very clearly in the first letter that this was about policy not about the specifics of the case. I would ask her when she is going to get off her butt and do her job.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable Minister of Labour, I would just like to remind all honourable members to choose their words very carefully, because all members are honourable members.

* (14:10)

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, these letters were tabled with me mere minutes ago and I have been responding to questions. I can tell you that from a very brief perusal of these letters, and I emphasize that it is brief, they do not appear to

be discussing as much policy as the individual elements of Ms. Button's case.

As I have said in response to the member, I am more than happy to follow up on this situation to undertake to determine what exactly is the situation with this particular case as soon as we are finished with Question Period.

Regional Health Authorities Minister's Relationship

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My question to the Minister of Health. The Thomas report released last week shows that the health care system still has some substantive problems. I quote from the report: The process of regionalization is incomplete. The exact nature of the working relationship between the minister and the RHAs is not clear. There remain areas of overlap and duplication that reduce efficiency and that blur accountability.

My question to the minister, after 20 months in the job, and with these comments from Paul Thomas and an eminent team of an advisory group of 76 leaders in Manitoba: Why, after 20 months in the job, I ask the minister, has he not sorted out some of the most fundamental issues of his own job?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising those questions, because the Thomas commission was set up out of a very sincere desire of members on this side of the House to try to implement a deal with the recommendations of the Sinclair commission, a seminal event, probably one of the most significant inquests and events, I think, in Canadian health history.

We wanted to make sure that we implemented the recommendations properly and made sure they were done, not only on behalf of the 12 families, but on behalf of all Manitobans to improve the system. We put in place that commission.

With regard to the specific issue of regionalization, one of the first measures, and I certainly know members opposite oppose this, but one of the first things we did is amalgamate two health authorities in the city of Winnipeg that were put in place by members opposite in

order to ease out the bureaucracy with respect to the implementation of the health care system. I will respond further in subsequent questions, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the minister. In view of this problem that after 20 months it is still not clear what the relationship between the minister and the RHAs is, in view of what Paul Thomas says on page 70, will the minister not admit quite clearly that politics, economics and power are getting in the way of sound decisions? Direct from Paul Thomas and his report. There is a problem.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I think if the member reads a little further on in the report, he will see that Paul Thomas reviewed the corporate structure and the reorganization that was being put in place by the Department of Health, and recommended we had taken appropriate steps to deal with those issues.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the Minister of Health. After 20 months and a recently compiled report, I ask the minister to admit that this report is a pretty damning indictment of his work as a Health Minister. Why has he failed to accomplish in 20 months what he should have been able to do in the first 2?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, this report is a damning indictment of what happened to the Health Sciences Centre in 1994-95, and that was what this report dealt with. We had the courage to put in place a review of the entire system, which made a number of recommendations. The report goes on further to say that we have made appropriate changes and steps with respect to reorganization and comments on the favourable response that we gave to the Thomas commission.

A while ago members opposite were asking us to reorganize, and I said we are looking at some of the direction we are getting from Thomas, and in fact we are engaging Mr. Thomas in terms of some of the recommendations he made to ensure that we follow through with those recommendations. So we are

actually doing something, Mr. Speaker, not the Liberal way of sort of just talking and not doing anything.

Granny's Poultry Union Certification

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, the Doer government's anti-democratic labour Bill 44 was used to force Granny's Poultry in Blumenort to be unionized.

Can the Minister of Labour explain why, when the employees want the ballots counted, the Manitoba Labour Board will not allow them to be counted?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the parts of The Labour Relations Act that dealt with the Labour Board's decisions on the Granny's Poultry issue were parts of The Labour Relations Act that were not changed by Bill 44.

Mr. Jim Penner: Mr. Speaker, for lack of an answer, can the minister explain what the farmers using this co-op facility for poultry processing would do with their livestock if the plant is closed because of this anti-democratic legislation?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I will not discuss the adjective "anti-democratic" as it was used in relation to The Labour Relations Act but just to say again that the area of The Labour Relations Act that was in place and was used by the Labour Board in making their determination on Granny's Poultry was a section of The Labour Relations Act that has been in place for many years, through many governments of both political stripes.

Mr. Jim Penner: Mr. Speaker, I must ask again, because our constituents are very concerned: Is the Labour Board going to rule against the majority whenever they want to organize employees and not count the ballots?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the Labour Board makes a ruling based on the legislation that I have stated has been in place for many years. Also, the Labour Board, each panel is made up of members that are recommended and appointed both from the business community

and the labour community. It is a very balanced board. It has a reputation across the country as one of the, if not the best, and most balanced labour boards in the country. As well, the chair of the Manitoba Labour Board has been the chair for 28, I believe, years now.

Prime Minister of Canada Premier's Meeting Request

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the Premier indicated that he would be willing to meet with the Prime Minister, a delegation with the Prime Minister on the farm crisis, and I quote: Any time or any day, any place, any time. The Prime Minister will be in Winnipeg this Thursday for a series of events, photos and meetings.

After misleading the grain farmers of Manitoba that he would be available any time, any day, any place, can the Premier tell this House if he has made alternative arrangements to meet with the Prime Minister on the farm crisis, given that he obviously will not be meeting with him here on Thursday in Winnipeg?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), we have asked for a meeting in Ottawa as requested by the all-party committee with a number of our delegates that would attend that meeting with the federal Prime Minister. We offered, as well, to meet him when we were aware that he would here on the 31st. He has not agreed to meet us here on the 31st. The parliamentary committee, as the member opposite knows, is meeting with a number of representatives from here and Saskatchewan, I believe, next week.

I also intend to raise this issue with my colleagues in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia at the Western Premiers' meeting that starts tomorrow night, or late tomorrow afternoon. We hope to continue to have a co-ordinated approach, and the statistics have borne out again the fact that livestock producers are doing reasonably better than the situation with grain and oilseeds, which are doing terrible. Everybody in this room knows that, with the

statistics that have just been released for the year 2000 with the decline in real income after the input costs of close to 10 percent.

Canada-Manitoba Adjustment Program Payment Delay

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, has the Premier (Mr. Doer), spoken to the Prime Minister, given the fact that the Prime Minister announced, on March 1, the Canada-Manitoba Adjustment Program 2 assistance would be in the mail shortly? Has the Premier spoken to the Prime Minister about the delays in distributing the CMAP 2 cheques and the hardship this is creating to farmers, some of whom have already got crop in the ground and many have not been able to begin yet?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, the issue of the delay in getting the funding for CMAP 2 from the federal government, getting that money out is a serious concern, but we have indicated that we have had discussions with the federal government, and it is our intention that those cheques will be distributed before the end of the month.

* (14:20)

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, after his Minister of Agriculture's repetitive announcement that the cheques will be in the mail by Thursday, can the Premier assure this House that these cheques will flow to Manitobans by the end of this month, as repeatedly promised by his Minister of Agriculture?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to have those cheques flow by the end of the month. We are waiting for confirmation from the federal government as to when their money will be available. We expect those cheques will flow by the end of the month. We are ready to have the cheques flow.

Flooding—St. Norbert Infrastructure Projects

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, it has been a fair bit of time now since

we have had some of our Estimates with the Minister of Conservation. I am wondering if the Minister of Conservation could report to the House how it is going with our flooding improvements for the area of St. Norbert, where we are looking at some infrastructure dollars for some of the dikes that are being constructed in certain areas.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): I thank the member for the question. I know that during Estimates he raised it there as well. I thought my response to him during Estimates was very clear. That was: Ongoing discussions are being held with the City of Winnipeg with a view to eventually coming to a resolution on that issue.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Prior to members' statements, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have from the Original Women's Network 10 visitors under the direction of Mrs. Sandra Funk. This group is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickers).

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Marlene Fast

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a constituent of mine who has recently been recognized, and deservedly so, for excellence in her field. Marlene Fast of Mitchell, Manitoba, opened a portrait studio back in 1978. Since that time she has developed a reputation as a creative and professional photographer, which has resulted in a continually growing business as well as a number of awards and recognitions.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Fast was named Manitoba's portrait photographer of the year in 2000 and just recently was presented with a lifetime achievement award at the Manitoba Women Entrepreneurs of the Year awards. As someone who has relied upon Ms. Fast's

expertise a number of times, I can assure the House this distinction is well deserved. Indeed, Ms. Fast is a representative of many women entrepreneurs in my constituency and throughout Manitoba who are making a name and career for themselves in a variety of business endeavours.

Since the time I entered business in this province, the number of women who are engaged as the principal owners of their own businesses has risen sharply. This increased participation has been a great benefit to Manitoba. As a province we need to ensure that, as a new generation of young female professionals seek out opportunity, they find encouragement and opportunity right here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of the Steinbach constituency and all the members in this House, I would like to extend my congratulations to Marlene Fast on her achievement and to wish her many more years of success. Thank you.

Physician Resources

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to bring attention to some of our Government's many initiatives in health care, the latest being our financial assistance to promote physician retention.

As part of our commitment to enhancing the quality of health care in this province, our Government has announced a new \$5.8-million Medical Student/Resident Financial Assistance Program to help improve the retention of Manitoba medical graduates and increase the number of family practitioners and specialists here in Manitoba.

The financial assistance program will be available to medical students enrolled in their third and fourth years, as well as residents in family medicine and specialty programs. The program will offer conditional grants to reduce their debt load in return for service in Manitoba after graduation. By making it more attractive to study medicine here and stay in Manitoba after graduation, Manitobans will reap the benefits of more locally trained doctors who will remain in our province permanently.

This new program, along with the recruitment of trained physicians, the expansion of student physicians in the Faculty of Medicine, the launch of a large rural physician campaign to address the problem of underserved areas, and the program for international graduates, are part of our comprehensive physician resource plan. These initiatives clearly demonstrate our commitment to improving health care services for all Manitobans.

We have and will continue to work hard to improve the quality of health care in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Refugee Sponsorship

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to applaud the Fort Garry United Church YES Committee for its decision to sponsor three refugees from Rwanda. Thanks to the church's hard work and warm generosity, Yvonne Musasangohe, Jean Abimana and Cynthia Cyamuhendo will have the opportunity to live and work in Canada far from the turmoil that currently plagues their home country.

* (14:30)

Refugee sponsorship is rapidly growing in this province, largely due to generous groups such as the United Church's YES committee that feel the desire to improve the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. It is heartening to see the strength of character we talk so often about in this province goes far beyond a friendly smile. When the time comes to make a meaningful difference, Manitobans can be found lending a hand to people around the world.

Sponsorship is a win-win situation for the newcomers and for the local economy, giving new Canadians the opportunity to raise their family and earn a living in a country that is possibly more stable than the one from which they come. In addition, the newcomers contribute their unique knowledge and skills to the Manitoba work force, making our economy more diverse and therefore more stable.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members of the YES committee of the

Fort Garry United Church for their dedication to such a notable cause: Lorraine Ashdown, Rhonda Collins, Rosalind Dearing, Evelyn and Don Fletcher, Nora Harvey, Carole Lowes, Kate Manchur, Gail Matiation, Donna McNamara, Tanus McNeill, Eveline Milliken, Gord Taylor, Thacienne Mukaminega, Yvonne Musasangohe, Margery Plewes, Doreen Shanks, Claire Maxwell and Inna Gekht.

Congratulations to each of you and good luck with your noble endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Manitoba Mine Rescue Competition

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, on May 25 and 26, 2001, I had the pleasure of attending the 41st annual Manitoba Mine Rescue Competition held in Flin Flon-Creighton. This year's competition included teams from Flin Flon, Leaf Rapids, Thompson, Pinawa, Snow Lake and Lac du Bonnet.

This important competition demonstrates that the participants are ready, willing and able to help their fellow miners in case of an emergency. The competition included a written exam and a hands-on rescue which this year took place at the Konuto Lake Mine. Mock emergencies were staged at the minesite for the hands-on rescue portion of the competition and required miners to assess the emergency and respond quickly and correctly to numerous situations.

The miners were judged on the techniques and equipment they used in dealing with the challenging emergencies. From all members of the House I would like to commend the organizers for all of their hard work in making this event a success. Special thanks to Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting company in Flin Flon for being such superb hosts.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the teams for their remarkable efforts, regardless of the outcome. Congratulations to the winning team from the Ruttan Mine at Leaf Rapids, made up of Bruce Gulliford, Gerry Sullivan, Tony Butt, Dave Robinson, Shawn Gale and Chris Matthews, and to the runner-up team from Flin Flon, which included Olaf Hettrick, Dennis Hydamaka,

Richard Beck, Jason Leavers, Ken McCrimmon, Russ Swain, LaVerne Hinzman and Bill McLean.

I would also like to congratulate Dean Randell of Pinawa for winning the technicians' competition. I am proud to have been a small part of the 2001 Manitoba Provincial Mine Rescue Competition in Flin Flon-Creighton.

Victorian Order of Nurses

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I recently had the pleasure of attending a reception at the Lieutenant-Governor's house to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Victorian Order of Nurses. Founded in 1901, the Manitoba branch of the VON has become one of our province's most recognized and respected organizations.

The VON was originally established to assist communities with numerous health care needs and to provide a variety of health-related services to those who lived in remote areas and those who could not afford to receive care elsewhere. Now, a century later, the VON continues to play a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing the health of Manitobans in their homes and communities. Each VON branch, run jointly by citizens and health care professionals, delivers those services which address the unique needs of its community. As well, VON nurses continue to have a strong voice in the shaping and strengthening of our health care system.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Victorian Order of Nurses as it celebrates its 100th year in Manitoba. I wish all VON nurses continued success as they take this wonderful organization into its second century. On behalf of all Manitobans, I thank them for the invaluable services that they provide to the people of this province.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to determine if there is leave to waive Committee of Supply on Friday.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive Committee of Supply on Friday?
[Agreed]

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent for Supply to meet in two sections only today, rooms 255 and 254, and for the Chamber section considering the Estimates of Executive Council to not meet. The departments scheduled, of course, for rooms 255 and 254 are Education and Training, and Health, respectively. This is for today only. [interjection] That change actually will be to apply this week.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the Committee of Supply to meet in two sections only, meeting in rooms 255 and 254, and for the Chamber section considering the Estimates of Executive Council to not meet? The departments scheduled for rooms 255 and 254 are Education and Training, and Health, for this week. [Agreed]

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Smith), that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH

*(15:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Good afternoon. 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. There was a previous agreement of this committee to have a global discussion of the entire department and after completion of all questioning pass all resolutions. We will continue with the global discussion.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): I wonder if the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) would give me any sense of, for example, when we left off yesterday the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) was questioning me on some specific issues. I was going to give

some responses to some of those questions. The member can advise me whether I should wait or put it on the record or what she might advise with respect to the timing of how we are going to proceed.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Just to indicate to the minister that the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) will be back here today at five o'clock to resume his questioning. In the interim between now and five o'clock I will be asking a number of issues that are basically all over the map.

I wonder if the minister could give me some indication about the \$7-million Recruitment and Retention Fund that was set up in 1999 and what has happened with that fund. I also noticed that in the Estimates from last year there was a commitment of \$2,700,000. The Estimates for this year are showing \$2.9 million. That from the year 1999-2000 is down by 50 percent. I wondered if the minister could give me some indication about where he is going with that Nursing Recruitment and Retention Fund and why it has actually been decreased so dramatically, especially in light of the fact that we are in a nursing shortage.

Mr. Chomiak: The Nursing Recruitment and Retention Fund that was put in place, the funding, as I understand it, was one-time funding from the former government with respect to the nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund to deal with what at that time had been finally an acknowledgement of a nursing crisis and a nursing shortage. It was a fund that was set up and established in the dying days of the Filmon government that dealt with matters of recruitment and retention.

We have significantly dealt with the issue of nurses, of course, as the member is aware. We put in place a five-point nurses plan to deal with nurses and to deal with issues of recruitment and retention and related matters. As I indicated to the member previously on several occasions, two of the matters that related to nursing had been indicated to us by nurses, by the hundreds of nurses we talked to, not on the phone, but face to face at meetings across the province. We talked with nurses to deal with the issue of nurses retention. What we did is we dealt with two major issues. That was firstly the reinstatement

of the diploma program and secondly we took \$3 million from the nurses recruitment and retention plan and allocated it to health authorities for nursing continuing education.

The allocations were based on practising nurses, that in addition to the clause in the MNU agreement providing funding for nurses to help improve the whole situation of an ongoing continuing education. The diploma program, as the member is aware, commences September 5. I am advised that 450 students were admitted the first year at the baccalaureate program in September; 215 students were enrolled in the LPN program during 2000 and will graduate in September-December 2001. In September we also offered of course the four years of the Bachelor of Psychiatric Nursing program in Winnipeg as well as Brandon. As I understand it, 180 nurses have applied to the nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund for financial assistance in enrolling in refresher courses; 240 R.N.s, RPNs and LPNs receive funding to offset the cost of locating to Manitoba. An additional number of R.N.s and others have been recruited from the Philippines under the Provincial Nominee Program. As indicated earlier, we have allocated \$3 million to the health authorities for nursing continuing education.

We have also been asked and are looking at reviewing case mixes and staff mixes with respect to the jobs. The workforce task force was established. There will be additional measures that will shortly be announced in that respect. As I pointed out, the member's allocation with respect to nurses, I remember the initiative was very clear that it was a one-time injection of funding from the former government. Last year we put an estimate of \$2.7 million. This year we have allocated \$2.9 million, which is an increase of \$200,000.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate to me why the decisions were made to decrease it substantially from when it was first established? Because it is about 50 percent less than it was when it was established. Is there no obvious need for that larger amount of money? Are the smaller amounts adequate, and have they been fully expended, for instance in last year, and does he fully expect them to be expended this year?

Mr. Chomiak: As the member opposite notes, the \$7 million was one-time funding, one-time funding that was put in place, which was budgetary funding, I believe, if memory serves me correctly, was a '98-99 expenditure that was put forward into the subsequent year, \$7-million one-time funding. What we have done is funded it on an ongoing basis. We have increased it this year by \$200,000.

Mrs. Driedger: It certainly was one-time funding. It was one-time, in terms of it was in that budget that year. Who is to know whether it would have been one-time funding? It might have been kept in year to year. It is fine for the minister to keep indicating one-year funding, but the fact of it was it was that budget year and it was that commitment that year.

I am just curious, if \$7 million was put in in that particular year, is there no need for that equivalent amount year to year, or are there some valid reasons why it can be basically less than half of that on an ongoing basis. Is that suitable? Is that meeting the needs out there, in terms of recruitment and retention?

Mr. Chomiak: As memory serves me correctly, the money was taken from a previous fiscal year and forwarded into a one-time \$7-million fund, of which the nurses recruitment-retention group were allowed to put specific programs in place. It was put into a fund, I believe it was under the auspices and control of the WRHA. I think it was set up as a trust account or something along that nature, to be funded a one-time basis for programs of retention and recruitment.

What we have done is continued ongoing funding for nursing recruitment and retention initiatives in addition to all of the other initiatives that we are undertaking that deal with nurses recruitment and retention.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate whether all \$7 million was used up in the period of time it was allocated for, or was there carryover and that is where some of the rest of this money is showing up?

Mr. Chomiak: Again I am going roughly from memory in this regard. I am only going from memory. I do not have notes in front of me with

this respect. I will try to confirm with notes. If I recall correctly, something like \$4 million, I think, was expended. If memory serves me correctly, there was an additional \$3 million that had not been expended that we utilized for the continuing education. Now we have topped it up on an annual basis, which in other words, we have taken a one-time program that had been put in place and was very clearly a one-time program, and we put it into an ongoing program with continuing funding.

Mrs. Driedger: So the minister indicated that \$3 million was left over, and he was able to then use that for their first budget in their commitment for continuing education funding. Is that an accurate summary of what he said?

Mr. Chomiak: No, I do not think that is. I will confirm the specifics of that, but what I think we did was we took \$3 million and used it for continuing education.

Mrs. Driedger: The \$3 million, that the minister is indicating is used for continuing education, is that in a specific line in the budget?

Mr. Chomiak: I should clarify, Mr. Chairperson, these decisions were made by the Nursing Recruitment and Retention Fund. The body that was set up makes these particular decisions. I will confirm if in fact it comes out of a line item in the Budget.

Mrs. Driedger: I know I had written to the minister asking for clarification of the Recruitment and Retention Fund being controlled by the WRHA, and as it was a provincial initiative, I believe it was something that had been actually under our government. It was something that was managed by Manitoba Health with input from actually the RHAs. Various RHAs as well as the unions as well as the regulatory bodies were all represented on that committee. I know it has changed. I know I wrote the minister wondering why he had commented last year that this fund was under the control of the WRHA when, in fact, I thought it was intended to be money that was allocated provincially, and I wondered why Manitoba Health wanted to have the RHA in control of it and why not Manitoba Health.

Mr. Chomiak: I think the member has it wrong, Mr. Chairperson. As I recall, the funding was allocated in an account with the WRHA, was still controlled and is controlled by the particular committee, is not a part of this Budget, as I understand, and is separately controlled and accounted for. It is not under the auspices or direction of the WRHA insofar as they direct control. As I understand it, it is in an account that is managed by the WRHA. That is my recollection.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister give me any indication as to whether or not he is going to expand any of the training programs for nurses, whether it is the BN program or the LPN program or even the two-year diploma program? Does the minister have any intent of enlarging any of those to try to have more nurses trained?

Mr. Chomiak: As the member is probably aware, we now have a number of nurses in training that go back to the decade before the cuts of the '90s, Mr. Chairperson. So we now, in terms of having nursing in training, have a substantial number of nurses in training. That is not to say that we necessarily have sufficient numbers, and we are looking at various options with respect to additional training and education opportunities for nurses.

* (15:10)

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate—I am aware he probably does not want to give me any detail—is there an intent or a move to enlarge the number of training seats in any of the programs?

Mr. Chomiak: We are actively pursuing various options and various matters related to increasing the supply of nurses. There are a number of options and alternatives that we are looking at.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate how many LPNs are being trained every year? I know that prior to our leaving government we had enlarged the training program to 190 students being trained a year in the LPN program. Could the minister give me an indication if he has continued with that and if he intends to enlarge the LPN training program or decrease it in size?

Mr. Chomiak: I think I have already indicated to the member opposite that we are at 215; 215 were enrolled in the LPN program this last year.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate if besides the 190, the extras beyond that, was that part of a federal government program? Is it a federally funded program that is actually occurring in Manitoba, or is it actually totally provincially funded?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, it is an employment program that we manage.

Mrs. Driedger: In the minister saying that, I would ask him then if it is an employment program that the Province is managing. Is it a federally funded program then?

Mr. Chomiak: In large part.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate for me where those extra 25 or 35, however many are in that program—I know that there had been 25, I believe, at one point training in Selkirk, and I understand that was a federal initiative, probably as the minister indicated, perhaps managed provincially. Is that where these extra students are being trained in this case as well?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, we will provide that general information for the member.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate when the MNES contract is up?

Mr. Chomiak: On March 31, 2002.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister give any indication whether it will be renegotiated under the same terms, which is 400 students per year?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I generally make it a rule that I do not negotiate in public.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister give me some indication as to the number of casual nurses that are currently in the health care system in the province? Are those numbers going down at all?

Mr. Chomiak: I will endeavour to provide that information for the member. I also should note that the member might be interested that, in 1998, we were graduating 215 nurses; in 1999, 153; in 2000, 135; 2001, 190. We are hoping and anticipating to graduate in excess of 400 in 2002, which is a remarkable expansion of nurse

training from the low, low, low ebb of the '90s, after the cuts to the programs.

Mrs. Driedger: It is interesting to note, and I do note that 2002 is a big year, that the minister seems to enjoy every moment he can to take credit for all of those nurses that are going to be graduating in 2002. Unfortunately, none of it is to his credit, because those nurses entered the BN program in 1998. *[interjection]* I am sure, if the member from Dauphin is interested, the dean of nursing would probably very much enjoy spending some time with the Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) explaining some of that to him, because those students are in the program, and the numbers are up. I would credit the University of Manitoba and a lot of their initiatives. I think it is a real disservice if the Government or any members of the Government are going to sit back and take credit for something they had very little to do with.

That was a lot of hard work by the University of Manitoba and a lot of aggressive marketing and advertising to get those numbers up. Certainly, the only thing the minister can take credit for is the extra 90 students in the system, and of course, they are only finishing their first year. So, when they start to graduate, then I think the minister has just cause to indicate that that was from his initiative. In the meantime, I do not think it is a very respectful thing at all to sit back and take credit for something that the university worked so very hard to make happen.

Although a lot of those students went in in 1998, it is certainly not even something I would sit back and take credit for because, really, I think a lot of that was just pure hard work by the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Nursing, and others at the university, to work that hard to make that happen.

In looking at the education fund, I mean, the minister talks about putting \$3 million in for continuing education. I have been hearing from more and more nurses that they are not even able to access this funding, because they are not allowed to take a day off or time off to go because they are short-staffed on the ward. The only people that appear to have an ability to

access this funding are nurses either on a day off or public health nurses, I am told, who are able to do this. So there are some nurses out there, I guess, that are becoming a little bit more skeptical in terms of having this fund out there and people taking credit for putting the money out there. They are starting to feel, well, what is the point, we cannot even access the funding in order to take any programs. I guess there is some growing cynicism of it.

One nurse indicated to me that small wonder hardly any hospital nurses come to the in-services. We really need all our nurses to receive education, and they realize that it is important, but there are barriers to access this fund, and hospital nurses are feeling that it is wonderful that the fund is there, but hospital nurses are not even able to access it.

I am wondering if the minister has given any thought to how that education fund, the \$3 million—which is a good thing, I think, and I do credit the minister for putting that funding in there for continuing education—how it can be made more accessible for staff to be able to access that and how some of those barriers could be dealt with, so that staff would have that ability.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I think in the first several weeks we were in office, we indicated from our discussion with nurses that that was one of the primary issues that nurses had brought to our attention over and over and over again. They also brought to our attention the fact that it was difficult to access continuing education. First of all, there was nothing for them. There was no fund, and so not only were they difficult to access because they were needed on the ward, but they were having to pay, in most cases, out of their own pocket, so we put the fund in place. We also asked the RHAs and nurses to try to administer the fund to the best extent possible in order to provide those services.

The member says that some people are getting cynical. I understand that; it is very difficult. Unfortunately, we are dealing with a situation where, as I said many times, it is going to take us awhile to get back up to the employment levels of nurses that we think are

what is necessary in the system to permit nurses to access programs and to have backups and replacements in order to access those programs. It is a problem, and I have asked nurses on many occasions, in terms of the meetings that we have had with them and otherwise, for their advice in this regard. I am open to any advice or suggestion with respect to assisting nurses in accessing this fund and these resources, because it is very important. It has been something the nurses have asked for for a long time.

* (15:20)

Mrs. Driedger: I noticed in the budget this year there is a line allocated now for the Protection for Persons in Care, and there appears to be an office allocated for that.

Could the minister give me some indication as to how that is staffed? I would also be interested, I guess, in knowing the kind of activity that has been generated once this has been implemented now and how many phone calls and how many investigations there have been. So if the minister wants to start on an overview, I can get into specific questions. I guess I am looking for just a summary of where it has gone and how it is doing.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I have a summary of the operations of the office that I can provide for the member with some of that information.

Just to commence, we have a manager as well as three individuals who receive complaints. In addition, if memory serves me correctly, we have a list of 15 individuals from a roster who are utilized for purposes of undertaking investigations. The office was announced and funded in this year's budget and a specific line was put into this year's budget to deal with the office.

There was a communication strategy that was put in place. The lead investigator—I believe it is 15 roster investigators—is Donna Klassen who has a good deal of experience in this area. As well, the investigators are from a wide array of backgrounds to aid in the follow-up to the particular complaints.

If the member wants to ask more specifics, I do have some information that I can provide to the member, to continue to provide shortly.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister just confirm did he indicate that there was one manager? Then he said three others, and I did not catch what those three others were, and then I did hear 15 investigators.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, there is one manager and three—I suppose the best term would be inquirers, and then there is a roster of 15 investigators who are utilized to investigate and do follow-up on specific cases.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister define for me the difference between inquirers then and investigators?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, under the act, calls come in and complaints are received. Not all complaints are justified or warrant investigations. Complaints and calls come into the office and follow-up is done in the office. If an investigation is required or warranted then, as I understand, it is provided to investigators who do the follow-up investigation.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate whether he has been involved in any of the decisions as to whether a case reaches investigation? I recall that had been one of my concerns when we were debating this bill, because the bill certainly left it open for the minister to be quite involved if he chose to. I am wondering if he has ever become involved in making decisions about whether or not an investigation should occur.

Mr. Chomiak: No, Mr. Chairperson.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate who the manager is and what the background of that person is?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the manager is Mr. Paul Lamoureux, and he was a former liaison officer with the regional health authorities between the regional health authorities and Manitoba Health.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister also then give me an indication of the three inquirers that hold those positions, what their background is, and if it is they who actually make the

determination as to whether or not an investigation will then occur or not?

Mr. Chomiak: I will provide that information to the member.

Mrs. Driedger: I would be interested in who the three inquirers are and what their backgrounds are and also to find out—I do not know whether the minister wants to provide that for me later or deal with it right now—but if a call comes in, would one of those inquirers make a determination on their own as to whether or not an investigation would occur? Or is there a group discussion or does an inquirer discuss it with a manager. What are the checks and balances to be sure that everything is being addressed objectively, fairly, in a balanced way?

* (15:30)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, obviously some personal judgment is attached to situations, but if there is any kind of circumstance or any kind of question or any kind of judgment call that is required, it is then referred to a group decision that is made.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister then confirm that generally a call would come in and one of the inquirers alone could determine whether there are reasonable and probable grounds? They could decide whether somebody is indeed abusing a patient to whatever degree, that any one of those inquirers could unilaterally make a decision and it is in their own judgment as to whether or not a case would proceed. That could actually happen. I would also assume then that if they were concerned they would take something forward and have a discussion, but could one person alone if they are left with that kind of latitude? I would ask where are the checks and balances to be sure that nobody is falling through the cracks.

Mr. Chomiak: Firstly, checks and balances were put in place when we put in place this act, Mr. Chairperson, that have not been in place in this province for a number of years. Secondly, the member misinterprets. Obviously the person who takes the call is not going to make a unilateral decision on whether or not this call is valid without obtaining information.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister's previous answer indicated that a person could do that and that is why I am seeking clarification from him. Could a person unilaterally make a decision, or is there some kind of a process in place where they do not unilaterally make a decision? I am not clear on what his previous, previous answer was.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, in certain circumstances where one's judgment and experience indicates that a decision can be made unilaterally on the advice and the information that is obtained, an individual may make a unilateral decision. In the majority of cases, the vast majority of cases, either follow-up or some form of consultation will be required. If the member is asking for 100% assurance, I can tell you that does not happen in the real world. If the member is trying to determine whether or not there are checks and balances in place, I have indicated that there are.

Mrs. Driedger: I guess, because of some of the concerns I had during the debates and presentation of this legislation, because one wants to be sure that indeed there is absolute fairness, that there are checks and balances in place, we certainly do not want to have a situation where there is any malicious reporting going on. Sometimes that is hard to know, whether there is malicious reporting. If the minister has just told me that there could be situations where an inquirer would unilaterally make a decision, then in fact that does not really give me much comfort, I guess, that there are actually all of the checks and balances. Can he tell me: Are there certain criteria then, or a procedure, a written procedure that would indicate when a person does not have to seek another judgment so that indeed it is not left wide open to any kind of interpretation?

Mr. Chomiak: Perhaps the member can clarify her question.

Mrs. Driedger: I think the minister is stalling for time here, because I think my question was very clear. Are there procedures that the inquirers would then follow so that they would know when they should perhaps seek a second opinion, and are there clear situations where they would obviously then not have to seek a second opinion? How do these inquirers know, and even

for their own protection I suppose, too, when they should or should not seek some second opinion? Are there no procedures in place or criteria in place?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not know if the member asks her question clearly and somehow suggests that my asking the member to clarify a question is somehow a stalling for time, Mr. Chairperson. That is not conducive to a reasonable debate, back and forth. I could suggest all kinds of things about the member's questioning as well, but I will not.

Mrs. Driedger: I think if the minister recalls the debate we had when he introduced the legislation, I did not feel at the time that there was any guarantee of objectivity in the bill. What I am looking for in all of this is to find out what kind of checks and balances has been put into place so that we can actually guarantee objectivity, we can guarantee fairness to everybody, we can guarantee that this is a balanced approach, that there is consistency, that all three inquirers are consistent in their approach. I do not get a sense from the way he set this up that any of that is necessarily in place.

Mr. Chomiak: This is the first office of its kind in Manitoba, after 11 years of Tory government, and after 3 or 4 years of my demanding that something be put in place. When we came into office, we put this in place. We put it in place to deal with a variety of issues that occurred over the '90s and a lack of action and neglect on the part of the former government. This office was structured and legislation was put in place in order to deal with some of the issues that had occurred.

The legislation was drafted, based on some of the legislation that was in Alberta. We had sent out and we had reviewed the situation in Alberta, reviewed the experience in Alberta and in fact we had had a team of individuals working on it for I think upwards of a year. We also then spent a considerable period of time putting in place orientation sessions with respect to the legislation that occurred in the RHAs, that occurred between the Department of Health, that occurred between the staff and the individuals that reviewed the particular legislation and reviewed its implications and how it would be

applied and the ramifications of applying that kind of legislation.

There is an act that have some very specific criteria relating to not only the threshold, Mr. Chairperson, that was very carefully drafted. A very carefully drafted threshold was applied in the legislation, and some specific processes were put in place with respect to how this particular office would function. We then had a training system that was put in place with respect to the office and to the individuals who were employed by the department in order to undertake this kind of action, this kind of follow-up, the first of its kind in Manitoba and one of the first of its kind in the country.

* (15:40)

As the member knows, the unit is responsible for carrying out the provisions of the act, which were very carefully drawn together and debated. I recall the member's concerns and objections that she had expressed during the course of the debates with respect to the act, and some of the issues raised by the member were acknowledged; some of them were noted, Mr. Chairperson. The member continues to raise issues with respect to the objectivity. There is an act in place that has specific criteria that apply to the application and to the dealing with the particular issues.

The office generally has been functioning now for upwards of a month from the proclamation date of May 1 of this year. As I understand it, there has been considerable interest and a number of requests for information and inquiries. As well, there have been requests to provide additional information from the unit and from the department. As I understand it, there have been over a hundred calls to the office since May 1 of this year with respect to a variety of issues.

The member seems to want to look for little points in respect to a general observation and claim that I made with respect to the functioning of the office. There are a variety of complaints and a variety of information that comes into the office that are dealt with by the individuals in the office. Some of the calls that come in are not complaints; some are just general information inquiries. So if the member suggests that for a

general information inquiry if the information has access to the individual, that that individual should then not provide that information because that individual is consulting, I do not think that would be prudent. I think that in that case personal judgment would be applied and should be applied to the request of the individual.

There were a number of experiences that were noted with respect to the experience in Alberta, and the individuals at Manitoba Health who designed the office looked at those experiences and amalgamated, synthesized those experiences in terms of what is going to develop in terms of Manitoba. They are keeping careful track of the inquiries and reviewing the inquiries in order to determine what the pattern is and what information is coming forward and what kinds of needs are required to be met and to be dealt with. The office has now been functioning for less than a month, and I think we will also have a better picture and a clearer picture after the initial period of time from which the office has been launched.

As I understand it, all regional health authorities and personal care administrators receive training. As well, abuse prevention videos were distributed to the RHAs. The professional associations as well some of the other key participants were generally receptive, and we are working with other aspects of the province with respect to our feedback and our follow-up to this program.

I have also indicated publicly that we intend to utilize, once we are up and running and have a database and an information system in place, that hopefully this particular process can serve as a basis for a province-wide mechanism of complaint and complaint follow-up.

It has been certainly one of the options for us, and it came up during a review of the Thomas report was the question of complaint and complaint follow-ups. We have been pursuing various options with respect to that. I was asked in fact at the press conference during the Thomas report about an ombudsman, for example. We are looking at various ways of doing complaint follow-up.

The officials in the department, when we reviewed some of the options available to us in

the department, suggested that we use The Protection for Persons in Care Act as a skeleton for a framework for further follow-ups across the province. There are criteria set by the department for following up, and the calls, I am advised that most decisions are made as a group and all follow-up is monitored by the manager and director of the program. A database is being developed in order to better manage and do follow-up with respect to this particular act.

Mrs. Driedger: I think the minister is aware that I have been supportive generally of the intent of the bill. I certainly do support the fact that we have to make sure patients in our health care facilities are protected from abuse. I do not think anybody would condone that in any way whatsoever. I also know that when the bill was introduced I know of the minister's closeness to the situation and his sensitivity to this bill.

I have met with a number of people from Holiday Haven, in fact, many different groups of people and professionals there. I am very well aware of the goings-on at the time when this situation occurred and the minister's concern at that time and his close awareness of what was happening in the situation.

I found that actually the bill he put forward himself at that point in time I liked better than what he eventually ended up with. In fact my amendments were largely taken from his original bill, which he really abandoned, I thought, when we introduced the actual bill that he did introduce. So he should not be too surprised at some of my concerns, because they used to be his concerns too.

I understand from his answer that this office has been open now just less than a month and he has indicated there have been 100 calls. Can he indicate how many of those are just information seeking calls and how many of those might have been actual complaints?

Mr. Chomiak: To suggest I abandoned my original bill is a distortion of what happened. I am compelled to put on the record the actual facts of what happened. I drafted the bill when the previous government, after inquest after inquest, had done nothing, squat, diddly-do, nothing. Not a thing, nano. I do not know how

many adjectives I can use to express the frustration that there was nothing done.

I took it upon myself to draft a bill based on the Alberta bill, together with some staff assistance who helped me draft a bill. I brought it before the Legislature on several occasions and was very discouraged that there was not any interest whatsoever on the part of the former government to introduce or to pass or to bring in legislation of this kind, and was forced to wait until we formed government, at which time I ran the bill through the department, who for a variety of reasons came back with some different suggestions for the bill, some which in my view improved the situation vis-à-vis the experience in Manitoba and vis-à-vis the requirements in Manitoba and the needs that had to be met.

So to suggest there was an abandonment of the bill I think is inaccurate. I think what we managed to do with the bill is what often happens in bills is that we managed to improve the situation. We are now much further ahead than we were several years ago when there was nothing in place, Mr. Chairperson. I have some of the data. I am just trying to outline for the member some of the data. As I interpret it, there were over a hundred calls that have been made to date, to the particular branch. If I read the statistics carefully, there have been 42 inquiries related to actual issues and 66 information requests, if I am reading this accurately.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister tell me, through those 42 complaints then, what might have been the end result of those particular complaints?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, we are going to be publishing regular information, public information on this. At this time, I would rather not put out information with respect to this because of the early stages of the office and because it may not be a true reflection of the reality after some period of time. There will be public disclosure of the information, and the information will be provided, but I am not certain if, in the first 30 days in operation, it would be prudent to do that.

The member asked about the three individuals: It is Teresa Raines who came from

the Department of Justice, who, I understand, has a child abuse background; Val Bakowski, who is from the Seniors Directorate, elder abuse expert, who worked in long-term care; and Jacques Gagné, who is a retired RCMP officer from, I believe, now late of the Department of Health or of the Department of Health.

* (15:50)

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate, of those 42 complaints that came in and were investigated, whether any Criminal Code offences were identified in any of that?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, it is too preliminary for me to give that kind of information.

Mrs. Driedger: When the minister indicated there will be public disclosure, could he tell me in what format and what frequency and how one would access that information?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, we are still determining the exact scenario by which the information will and can be provided there. There are, obviously, ramifications. Part of the process, as well, is that I wanted to integrate, and that is one of the reasons that I was not as specific in some of the answers that I gave with respect to questions raised by members opposite with respect, for example, to departmental reorganization because I knew the Thomas commission was specifically looking at that particular issue. I also knew that the Thomas commission would have ramifications for almost everything that we are doing in Health, and, to that extent, I did not want to put in place specific policy measures and then find out that the Thomas commission was going to recommend something radically different.

It is one of the reasons why it has been frustrating because, on occasion, members have suggested certain patterns of operation of the department suggesting that we are not going in certain directions. Rather, part of it has been a real sense on the part of the department, a recognition that we are and needed to reorganize and that certain aspects of the way the department functioned would change

dramatically and permanent as a result of Thomas. This is another example of part of the decision-making process with respect to how this information will be communicated, is wrapped up in our response to the Thomas commission.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate whether the 15 investigators are full time, part time, or are they seconded on an as-needed basis?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, as-needed basis.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate are they all from within the Department of Health?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, in fact, they are all from outside of the Department of Health.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate where they might be from? I mean, are they people within government? Are they people within the RHAs?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, as I recall, if memory serves me correctly, they are from a variety of backgrounds. There are some that are involved in justice. There are some that are involved in different forms of abuse. There are some involved in nursing. The lead investigator, as I recall, is Donna Klassen, who is the head of the Golden Links personal care home, if my memory serves me correctly. There is a roster of 15 individuals. I will endeavour to get more specific information for the member with respect to the investigators.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister take it upon himself too to provide me with a job description of the manager, an inquirer and an investigator so that it would be clear what each of those positions entails?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister give me any indication if there are any problems in implementing this, or has everything gone fairly smoothly?

Mr. Chomiak: To date, it appears to have functioned very smoothly without any major

difficulty or problem. There seems to be at this point excellent co-operation across the system. Of course in something as unique and groundbreaking as this there will be inevitably, despite the best of planning—there was some considerable planning by officials from the department. I know that because I was very impressed with the briefing and the information that they would provide me on a regular basis with respect to the implementation of this operation. But from what I gather and from what I have been advised, it has been largely functioning effectively and as had been anticipated.

Mrs. Driedger: Is the minister comfortable to guarantee that patient privacy is actually guaranteed? There are a number of people obviously involved in this that are outside of the health care system. Is he absolutely confident that patient privacy is guaranteed?

Mr. Chomiak: To the extent that I can guarantee anything in the health care system, measures have been put in place to train individuals appropriately with respect to the very stringent guidelines that have been put in place regarding patient confidentiality.

Mrs. Driedger: I would now like to ask the minister just a couple of questions on the Healthy Community Development line in the budget. I notice that from 1999-2000 to this year it has actually dropped by 16 percent. I know that if we are looking at a commitment to putting more emphasis on communities I understand that this particular amount of money is used for innovation. It could be used for start-up money, I understand, for different projects. It could be used for seniors groups, I understand, that could use it for looking at health promotion and illness prevention. If a government is going to talk about its emphasis that it is putting on the community development, that it is committed to doing something like that, I would wonder why the Government would choose to reduce spending by 16 percent over two years.

Mr. Chomiak: There is a variety of reasons, Mr. Chairperson. It is one of the difficulties when one focuses very, very narrowly on specific issues and only looks at specific issues that one gets the wrong picture with respect to the way that matters function. In fact, I can advise the

member that there was a healthy communities fund, something in the neighbourhood of \$20 million or \$30 million about four or five years ago, that dissipated to nowheresville. It went nowhere and was not very effective, that function.

* (16:00)

One of the reasons of course is that a lot of the programs and some of the programs have rolled out into direct actual expenditures at the Department of Health. Another factor is that we are doing considerably more with respect to programs in the community than has been the experience of the past decade and that the member might be more familiar with the past several years at the Department of Health.

We have done some considerable changes this year. Let me just outline some of them for the member. As indicated, we had the honour to launch the first PACT program this year and recently opened a PACT office, a program that for 10 years was languishing and came up for it and came back and came up and came back and was not put in place.

Mr. Chairperson, we put it in place a program for people with acute mental health problems, a classic community program that wraps professionals around individuals. For the first time we have put in place an eating disorder program that is a community-based program that we announced and had the pleasure of opening with the obvious support of the community. Those are actual program funds that actually had never, ever existed before, that are actually out there providing resources and services in the community.

This year, Mr. Chairperson, in the last year, we have done more in terms of inoculation programs, community-based programs, preventative programs than ever in the history of the province, first time a pneumococcal vaccination program, a pneumococcal vaccination program, the largest influenza program ever in the history of Manitoba, and, of course, the meningitis vaccination program that was put in place.

This year, Mr. Chairperson, we actually, instead of taking \$700,000 in advertising about "we have a plan," that was done just preceding

the last provincial election by a particular regime, we actually took some funding and actually put in some advertising for preventative measures, measures to prevent childhood injuries. We actually put in place a program to prevent childhood injuries, how novel, prevention, novel innovation that helps prevent long-term difficulties.

In addition, talk about healthy communities, Mr. Chairperson, we reversed the former decision of the Government that cancelled subsidies to people to test their well water and put in place subsidies to individuals that encourages them and subsidized them to have well testing, to help individuals who have well systems to have clean water. That is another example. So, for the member to take a narrow particular item with respect to an appropriation and somehow suggest because in the last two years the particular item does not increase and somehow is not a move forward with respect to community is not accurate. In fact, there have been more community-based programs. I look to the recent announcement of the expansion of the Nor'West Community Health Centre, a major expansion that we were able to announce that they were proceeding with, that is going to provide primary health care. I was just up in Ethelbert and Pine River to formally open the community nurse resource centres, that are community-based centres.

Mr. Chairperson, the member indicates—*[interjection]*—I was recently in Carberry and toured their facility, but, just to continue my point, I was recently in Ethelbert and Pine River to open community-based systems. So there are a variety of things that are actually being put in place and programs and initiatives that are funded directly in the community, something that I think is a significant move forward with respect to developments in the health care sector. I have seen a change, a significant change, with respect to new developments in Manitoba and, more effectively, I think, is a move to go from pilots and actual demonstrations to actual real ongoing funding of programs that are ongoing and provide that community resource and that community base that continues the program, not something that has a sunset provision apply to it and just ends up to be cut off when the funding

cuts off, rather programs that are moved out into the community and provide resources and access for all Manitobans.

I am very pleased with the direction that the Government has announced, from a policy standpoint, to move out into the community, to put in place community-based programs that have not been existent in the past. I am quite happy to continue discussing that with the member opposite because there is a whole variety of other programs that I can deal with since I am only going off the top of my head with respect to those items that come to mind.

There are numerous other items and numerous other programs, particularly in the community, that have seen increased funding and increased resources attached to it this year and have continued to be applied. When I am looking at the line item with respect to the community, healthy communities development, if I read it correctly, I think we are spending more money this year than last year. I remember last year the member's criticism was, well, you spent less money last year than the year before. Now, the member is saying, well, you spent less money last year than the year before, but in fact what has happened is we are spending far more money doing community projects, and I think that is significant for this Government.

Mrs. Driedger: It is interesting. I know when I look back at Estimates, either from comments from this year or even going back and rereading some of the Estimates from last year and even from the year before where the minister indicated that he really likes to get into good discussion on some of these issues and that he really does not like rhetoric, it is interesting though sometimes how he slips into the rhetoric when it suits him really well, just does not like it when it comes from the people that are trying to seek accountable answers.

Certainly the minister might have been a little bit sensitive about the numbers, but I think the numbers speak for themselves. In the last couple of years this fund has dropped by 16 percent. My understanding is certainly that some programs do roll out from this, but what that does then is it leaves room for other new programs, new ideas and new vision, and that is

what one would expect the Government to do, is to be sure that there is ongoing new ideas and new vision. Here is a great opportunity that may be rather than decreasing this by 16 percent over the past couple of years; there had been an opportunity here for some community programs, some new initiatives.

I know that there are seniors groups out there that are very much looking for some support, and I really have to admire them because they do not just sit back and look for handouts. These seniors groups are out there working very, very hard to try to better things for themselves. All they look for is a little bit of support. They are willing to put in a lot of volunteer time, they are willing to put in a lot of volunteer effort.

I know we have a group in Charleswood that has worked really hard since their beginnings during the International Year of Older Persons, and this group is now hundreds strong. They are trying very hard to be sure that they stay healthy, they know how to be healthy. They are looking at active involvement in their community and, you know, they seek very, very little. But I know that they had made an application this year for funding because for them they have an ability to take things so far. They could use some very, very simple support from Government, and they were denied that support. I know there is another group, the minister may very well have heard from them lately, from the Morris seniors who are also looking for some support.

* (16:10)

So I know there are community groups out there, particularly seniors, and the seniors are not looking for handouts. The seniors are not looking for somebody to waltz in and do things for them. All they are looking for is just a little bit of support. I would wonder that there must be a lot of little groups out there like that who if programming was put in place, we could actually see maybe more healthy seniors, more involved seniors, more active seniors. Certainly there have to be groups out there province-wide that could benefit from just a little bit of funding from this fund.

I understand that the WRHA for instance might have started to do some planning around

these areas, and maybe these RHAs are certainly looking at doing some of the planning and development. I guess I am looking to the Government to find out where their leadership is in terms of this healthy community development fund. Is the minister just going to look at the RHAs to come up with the ideas and the plan and the vision, or are we going to see some leadership initiatives by the Government too, because here is a perfect opportunity where some of that could be showcased? In the case of the seniors out there, I think they are a great group to put the resources into especially with our aging demographics in the province.

Would not the minister have seen a good opportunity here that instead of rejecting all of the requests that came in for seniors funding, he might have made a commitment to look at putting some funding in that area?

Mr. Chomiak: Well, Mr. Chairperson, it is somewhat frustrating because we would see in the Legislature that Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays the Opposition asked us to increase spending, and then Tuesdays and Thursdays they asked us to decrease spending. We keep seeing that over and over again. There is tremendous work being done by many community groups and many seniors groups across the length and breadth of this province. In fact, in the last budgets, we have expanded—let me quote: We have expanded the resources we have provided to these groups. Let me say it again: We have expanded the resources we have provided to these groups.

But, you know, Mr. Chairperson, I also am aware that we cannot meet all of the needs, unfortunately, even some of the smaller needs. There are judgments that are made, and there are decisions that have to be made. The member weaves in a whole series of questions with respect to her long statement. The regions have and will become more of the focus with respect to operations as we continue the evolution of the process towards regionalization, and we are going to be looking more towards the regions with respect to the actual delivery. The Department of Health has to and must look more towards policy development and overall policy direction to the various regions with respect to the health care system, and we are evolving and changing towards that.

I have said this before and I will say it again. I will point it out to the member. With respect to the Budget, last year's efforts with respect to the Budget, which was voted against by members opposite, was to augment the resources particularly in acute and intensive care, the acute care side. We said that we were on a multiyear plan, and this year was to put more resources into the community side which, obviously, has been demonstrated in this Budget, which the members also voted against. So in some ways, I am trying to avoid the politics of it, so I will just suggest that my comments speak for themselves with respect to the particular issue.

There are a multitude, a variety of needs out there that require judgment, that require weighing on a list of priorities. I often say with respect to health care, you almost could indicate that every issue that comes across our table, our desk, is a priority. It is only a question as to what level of priority does this one or that particular item achieve in terms of priorities.

We indicated that we would be moving more to the community. We have done that. We have indicated that we are going to spend a lot of our time and energy in the first several years in office in terms of retraining, re-educating and providing for more human resources, and we have done that, Mr. Chairperson.

The member refers to grant agencies. As I recall, grant agencies of which the seniors is one grant agency, had their funds frozen, I think, for eight consecutive years or seven consecutive years and, in fact, had a roll-back during the Conservative years. So when we came to office, Mr. Chairperson, these agencies were suffering and we provided additional resources, but not enough, I must admit. There are more that we could and should provide for, but we cannot because we cannot meet all of the needs and requirements out there. But we try to provide additional resources.

Let me contrast it. During the term of office of the member opposite, the funds to those agencies were frozen or rolled back. We for the past two years have provided expanded resources to those agencies, Mr. Chairperson. So I do not know exactly what point the member is trying to make. We have increased the resources. We know that in terms of prioritization we

cannot meet or achieve all of the needs that are out there but we are trying, and we have tried to balance the requirements out there.

Can we achieve optimum needs? Is there more need to have expanded seniors resources and seniors services and seniors pilot projects? Yes, there is, and there are initiatives in that regard. Is there also a need for expanded acute care services? Yes, there is. Is there a need for expanded community services? Yes, there is. Is there a need for expanded pharmaceutical application? Yes, there is, but there is an expanded need for virtually every area of health care, and we must judiciously look at the resources and try to apply our resources as fairly and as appropriately within the context of the priorities as we can.

We have expanded the resources of services to seniors. Probably there are needs that have not been met, but we cannot in our years of government deal with a legacy of cuts and slashing for the past decade. We are trying to meet the needs and the requirements. We have expanded community-based programming. We have ongoing programming and new programming under our Healthy Communities Development Fund that we are launching, and I suppose if I were to announce expanded community health pilot projects, if I were to expand double, the member would say, oh, you should not be doing pilots, you should be doing real ongoing permanent programming.

We are trying to balance, Mr. Chairperson. There is new ongoing permanent programming on the community side, and there are pilots and experiments and new ideas and other initiatives on the community development side, and we are trying to balance the needs of both. It is a question of resources, it is a question of prioritization and we are attempting to balance the needs of the community. The needs of the community overall, can we ever achieve optimum? Probably not, but we are trying, with the resources available to us, to do the best that we can.

I noted that the members opposite said we are spending too much this Budget. I can only take from that they want us to slash the funding

to those kinds of programs, because they cannot have it both ways. They cannot say you are spending too much and then say, by the way, fund this particular program or make Charleswood an underserved area for medical physicians or something like that. You cannot have it both ways. You have to balance it off and you have to be able to provide resources accordingly. We have balanced it the best to meet both the community and acute care side. This year there are more community-based initiatives than, I think, any time we have seen in this province and those initiatives are going to continue.

Mrs. Driedger: My next line of questioning will be around RHA funding, and I would like to indicate that I know that when the NDP came into power there were a lot of comments made by the Premier (Mr. Doer) and about the Minister of Health. Certainly the Premier had indicated that he was going to, he vowed actually to clamp down on skyrocketing health care costs. He indicated that deficits would not be allowed in any of the health authorities, in fact, made a commitment that that would not happen.

So it has been interesting to watch what has happened in this second Budget of this Government. I do have to say that at least our funding was done in an honest way. We did not promise our RHAs a lot and then not deliver, unlike this Government who promised all of this funding and then the RHAs find out that last year's deficits must be covered with the new funding. We saw from the letter from the southeast RHA that the RHAs certainly felt they were misled in the information and promises made to them, commitments made to them that all these salaries in health care, these increased salaries, would be covered; and then they get their budget and find out that, I think, they were led down the garden path.

* (16:20)

They certainly had believed they were being told one thing only to find out that they were told something very, very much different. At least with our government they knew what was happening, and at least with our funding we were honest with the RHAs. Now we find out that the RHAs, in fact, are finding out now and

they are quite concerned that there is not enough money to cover wage increases despite a promise to do so.

They find out that that are now expected to pay for things that were previously out of globe for them. They find out that all these hidden costs are now part of what is expected of them. We find out that operating costs for the three new CT scanners were not funded. The Government took great pleasure in announcing three new CT scanners but then, oops, we find out that there were no operating costs put behind them. So, despite the fact that the Government likes to crow about that they put CT scanners out there, they certainly did not follow through on a full commitment at all.

The majority of the RHAs in the province are ending the year with a deficit despite (a) the Premier saying no deficits would be allowed, and (b) saying they funded the RHAs more accurately than at any time in 10 years. I think the RHAs are feeling very misled by this. They certainly were led to believe something quite different from what they are finding out right now.

There is a question that needs to be asked in all of this too. Why were two-thirds of the rural RHAs allowed to budget for a deficit? We certainly know that in getting the budgets from all of them over the past year, despite the fact the Premier indicated no deficits would be allowed, the Government accepted deficit budgets from two-thirds of them. I have to wonder, and I am not an accountant, but I have to really ask the question: What kind of fiscal management is this when you say that you are not going to allow a deficit budget but then you approve two-thirds of the budgets as deficits?

Now we find out the RHAs are being asked to cut chemo programs, maybe dialysis programs. There is some discussion of closure of hospitals out there. There is certainly some really serious concern from the RHAs. Even in looking at a document that was sent out from Doctor Postl to the WRHA program clusters, he indicates in a sentence in his memo: You should also be aware that the fiscal environment in health care is such that we must be extremely prudent in our request for new funding.

One just has to sit back and say, okay, we have a government that has spent like crazy in two years. They have jacked up spending in Manitoba by almost half a billion dollars in just two years. That is 22 percent. Now I have to wonder, well, is it not funny that when we look at all of the health care spending, why would a government spend almost half a billion in two years and then all of a sudden turn around and start telling all the RHAs, well, you are going to have to start looking at cuts. It makes me ask the question: Where in the world is the planning by this Government?

If there had been proper planning put in place from day one, if this Government had had any experience at all with good financial management, if they had realized that good intentions alone were not good enough, then maybe we might not have seen a situation where you spend like mad for two years and then you do an abrupt turnaround and tell everybody, oh, oh, now we have got to be really careful. Now how much of all of that wild spending has been put into the base lines? What kind of a demand is that going to place on the system in the future? Why are the RHAs now having to look at some probably serious program cuts like chemo patients or dialysis patients, or are we going to see hospitals close or are we going to see beds close?

Are we going to see nurses put out of jobs, because I understand nurses are concerned out there that there could even be job losses occurring. In fact, that was something that was even put forward by the nurses' union last week in comments made by the union president, where she had indicated the health care system is in crisis. She is worried. In fact, her statement to the media was that there is an expectation by nurses of hospital closures, bed closures, and she is very concerned that they are going to see nurses now that are going to end up losing jobs.

So when you put 22 percent more into health care, which is almost half a billion dollars, in two years, with no plans to control climbing health care costs, one has to really ask how responsible an approach was this right from day one and how sustainable an approach is this. We know that Manitoba spends the most per capita in the country on health care. Our budget here is now almost 40 percent. Where is this all going to be in five years?

While it did need some injection of funding, because we know that certainly during the '90s the federal government did keep back a lot of funds, I think the Province struggled very, very hard to try to make sure that as much funding as possible could go into health care. I know as a government we did our best to try to meet the needs.

It was interesting to note that this Government during the '90s demanded we put more and more into health care. We did when we could. The NDP then become government and all of a sudden accuse us of reckless spending. The Minister of Health, as a new minister, says the buck stops nowhere. He felt like a runaway train, certainly made some interesting comments, and yet after all of that he turns around and puts this huge injection of money into health care with no plan on which to base it. The money is just going there. It seems to be dealing with crisis after crisis with no real vision and no real plan about where that money is going to go.

While I do appreciate that an injection of funding was certainly needed, it is important to spend wisely and it is important to spend with a plan. Certainly that is what we have been asking this Government for, that when you look at your priorities in health care, at least for goodness sake do it with a plan in mind.

I think what we have seen with the health care spending going up as dramatically as it has—I mean 22 percent in two years is very, very dramatic. It certainly demonstrates, I think, an inability to manage the finances in health care and no obvious commitment to do so.

In March of last year, certainly the Premier (Mr. Doer) vowed to clamp down on skyrocketing health care costs when his government brought down their first Budget. He indicated, and I will quote from a newspaper article: That is going to start with ensuring Manitoba Health sticks with the spending projections it is given at the beginning of the year. Manitoba Health, I think, did they not in their first budget overspend by \$75 million, so interesting that the Premier's comments obviously went on deaf ears here.

He indicated too, and this was his quote in the article: We believe that we have to have an

honest budget amount this year. Then he criticized the Tories for overspending, but then his government overspent. Then he says: And that is a practice that has to stop. Then the newspaper article goes on to say that Manitoba Health and the province's 12 regional health authorities will be given realistic budgets at the beginning of the fiscal year, but after that health care officials will be forced to stay within those spending limits. So the Premier puts out words like that, and then they turn around and accept deficit budgets from two thirds of the RHAs, which of course one wonders then what he was really saying.

* (16:30)

We look at what appears to be a disparate amount of funding between the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and the rural health authorities. We certainly see the rural health authorities beginning to have some really serious, serious concerns about some of that funding. We hear the questions from the rural RHAs, who do feel that they are being treated unfairly because there is a certain percentage given to the WRHA, and they are feeling that there is unequal treatment. There is question about the WRHA also seeing an injection of funding midway through their year. In fact, \$32 additional million was received by the WRHA mid-year, which was an additional 3.5 percent. The rural RHAs are asking: Is this what allows then the WRHA to announce a surplus while the majority of them are all facing deficits?

Certainly, when one looks at the amount of money, if over the past two years, there has been a 22% increase in the budget, was it fairly distributed between the RHAs? Was fairness used in the decision making?

It would be interesting if the minister would care to indicate how he came to the determination of the WRHA getting \$75 million. I would certainly be interested in seeing the request in writing and all of the paper trails around that particular discussion on how the WRHA asked for and received the \$75 million and what that is based on.

One has to then look at all of this funding increase and ask is health care 22 percent better

than it was two years ago? Have waiting lists been reduced? Has quality been improved? Are patient outcomes any better in this province because of this injection of funding? I think that what we will see is that waiting lists in fact have in many instances gone up. In fact, patient outcomes do not appear to be any better, which does tell us then that perhaps funding is not the be-all and end-all to resolving some of these issues. If we are going to spend millions and millions more, what are we getting for that money? I think more and more of the provinces in the country are probably beginning to look more at what we are getting for the amount of money that we are putting in.

We certainly look at the Canada Health Act, including principles of universality, comprehensiveness, portability, accessibility and wonder, if one were to really have a good look at it, whether or not all of this funding has really improved accessibility to health care. If we were to look at the RHAs and look at comparing any of them between the rural and the city, it would probably take far more time than what we are allowed in here. Certainly I think what we are going to find out there is the question from the RHAs wondering if there is fairness in the treatment, and I think they have some legitimate questions to be asked.

The first question I would like to ask the minister is related to the fact that I believe that unequal treatment started last year when the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority received a larger percentage increase in their budget. I would like to ask the minister if he could please tell us what the percentage increase was in their budget this year, and why he might find that there is not the same kind of treatment being extended to the rural RHAs as being extended to the WRHA.

I mean, a lot of the rural ones would love to be able to have the same kind of money put into some of the things that the WRHA, fortunately to have a surplus, had an opportunity to make some really good commitments: community programs getting 11 percent; personal care homes getting 8 percent; hospitals getting 4.3 percent.

The rural RHAs are asking: What is wrong with us? Why can we not see that same kind of

fair treatment? Why are the Winnipeg and rural RHAs being treated differently? In fact they would love to see and have the opportunity to put that kind of an injection into their programs as well, but they do not feel that they have had that chance.

Mr. Chomiak: That was the second longest question I have ever heard, Mr. Chairperson. That particular discourse had considerable inaccuracies that I am compelled to deal with in order to effect the record and to ensure accuracy.

Where does one start? I am not sure we have enough time in Estimates for me to try to correct the inaccuracies that were put on the record by the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) with respect to her discourse over the last half hour.

Let me commence by indicating when we came into office we asked Mr. Webster, who was appointed by members opposite, to do a review in terms of how we did the funding to the RHAs. He suggested something very novel that had not happened in the health care system, something really novel, that maybe we should give the budgets to the RHAs ahead of time, not in midyear, not at the end of the year, as had been the past practice under previous Conservative so-called business understanding oriented governments.

Maybe we should give the budgets ahead of time, recommended by Mr. Gordon Webster in his report, so that we would not be in a situation that I saw. We tabled in the Legislature letter after letter after letter midway through the year from RHAs saying: Can you please fund, Manitoba Health, these programs, those programs and that program that are not funded, because we are doing them and they are not being funded and we do not have our budgets and we do not know whether or not they are being funded? That is what had to stop. That is what we moved on.

In Estimates at this time last year the member was running around together with the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) saying the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has a \$10-million deficit, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has a \$10-million deficit. Now she says they still do, insisting, trying to get, you

know, going around on uncorroborated evidence, indicating there is a deficit. Now she said in her statements that it is balanced, that they got more money, but now she says, no, they still have a deficit. You cannot have it three ways, which is what the member has tried to have in terms of her comments. The question to me preceding this was: Why have you spent 16 percent less in Healthy Communities? Now the question is: Why have you spent 22 percent more in terms of the Health budget? You cannot have it both ways. You cannot have it both ways. It is totally inconsistent. It was inconsistent when they managed the health care system and it is inconsistent when they criticize the health care system. They cannot even get their criticisms consistent since they contradict one after another.

* (16:40)

So we put in place the Webster report that reviewed the funding and said something novel, that perhaps we should get out the budgets to the health care, to the regions ahead of time, and we tried very hard to do that.

The vast majority of money that is going to the regions this year is balanced, the vast majority. There are difficulties that we have encountered. I have indicated that. We have not hidden it, as was done in the past. We are dealing with it with the regions. We are continuing to refine the process, but the point is, the vast majority of funding is balanced, something that had not happened before. The member talked about a \$75-million overrun. That was the lowest overrun in the history of Health for the past five years. That was in the first year of a government, which in my view is not bad. It is not perfect. We always say we are not perfect, but that is not bad, considering that the so-called well-managed, oiled Tory machine did not get anywhere near that for the past five years.

The member opposite suggested that somehow the formula with respect to the WRHA provided more money to the WRHA than to rural regions. In fact, the formula and the calculations that we put in place saw more money going to the rural and northern regions as a percentage than to the city of Winnipeg. That

money going to the rural and northern regions as a percentage than to the city of Winnipeg. That was done deliberately. I will admit that there were difficulties with the regions that had started in the previous fiscal year in terms of the deficit and in terms of coming to account for the situation. The member talks about the closure of hospitals and the closure of beds. I admit that the member and her party has a fair amount of expertise in this particular area, insofar as they did a lot of it during the past decade, closing 1400 acute care beds permanently, in closing the largest hospital in the history of the province of Manitoba, when they closed the Misericordia Hospital.

So I admit the members opposite have a fair amount of expertise in this area. That is not the policy directive of this Government with respect to hospital closure. The member should note that a process was put in place under the former government that saw a review done of rural hospitals, two processes in fact. A report done by the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation and a report, the so-called template report that was done together with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and other regulatory bodies that looked at minimally staffed facilities and how they should be staffed.

I note that both those endeavours were put in place by the member's government, with respect to hospitals and with respect to underutilized hospital facilities. There are problems in that area. We are having difficulty staffing across the system. We have indicated something novel. We do have human resource shortages, something that was not recognized, except in the dying days of the former regime. It was not recognized. There actually was a lack of human resources to staff these positions.

We have taken the measures and initiatives at considerable expense, and I suppose the members opposite would rather we not do it, to retrain and re-educate professionals right across the field. First time in a decade, expansion of the Faculty of Medicine, as well as an expansion of the residency program, as well as a loan program to help keep doctors here, as well as a program for international medical graduates, as well as the establishment of a northern and rural health office. All designed to enhance the capacity of professionals to stay in Manitoba and to carry

out their profession in particularly underserved areas, as well as our nursing initiatives.

The member, in a previous response, said well, we cannot take any credit for the nursing expansion and nursing enrolments. Frankly, I do not care about the credit. All I know is that there are more nurses in training now than at any time almost back to the years of when was their previous government, to the previous government, an NDP government. That suggests something to me. That suggests that we do recognize the need for training of professionals across the field.

The member has been accurate in a whole series of initiatives and in a whole series of measures. The member refers to a letter that was leaked by a former colleague of the member, the member of Parliament for the Alliance, the Honourable Mr. Toews. He leaked a letter to the media alleging that we ordered the cuts of programs. I notice that the member uses that in her terminology. That is not accurate. It is not accurate to say that, but the member persists in using that kind of terminology, and persists in putting that kind of information on the record when in fact that is not the case.

The whole issue of funding of all of the regions is something that has been a difficult process over the past three years. I find it passing strange that we are providing more in terms of funding to the rural and northern regions than were provided by members opposite in the '98-99 year. How curious. We are providing more funding than they provided in '98-99, and yet the member is saying and suggesting to us that we are spending too much money on this. It just does not equate. I have said before that the member cannot have it two ways. In fact, the member cannot have it three ways as well.

If the member wanted to be forthright with respect to the comments the member was making, the member would indicate that when dealing with these issues, the RHAs said—let me quote what one of the RHAs said with respect to the health care system has been devastated for 10 years. That was their response to the budgetary issue raised by the member's friend from the Alliance Party in the letter that was leaked from one of the RHAs.

There was a letter to myself that talked about various options to deal with budgetary considerations. We were frank, and we were up front in terms of what we were doing last year. The member suggested that there would be a deficit at WRHA. Now the member says that WRHA does not have a deficit, but then the member says, oh, she still thinks that they do have a deficit. I do not know what we could do or say that would satisfy the requirements of the member opposite.

There are problems with respect to the deficit situations of some of the RHAs. We are trying to deal with it. We put in place a process with the RHAs over the past year to have discussions with them in terms of their needs and their requirements. The only unfortunate thing, Mr. Chairperson, is we did not have and we do not have the total resources that would totally satisfy all of the requirements and needs of the RHAs, and that, unfortunately, is a reality of the fiscal situation that we face.

On the one hand, the member is saying we are not funding them enough. On the other hand, the member is saying that we are spending too much. The worst thing that bothers me is this little thing that the member plays about pitting urban against rural and suggesting somehow special treatment with respect to the urban centres vis-à-vis the rural centres.

I can tell you that the Winnipeg region, which I should note does have 30 percent of its patients from rural Manitoba, had as a percentage increase one of the lesser increases of all of the regions across the province, Mr. Chairperson, but that fact is lost upon the member opposite as she puts her rhetoric on the record with respect to the information, some of which I think comes from the letter that was leaked by her friend in the Alliance Party and some of which comes I do not know from where, perhaps from comments that were made in the past with respect to the budgetary considerations.

Mr. Chairperson, we have tried under our existing resources to achieve the best funding arrangement we can under the circumstances. We are continuing to work with the regions. Last year at this time, when the member had suggested Winnipeg region was \$10 million in

deficit, I suggested, both to the media whom the member was talking to and to the member, that she should wait until the end of the year to see the actuals in order to determine the situation. At the end of the year, when the situation was found to balance, I did not see the member coming forward and saying, boy, in fact, we were wrong to make our claims that we made and we apologize and withdraw those statements. In fact, that was completely overlooked.

* (16:50)

So I suggest to the member opposite that much of the information she has put on the record is wrong, and I have pointed out the information that she, in fact, has indicated wrong. I can indicate to the member that it is curious to me that in the question preceding the last long, long half-hour question of the member, I might say, she indicated that we were somehow doing something wrong in spending 16 percent less in the Healthy Communities Fund. Now she has suggested we are overspending and expending inappropriately because we have invested more funding into the health care system.

I understand that the member has suggestions with respect to some of the expenditures, but I would like to point out, what aspects of the expenditures would she suggest that we withdraw? Would she suggest we take more money back from the rural and northern RHAs? Would the member suggest we cancel the expanded medical program? Would the member suggest that we cancel the expansions of the Pharmacare program? Would the member suggest that we cancel the expansion of the nursing program?

Mr. Cris Aglugub, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

In fact, I know the member would love it if we did not do the diploma nursing program, but I want the member to know that, in fact, the diploma nursing program is well received in rural Manitoba particularly. It is one of the issues when we go to rural Manitoba where we receive a lot of support for the diploma nursing program.

So, despite efforts of members opposite, the diploma nursing program has been well received

across the province of Manitoba and well accepted across the province of Manitoba and I think has assisted us in the educating and training of more nurses. I look forward to the continuing expansion of a variety of programs as well as careful scrutiny being paid to these programs and how they are applied.

Mrs. Driedger: Brandon may have had a 9% increase, but \$3.9 million of that will be going to pay the shortfall. The *Brandon Sun* reported on Thursday, April 19, that despite a 9% increase in funding, the Brandon RHA has just \$900,000 of available money to deal with operating costs for the year ahead.

In fact, Mr. Earl Backman was quoted as being particularly disappointed that funding levels failed to pay for labour costs associated with existing contracts, and, clearly, this was not the case in Winnipeg. On April 23, CJOB was reporting that they have a letter from South Eastman Chair, Mr. Paul Campbell, and this letter talks about underfunding of \$3.4 million, \$2.7 million of that being from last year.

Their letter indicated that it will force the delay or cancelling of the CAT scan, delay the opening of the personal care home, stop the chemotherapy program and the surgical program and the potential closure of the St. Anne Hospital.

So the minister might like to criticize me, for what he is saying I am pitting rural against urban, when in fact he has done that. They are feeling it, they are expressing it and I am the messenger that is bringing that forward. I know this minister has a tendency to shoot the messenger, but it is certainly the RHAs out there that are the ones that are saying they feel they are being unfairly treated, and I wonder if the minister could please explain the differences. I mean, is it fair when Winnipeg has enough money to ensure the continuation of all services and improvement on many services and the rural certainly are not feeling that?

In fact the WRHA knew its budget before Budget day. It allowed them to make their announcements earlier and yet the rural RHAs never had that same opportunity. I mean, why was WRHA the only one to receive additional funding mid-year? I mean, the disparity in all of that just sort of screams out for an explanation.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, of course the *Brandon Sun* had Earl Backman saying, quote: The health care system has been devastated for 10 years. I will accept responsibility for what we do, but I will not accept responsibility for the mistakes and the cuts and the bad management of the past decade under members opposite. So the very article the member quoted from indicates that information.

As I indicated to the member opposite, in fact the member does have a penchant or a tendency, if one wants to use that word, for pitting rural against urban which I do not think is healthy and I do not appreciate. I do not think it is appropriate. The member opposite does appear to like to do that.

We saw that recently on an issue that was unprecedented from a health care system. What I am seeing now and I have indicated to the member opposite that with respect to the budgetary process, the percentage increase to Winnipeg was below that of the majority of the regions outside of Winnipeg, and the formula that we had applied in terms of determining the Budgetary allocations saw a larger increase to the rural and northern, than in fact to the urban.

Part of the issue is despite the claims by members opposite that the WRHA would have a deficit budget, it did not have a deficit budget this year, which is something quite unique across the system, after what had essentially been, a continuing almost a decade of deficits, first by hospitals and then by the region over the past decade. We think that coming in, the largest region by far in the province, on target and on budget was a considerable improvement over past practice. I only hope that we can continue that practice, and I only hope that we could emulate it across the system with respect to the other regions.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to first of all pick up with a couple of issues from yesterday. The minister indicated that there might be some further information related to the incidence of cancer in East St. Paul.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I in fact had it all ready for the member in order to

efficiently and effectively provide him with it, but during the course of discussions about other issues I now have access to it.

I am advised in 1972, drinking water wells reported hydrocarbons in the water. By 1974, more than 30 drinking water wells reported hydrocarbons and tested area wells were done in 1978, 1979, 1981 and 1982. In July '74, gasoline loss was noted at 1915 Hoddinott Road, the Birds Hill Gravel and Stone. Two underground gasoline tanks were removed from an area of shallow overburden from the Birds Hill area in the early 1990s. At that time the soil underneath the tanks was not routinely excavated as it is now.

All the affected wells were identified and residences were provided in the 1995 time frame with carbon filters to remove the hydrocarbons and later with municipal water piped in from the R.M. of Springfield. I am advised, Mr. Chairperson, that the East St. Paul residents affected by the hydrocarbons as a result of those instances in their wells were protected either by carbon filters or piped-in water. The element in gasoline that is classified as a carcinogen is benzene. Chronic exposure of humans to benzene from workplace data may lead to bone marrow damage which may be manifested initially as anemia, leucopenia or thrombocytopenia. Benzene-induced leukemia has been observed in humans. Benzene is not known to be associated with colorectal cancer.

A preliminary analysis, which was the matter that I referred to the member yesterday, by CancerCare Manitoba, the RHA and Manitoba Health suggests that colorectal cancer incident rates are elevated in the East St. Paul area, particularly amongst males. The major known risk factors for colorectal cancer relate to age, a diet rich in animal fats and meats and poor in fibre and of course a family history of colorectal cancer.

As I indicated to the member, a more complete analysis of the cancer incident rate data and all of the information that was provided publicly last week is being undertaken. We are hoping to provide analysis by Manitoba Health and WRHA and CancerCare Manitoba as soon as possible.

Quite clearly as well, which are comments that I am making, there is some significant analysis that must be done in terms of long-term cancer rates with respect to some of the data that has been accumulated by CancerCare Manitoba as it relates to cancer rates. But that is an update that I have for the member relating to questions that he had yesterday.

* (17:00)

Mr. Gerrard: The question that I would have, in view of the previous contamination of a number of wells in the area, is to what extent there has been testing of wells in the last year or two and has there been any contamination show up.

Mr. Chomiak: I have already asked for that information.

Mr. Gerrard: Because there are a lot of private wells in the area, it would be important to at least do that follow-up. As you have indicated and I commented yesterday, the primary epidemiological associations of colorectal cancer are with diet. But they would lead one to suggest that in fact what is important in this diet is the oral ingestion of carcinogens. I think it bears some close follow-up, perhaps some comparison with studies that have been done elsewhere where there have been hydrocarbons spills. Do we know anything in particular about the nature of the spills? Was this gasoline or was it particular chemicals?

Mr. Chomiak: In terms of the particular spill in 1974, the fact that there were underground tanks as well in the area, it appears gasoline loss was the significant factor in that particular area. The member is obviously more an expert than I am. I was under the impression that genetics were probably more of a factor in colorectal cancer than in fact diet, but perhaps the member can enlighten me otherwise.

I thought that that was one of the really significant areas where genetics seemed, unless of course diet, affected one who has a predisposition to a genetic form of colorectal cancer. But I just throw that out.

Mr. Gerrard: There are some forms of colorectal cancer which clearly there is a familial predisposition. So genetics is certainly an important contributor. My guess would be, and I do not have the precise statistics, that one was probably looking at maybe 10 percent where there is a genetic sort of clearly identified familial condition at most. The bulk of the remainder, one is probably looking at environmental. But within that there is probably a certain proportion which may turn out to be more genetic or more environmental depending on what is there.

Certainly from the perspective of what we know about colon-rectal cancer, the fact that there are dietary carcinogens and mutagens which occur naturally which seem to be involved would suggest that the presence of mutagens or carcinogens which are orally ingested even in small amounts may be important.

Let me go on to follow up the area where we concluded, that is, some discussion of the made-in-Manitoba model, your approach to be innovative to set up a model where you are able to make comparisons of cost-effectiveness, outcomes effectiveness. In the concluding remarks at the end you were talking about the alternative form of delivery. Perhaps you can sort of expand a little bit more about how you see the alternative form of delivery and how it is similar and how it is different from the present delivery system.

Mr. Chomiak: I am going to compartmentalize this in several areas. Firstly, we know that in Manitoba, as across the nation, the number of day surgeries is increasing and the number of surgeries that require overnight stays, if I can put it in those terms, is decreasing, statistically and otherwise. We know that is the case.

We also know that the most recent CIHI data and the most recent CIHI report suggests that alternative arrangements ought to be made for more day surgeries. If we consider that and if we consider the fact that the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation did a study in Manitoba of private clinics operating beside public clinics and demonstrated statistically that the waiting lists grow longer in that instance and that data confirmed information that had been done in an Alberta study as well as I believe an

additional U.S. study, when we consider those factors, we then consider the situation here in Manitoba.

In Manitoba we know that the number of day surgeries is increasing. In Manitoba we know there is some dissatisfaction amongst some of the surgeons as to the type of facility and the accommodation, the kind of surgery and their access to surgery. We know that we offer surgeries at all of the acute care hospitals. We know that there is a demand for surgery. We know that while they are not all at capacity, there is a need to do different types of surgeries in different types of facilities. We know the WRHA is trying to reorganize and trying to organize surgeries and the entire system in Winnipeg on the most efficient basis.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

We know that in 1998 when the Manitoba system was challenged with private clinics opening up, they could not meet the challenge. They were firstly penalized by the federal government. The response was to take the private clinics and convert them into quasi-hospitals under the definition of the act and then give them contractual services in order to keep them operating and provide the service.

We know at the time the Manitoba government was looking for increased capacity, because it was publicly stated, because I had queried the Manitoba government at the time as to what alternatives they were going to offer in order to increase the volume of surgeries as well as try to maintain the integrity of the public system.

All of those issues combined, as well as discussions that we have had across the country which—and I do not have to go through the litany, and I do not want to go through the politics of what happened in Alberta, and I do not want to necessarily go through the politics of what is happening in Ontario—suggest that there are many observers in the Canadian scene that suggest the only way to improve the system and the only way to have medicare survive is to go private.

In view of that and in view of the fact that the last Manitoba government that attempted to privatize a portion of health care, namely the home care system, under the Filmon government was not generally accepted by the vast population of Manitoba, we felt that, looking at the fact that there were basically three existing surgery centres in Winnipeg, we knew that we needed increased capacity, we knew that we needed to have some comparative data with respect to surgeries in various centres.

We knew that Pan Am Clinic was willing, had talked about for some time being innovative. We entered into discussions with Pan Am Clinic to incorporate them using a private sector model effectively in our public system. The decision was made to try what I have termed a made-in-Manitoba solution to deal with the volume issues, to deal with the issue of physician retention, to deal with the issue of comparative statistics.

The alternative of some of the suggestions that had been made for example in the Legislature that we fund all private clinics to me is not a sustainable solution, because if we were forced to fund every private surgery centre that wants to come up to Manitoba, we have never been in a position to do that. If we were forced to fund every single centre that wanted to come to Manitoba to do surgery, we would not be able to sustain the volume going through.

So in light of the fact that we have a public system with capacity, in light of the fact that we are reorganizing more effectively some of our surgical programs, we turned to the WRHA and had them review their needs and requirements. They felt that the operation of a surgical centre would be in the interests of the system. We have entered into an agreement in principle to purchase the Pan Am system to integrate it into our public system and to have another resource to provide that type of surgery, the increasing type of surgery and the surgery recommended by organizations like CIHI, without putting ourselves in a position where we are competing against ourselves necessarily in the private sector and at the same time maintaining some of the checks by maintaining the private-sector contractual relationship, as well as observing, and we are going to observe, the experience of what happens in Alberta and what happens in Ontario in terms of what they are doing.

Mr. Gerrard: You mentioned the three private surgery or surgery clinics—Midland, Western and Pan Am—and the comparisons I think by cost-effectiveness, outcomes and efficiencies. I am interpreting that to mean that you are going to look at how things run at the Pan Am in this kind of model, compared with, for example, at Midland and Western in terms of the surgeries and the cost-effectiveness, the outcomes, the efficiencies and so on.

* (17:10)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, certainly we intend to utilize the comparisons in order to ensure that, in fact, what we are doing is more cost-effective and more outcome effective.

Mr. Gerrard: Have you sort of thought through what sort of comparisons that you may be making among the three clinics?

Mr. Chomiak: There has been some thought associated with that and some direction associated with that. I am largely looking to the direction of the WRHA with respect to that.

I just want to put a caveat on part of this discussion, because we have talked about surgery centres, and there is a whole separate issue, of course, and a different issue related to surgeries done at other clinics. I am deliberately focussing on surgery centres as the issue. The member had talked about, for example, Manitoba Clinic yesterday, and the comparison I do not think is the same in terms of that particular operation vis-à-vis surgical centres.

Mr. Gerrard: Just to return, can you expand a little bit on the comparisons that you may be making between the Pan Am and the Midland and Western? You indicate that you will be guided by the RHA in terms of how this is done. Frequently, it is important to identify the issues and how the comparisons are to be made upfront, so that you know right from the start that you are able to do the evaluation that you want to be able to do.

There is in the operation of a centre like the Pan Am centre, there have historically been some things like physiotherapy that have been covered in terms of cost at public health care centres like hospitals but have not been covered in clinics.

I am just also wondering what the minister is going to do in terms of services like this and what will happen at the Pan Am Clinic in terms of what will be covered and what will not be covered.

Mr. Chomiak: At present we are going to maintain the status quo with respect to coverage or non-coverage.

Mr. Gerrard: One of the significant issues I think as one moves from more hospital care to more home care and to more dispersed care with things like surgical centres, the issue which has been discussed to some extent in the Legislature which deals with the pharmaceutical services for children with cancer has come up.

I am just wondering whether you have any further information on how this is going to work for children with cancer and with kidney problems where, in point of fact, they are on one protocol and getting that protocol sometimes in hospitals, sometimes out of hospital, and clearly there would be efficiencies in having one pharmacy being able to deliver both.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, it is actually, in fact, a far broader issue than, in fact, just the pharmaceutical issue and the delivery or the location of the pharmaceuticals. There are a variety of drugs. Some are covered; some are not covered. Some conditions are covered; some conditions are not covered. There is some particular types of illnesses that we provide the drugs, some illnesses we do not provide the drugs. We actually have intra- and interdepartmental groups that are looking at all the ramifications of all those issues. So I am just taking it beyond simply the pharmaceutical issue.

With respect to the pharmacy issue per se, as I indicated both in the House and otherwise, we asked the WRHA to meet with the groups and to look at how best to resolve this issue. It does speak, as significant as it is, to the parents. It does speak to the larger issue of attempting on occasion to broaden or to make programs different in application, how difficult change is in a system with respect to specific issues. Having said that, we recognize there is difficulty and problems, and we turned it over to the

WRHA to meet with groups. I have not heard back yet with their recommendations.

Mr. Gerrard: The minister talked about The Maples Surgical Centre which is a recent arrival. I just wondered whether the minister would comment about where he sees the role of this in the whole system.

Mr. Chomiak: Well, The Maples Surgical Centre has had a curious and a very vocal history in Winnipeg. The proponent initially came in with a project and proposals that suggested it was going to be an overnight, in effect a private hospital. We were very concerned about the difficulty with private hospitals functioning in Manitoba. We indicated to him that we did not want private hospitals in Manitoba, that in fact we were going to be tightening up the legislation in that regard, and of course the legislation is before us.

* (17:20)

I think there has been some correspondence that I have not reviewed. There were some telephone calls that the proponent made to my office, but there was not a formal application for any kind of involvement in our health care system other than a proposal that was made to the WCB and a proposal that was made to MPI by this particular individual. He built a surgical centre. Recently I think he has corresponded with our office, and there are some ongoing discussions that are taking place between the WRHA and The Maples Surgical Centre.

I do not know if we have a need in the system or a capacity in the system for another surgical centre, but I am not the expert in this field. I have turned it over to the WRHA to look at it, review and give their best advice on it.

Mr. Gerrard: I would like to move to some of the things which are in the Thomas report. One of the things that Paul Thomas and his group has indicated is that there still at this point is not sufficient clarity in the roles and responsibilities and accountability of the minister and the RHAs. This point is made two or three places in the report. It is surprising that something as fundamental as this would not be very clear, so I

would ask the minister to provide a comment and indicate when he will have this cleared up.

Mr. Chomiak: The comment with respect to the issue of roles and functions is part of an ongoing series of recommendations that are not dissimilar to those recommendations in the Webster report. Basically the recommendation is to regionalize and regionalize totally and to convert the Department of Health from an operational department—I have characterized it structurally as a holding company model, but that is my own characteristic—into a policy and accountability framework kind of organization.

We recognized that when we came into office, Mr. Chairperson. So it has not been lost upon us in terms of what we are doing and where we are going. We have made some changes, and it is noted in the Thomas report, with respect to structure. It is also noted in the Thomas report that the reorganization effort—I was in a difficult position during the course of these Estimates because members opposite were saying, you know, when are you going to reorganize or what are you going to reorganize. I indicated that I knew that the Thomas commission was coming out, and I knew that the Thomas commission was going to comment on our organizational restructuring as well as advice as to the future reorganization. So that has happened and that is proceeding, and we are going to reorganize along the lines of the Thomas commission.

Now, having said that, Mr. Chairperson, just let me outline some of the really difficult problems that are encountered in terms of what, in effect, is a quasi-revolution in terms of health. For years, the Department of Health was the entity through which all information flowed and which operated virtually everything in this province. With regionalization, there was a sea change in terms of how the department functioned and how the regions functioned.

That change is in an evolutionary stage. We are still in a process of change. For example, Selkirk Mental Health is operated directly by the Department of Health. Should the Department of Health continue to operate Selkirk Mental Health? Should it be operated by the Interlake region because it is located in that region? Should it be operated by the Winnipeg Regional

Health Authority because the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority operates a number of province-wide programs? Should it be spun off as a separate operating agency? Should it be a board with its own entity? Those are significant issues with respect to Selkirk and comprise something like 600 employees.

Should Cadham Provincial Lab be maintained directly under the control of the Department of Health, or should Cadham Provincial Lab be fused with the virology lab under some form of co-management? Should it be fused within the WRHA?

There are some significant policy issues that still have to be dealt with with respect to some straight operational decisions as it affects the Department of Health.

There are further complications, Mr. Chairperson, and I would be interested in the member's advice specifically on this. Paul Thomas clearly recommends, it seems to me, in furthering regionalization that we follow the advice of some individuals and we get rid of boards of pre-existing institutions like St. Boniface Hospital, like most of the faith-based institutions and fuse them into the WRHA.

That is a significant departure from past policies of government and past structural changes. Admittedly, it was also recommended by the Webster report; it is clearly recommended by the Thomas report. It would clearly deal with the design and it would clearly deal with accountability in clarifying accountability between Health and the various regions. But for a variety of reasons, we are not proceeding down that path. There are historical, structural and other reasons for not doing that, but there are various arguments at various ways.

So having said that, Mr. Chairperson, we have a new structure in terms of a regional structure, a new assistant deputy minister **charged with regional affairs** who we plucked out of a region specifically and put into regional affairs. You know, it is sometimes simple to point at an organization and it is not acknowledged that, in fact, change is taking place.

One of the reasons I should say that Mr. Sussman is the Deputy Minister of Health, amongst a variety of issues relating to his ability, is the fact that he comes from a region. He comes from an operational standpoint, and prior to that he operated a personal care home. He understands the implications of operating. One of the reasons we have an assistant deputy minister who is responsible for regional affairs is because she comes from the region. She worked with the region.

There are a number of organizational structures, not the least of which is the IT component and how IT is organized across the province, which we are still dealing with, I might suggest. That is a whole other debate with respect to Health.

So what we are doing this year is we are cognizant of the recommendations of Thomas to move the department along in terms of structure towards a department that is more akin to policy accountability and follow-up, which is what departments have to do, so that it has a risk management function, so it has policy accountability and follow-up, has proper financial accountability and follow-up. All of those will be put in place. That is where we are going. It is acknowledged in Thomas that we recognize that, and we are proceeding to do that.

The next question is in terms of the relationship between the department and the regions, that it has been improved and it is being strengthened.

The next question is whether there should be structural changes in terms of how the regions operate. At this point, I suggest we are going to continue along generally the same lines we are continuing along. There are some larger structural issues with respect to what should the Department of Health continue to deliver and the ramifications of how we deliver programs, if, in fact, we should deliver programs province-wide or not. There are a number of areas, for example, of personal care homes in the proprietary sector—that is the private personal care homes—which because of anomaly and policy decisions report directly to the Department of Health as opposed to the regions.

So really Manitoba is an amalgam of not total regionalization, but moving towards

regionalization. What we have done in office is try to move it more towards regionalization, try to strengthen the accountability and the relationships. We have better structural relationships with the regions. We are putting in place more definitive accountability guidelines with the regions, and we are going to restructure in order to try to move along in the direction that a department of health probably should move.

The option is to continue on this more half-regionalized, half-centralized model, or the other option is to do what other jurisdictions have done, go back totally to a centralized model and get rid of the regions. We made a policy decision to move towards regionalization and to move in a more incremental way, and that is how we are proceeding.

I know I talked long on this, but I wanted to suggest that the issue has been well appreciated by the department. One of the reasons that, for example, Ron Hikel, again, was brought in as a deputy minister last year was because of his understanding of organizational structure and the need to restructure organization. He began the process of the restructuring. Mr. Sussman is continuing the process and the fact that he comes from the regions is suggestive of the fact that we recognize the needs of the regions and that the department has to be addressed in a different fashion.

Mr. Gerrard: If I have been critical about the slow pace, it is in part because the first and significant element of that is the definition of the role of the minister and the role of the regions. It would seem to me that that is fundamental and that it is fundamental to have those definitions of responsibilities quite clear, in that although these are, in fact, evolving, the sooner that there can be really good clarity in the definition of the roles and the responsibilities that this would help the whole system.

When, may I ask, do you expect to have a clear definition of the relative roles?

* (17:30)

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I look forward to that as well, Mr. Chairperson, because as the Thomas commission pointed out, everything on occasion becomes the responsibility of the minister, and

on many occasions nothing becomes the responsibility of the minister. It is not clear.

Part of it is because it is an evolutionary role, and I can think of members sometimes who have suggested that I have done things deliberately or specifically with respect to operations in which I did not.

I agree, there are difficulties in clarification, but there are always going to be difficulties in accountability. I would think in the next 60 days, the structural changes will be in place. In terms of the definition of roles, that will follow shortly.

Mr. Gerrard: One of the changes that has been made, and the minister may or may not want to comment because this has now moved into another department, and that is the role of research. The funding of the Manitoba Health Research Council is now under Industry, Trade and Mines. The issue is is this going to be helpful or a problem.

Mr. Chomiak: The Manitoba Health Research Council is still funded by Health. I think the overall direction and the overall initiative in terms of the overall government approach to research is being co-ordinated by Industry, Trade and Mines. I stand to be corrected, but I think that is, in fact, the case.

Mr. Gerrard: Well, my reading of the Estimates was that it now appeared under Industry, Trade and Mines, but you can clarify that for me by more formally telling me what is happening, and maybe while we wait for some clarification on that you can bring me up to date on where you see the role of research in the health care system.

Mr. Chomiak: It is clear that research has a variety—the member knows better than I, insofar as the member was formerly the federal minister responsible for that—of functions, not only in terms of primary research, clinical research and that direct application, but it is a huge retention. It is a huge retention recruitment issue right now.

One of the difficulties I think we have in Manitoba—and I do not want to go too far down this road because it is co-ordinated by Industry Trade and Mines—is there is not necessarily as co-ordinated an approach to research across the province and across the spectrum as perhaps there ought to be.

I also know there has been a need for investment in research to take advantage of some of the initiatives that have taken place at the federal level and in order to take some of that funding and to utilize it in order to access additional funding. I have suggested, and I believe that it is of a significant nature across the spectrum of the health care system, both in a primary sense and in a clinical sense as well as a major factor in terms of retaining and recruiting specialists and expertise across the system. We have on occasion gone to some lengths in order to retain and attract people with research capabilities here, not enough, but we certainly have attempted to do that.

Mr. Gerrard: I would move to—unless the minister has some information with regard to the research funding. *[interjection]* Okay. A question raised in the Legislature a number of days ago had to do with the report based, I believe, on Canadian Institute for Health Information data which came out in the *National Post* and showed, as indeed the minister has commented, that per capita we spend more in public funds on health care in this province than in any other province. Now, when I raised it, the minister indicated that I was wrong. Maybe let me stop there and let the minister clarify this funding issue and the comparison of spending in Manitoba to other provinces.

Mr. Chomiak: I am not entirely certain what the member is referring to. If I said the member was wrong, I was referencing something the member had said other than that. I am aware of the fact that there have been several CIHI reports that showed Manitoba on a per capita basis, if it is not age data related, has spent more per capita than other jurisdictions. That I know in fact to be true. If I made reference to the fact the member was wrong, it would have been with some other aspect of his question, because unless I was totally out to lunch that day, which I admit might happen on occasion, that is my best recollection.

Mr. Gerrard: The question, then, in terms of how we compare to other provinces and cost issues are ones which are integral to the operation of the health care system in this province. I just would ask what the minister's approach is to cost issues and what the minister's plans are in relationship to cost efficiencies.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the issue of cost and cost efficiencies is pretty integral to the operation of the health care system. I think part of the direction at the federal-provincial level in terms of "report cards" is really a reference towards outcome measurements, and outcome measurements have to take place at all levels across the system. We are going to increasingly be under scrutiny in terms to justify program expenditures. We are developing at the Department of Health a similar capacity to do some of that work. I should just point out that the Manitoba Health Research Council is funded under 21.2.(g) in the Estimates book, page 53.

Mr. Gerrard: Under Health or under Industry, Trade?

Mr. Chomiak: Health.

Mr. Gerrard: Okay. The minister was in the midst of commenting on the approach to cost. The question would be: Where does the minister see that we will be going in the next few years under his leadership in terms of the cost of the health care system in Manitoba and how it will compare with other provinces?

Mr. Chomiak: Part of the exercise when we came in last year in terms of budget was to look at a consecutive year plan, a three-year plan. Last year we were concerned with augmenting the acute care side. This year was more of an emphasis on community-based and trying to move resources onto the community side and onto that particular side.

Next year we hope to continue that process. We do not think or expect that the rate of increase is sustainable beyond the growth of the provincial economy. It is going to be difficult. There are clearly needs for us to achieve some cost efficiencies. Some initiatives we have undertaken, we have some initiatives. I am not at liberty to actually talk about them at this point, but there are some issues that are addressing this issue.

One of the ones specifically I have been very vocal on is that one of the two leading cost drivers with respect to the health care system clearly is pharmaceuticals, not just on the Pharmacare side but the fact that pharmaceuticals on the acute-care side and in all

of the institutionalized side is growing at a double-digit inflation rate, as well. I have long felt that this requires actually a national initiative, but I have not quite succeeded in getting it on the national agenda to the extent that I would like.

I can indicate that the ministers of Health are specifically meeting in the middle of August, specifically at Manitoba's insistence to meet to discuss the joint efforts on dealing with pharmaceuticals. We identified pharmaceuticals this year as one of the key increases in the system for a number of reasons, not the least of which is our double-digit increases, but as well as the fact that the CIHI data indicate that for the first time last year and this year pharmaceuticals outstripped the cost of physicians services in the country.

* (17:40)

We are internally undertaking a number of measures with respect to cost containment. We have to the extent possible tried to put in strictures in terms of expenditures by the regions. We are trying to do what we can significantly on the pharmaceutical side, both internally and externally, to decrease the cost of pharmaceuticals, which frankly if you look across the system in terms of increases, if you look and if you do an analysis of the increases across the system, the two issues that stand out are, of course, wage increases, salary increases and pharmaceuticals, head and shoulders above, which suggests a number of things, not just increasing costs but frankly increasing demand, increasing utilization.

There is more clinical application of pharmaceuticals than ever before,. In fact pharmaceuticals form an integral part of that community-based system. So we have to come to grips with it and able to fund it, and at the same time we have to achieve some kind of cost controls in that area.

Mr. Gerrard: When one makes a comparison between Manitoba and other provinces, I am just wondering to what extent the minister has looked at that and to which areas on a per capita basis we spend relatively more than other provinces.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the two areas that actually stand out—going from memory—are the number of acute care beds per capita, as well as the number of personal care home beds per capita. We are quite high on both fronts.

We are also significantly, and I think this is not suggestive of a bigger problem. I think on the community side and expenditures on the community side, I think we stand out as higher than most jurisdictions, as well, and I think that is because of the richer programs that we offer on the community side and have in Manitoba. Going from memory, there is no doubt, there is absolutely no doubt that the acute-care beds and the personal care home beds are relatively high.

It does suggest, as well, that far be it—and we felt, and I felt, and I said publicly that we are not in the business of closing beds. Ergo, there are different initiatives that are being looked at by, say, the WRHA with respect to bed utilization in the city of Winnipeg in terms of achieving efficiencies, one of which is relatively controversial and while it is a proposal, it is a proposal that has been put forward with respect to family medicine beds in some of the community hospitals.

So to answer the member's question, it appears—and I am going from memory—that it is the bed issue that is significantly higher in Manitoba vis-à-vis other jurisdictions.

Mr. Gerrard: The Thomas report talked about overlap and duplication, and I think that the reference here was to what was done in Manitoba Health and what was done with the regional health authorities. I wonder what the minister is going to do in this area.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, we looked at that on coming into office, and that has been an issue of concern. Part of the transformation in the restructuring of Manitoba Health is to move from areas of delivering programs and doing things that are not appropriate to the Health Department and moving programs that are appropriate to the operators to do and making Manitoba Health function as the overseer, if I could put it in those terms, to capture a broad description of what Manitoba Health should be doing.

Mr. Gerrard: Earlier on, the minister made reference to cost-effectiveness comparisons

between the Pan Am Clinic as it is now to be run under a new model with the Western and Midland clinics.

Just looking at cost-effectiveness, Mr. Chairperson, clearly there are some issues in terms of what costs are included and what are not. I wonder if the minister would comment on how the comparisons are going to be made and what sort of costs will be included as costs of operating facilities.

Mr. Chomiak: I think that some of the financial officials that we have, both in the department and the WRHA, are in a far better position to do those comparisons than I, as well as the utilization where necessary of outside experts, as we did with the due diligence report and the third party report that was done by Pricewaterhouse in order to determine and outline those specific issues.

Mr. Gerrard: My follow-up question relates to when you are running facilities of this nature, the real goal, as I would see it, is to make sure that you have the real costs of doing operating procedures, and that it is important therefore to make sure that in the analysis there are not costs which are hidden because of the nature of the delivery model and that you can actually do a fundamental and precise, concise analysis which is meaningful. Perhaps you would comment.

Mr. Chomiak: Well, in fact, it goes further than that with respect to the broader question of the cost of the delivery model in terms of the public system, as well in the various institutions where the function is delivered. It requires a comparative analysis and an actual comparison of apples on apples with the pre-existing public system as well.

Mr. Gerrard: I take it to mean that you are going to embark on a unit cost pricing system for delivery of services in all institutions and not just in comparison of the surgery care model.

Mr. Chomiak: No, I do not think I am suggesting that broad a statement, but I am suggesting that we are trying, as a department and as regions, to get better information and better data with respect to the costs of what we do. And that as well is very clearly a recommendation in the Thomas report. And it was, as well, something that we observed upon coming into office, that we continue to require

work on with respect to proper accumulation of data and proper management tools being put in place in order to best determine how we should function in the health care system.

* (17:50)

This is not strictly a criticism of Manitoba as well, because it is very clear across the country and part of the exercise in the IT initiative that we undertook as a result of the agreement we entered with the federal government last fall, was nationally to do basically an IT network across the country, network is the wrong word, but an IT initiative in order to start to get common data and common information so we could use for comparative and management purposes and otherwise. We need to accumulate the basic information and utilize it across the system. So it is a broader question than just say go unit price model or, there is a broader issue that has to be dealt with as well that we have to undertake as a system.

Mr. Gerrard: In follow-up, I wonder if the minister has made or has asked the regions to provide any costing, unit costing, or service costing data.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, there are several templates that are being worked on across the regions with respect to pricing and costs. There are also several projects with respect to information systems that are in progress or will shortly be in progress with respect to some of those related issues.

Mr. Gerrard: I just ask the minister whether you have some examples of the types of data that you ask the regions to provide.

Mr. Chomiak: I am advised that the MIS data that has been produced for several years deals with acute care costs across the system in terms of acute care systems and PCHs across the system. I am also aware of several initiatives, some of the MDS data that we are utilizing both in home care and some of the pilot projects we are doing in terms of long-term care that are looking at broader than just the unit cost but in terms of the classification systems and the like. So there are some projects that are ongoing in that area.

Mr. Gerrard: The sort of costing initiatives that the minister talks about deal with a number of aspects of health care which are important. I just wonder if these would include things like administrative costs and so on for running the facilities as well as other aspects.

Mr. Chomiak: In theory and in fact that information is provided. But I know in point of fact that it is not necessarily as effective in terms of a comparative tool as we would like, because I have asked for that data. I have looked at some of that data. There are different accounting methods and different means of dealing with particular aspects of that.

I am not at all certain that we are at a point where we can give, in my view, an accurate comparative analysis of the administrative data across the system. It could be that the department feels we might be able to do that. From my perspective I am not entirely certain. That is just my take on it.

Mr. Gerrard: Just some of the information tools that the minister has within the health care system, an example, the ObTech system, which he used in the area of cancer care, has been used in other jurisdictions as a way of providing helpful information on costs. Let me ask the minister whether he would provide a comment.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes. The ObTech system certainly was pioneered, and it has been assessed. I hear very good reports in terms of the operations of the ObTech system. I hear one of the deficiencies of the ObTech system is the fact that we have not been able to get practitioners to fully utilize the ObTech system. It is a change in practice. It is a significant change. This never changes. This is always a perennial issue in health care. It costs a lot more than was anticipated in the first place to run and finance the ObTech system. So, yes, I am familiar with it.

I have always been a fan of off-the-shelf kind of applications of programs. If something works somewhere and if we can take it off the shelf and make it work here, then by all means we are going to go ahead. That has always been my particular preference. So that is my comment on the ObTech system.

Mr. Gerrard: The minister may actually know or not know that the ObTech system was actually developed here and was rather not off the shelf but was developed right to start. But the issue here is that it is an example of a tool that could be used for financial information and has been used elsewhere, but within the system as it is operating in Manitoba, it may be more difficult to do so just because of the historical nature of the way information has developed and the costing base has developed.

Mr. Chomiak: I followed the ObTech system since its inception in the '90s. Followed it with a good deal of interest, and it was interesting for me of course in becoming minister to have access to even more information in terms of how it functions and how it is applied. This area is rife with difficulties. It has been an area that we have pursued again. There are a number of initiatives that are required to be done in Manitoba and we are going to have to proceed on, and, hopefully, we can make some progress, in fact, this year in that area.

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

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

* (14:50)

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Education, Training and Youth.

As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will follow in a global manner with all line items to be passed once the questioning has been completed. The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Madam Chairperson, I just want to say that we are joined today by Ms. Pat Rowantree again, ADM for Training, Ms. Veronica Dyck, Mr. Claude Fortier and Dr. Gerald Farthing. I am very happy to have such capable staff joining us here today again.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Madam Chair, I would echo the minister's comments. We are very fortunate to have the kind of expertise from Manitoba Education and Training that we have in the room today. I want to thank all staff for taking the time to come. It is very much appreciated.

I want to thank the minister for allowing this global discussion because I would assume that we would be pretty close to finishing today because, you know, being able to do it in a global manner is helpful to get the things out of the road that need to be asked.

There are several questions that I wanted to go back to. The minister asked yesterday, Madam Chair, that we leave off the testing part because Sam had entered the room, and we were discussing the InForM Net yesterday. So as a result of that, I think I will start on a lighter subject and then get into finishing off the rest of it.

Madam Chair, I wonder if the minister would give me some information. I have heard a lot about the minister's background in terms of I know he studied education and has become the Education Minister. I know historically throughout Manitoba there are many people who have become Ministers of Education who actually never had any training in education, but you soon get caught up to speed because—

An Honourable Member: You have to.

* (15:00)

Mrs. Smith: Yes, you have to, plus the expertise in Manitoba Education and Training is there to assist people who are in the portfolios, and often ministers will have a multitude of portfolios. They might take Justice. They might take Finance. There are different things that we do so I would not want the minister to misinterpret what I am going to ask. I am just very, very curious because I have heard conflicting reports.

Madam Chair, would the Minister of Education be so kind as to inform the Committee of Supply what the minister's teaching background is? Please do not take that in any

of Supply what the minister's teaching background is? Please do not take that in any wrong or right way. It is just that I have heard conflicting things, and it is my understanding that the minister did substitute teach and did teach from time to time. He has experience in teaching, and I know from Manitoba Education and Training, the minister also had the experience of correcting I think it was Senior 4 exams, and so I think this is definitely a plus. I mean, sometimes people go into in to full-time education. I know the present minister has done other things, like become councillor in Brandon, and had different kinds of careers.

But I have been asked personally on different occasions, and I really do not have accurate information, so, Madam Chair, if the minister would be so kind to just inform the Committee of Supply what his teaching experience is in the classroom or otherwise.

Mr. Caldwell: No, I do not take the member's remarks about my educational background in this regard in an untoward manner. I know my predecessor, my good friend from Brandon, Jim McCrae, was a court clerk and served as Minister of Education, in fact, just before I received the portfolio. So I think there is some value in having a diversity of experience in various portfolios.

I guess I will spit it right out. I was born and raised in Brandon, born in 1960 and attended Park Elementary School which, at that time, was at the corner of 15th Street and Lorne Avenue. I live at the corner of 15th Street and Louise Avenue, and it is the previous home where my grandparents resided, my parents resided and now where I reside still to this day.

It partially was torn down in 1979, and actually it was kind of an unfortunate occurrence because the school was a turn-of-the-century Victorian structure with three storeys, quite massive, with a beautiful copula, and it was quite an architectural jewel in the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood I live in is a historic neighbourhood in Brandon, an area known as Rosser ward in the downtown area of Brandon, and the homes around there are 100 years or older generally. It is a very beautiful neighbourhood. At any rate, I attended Park School which is now gone, alas, and then Earl Oxford Middle School in Brandon, which was Earl Oxford

Junior High at that time and graduated from the public school system in Manitoba from Neelin High School in 1978 or '79. I did a B.A. Honours or Specialists degree from Brandon University, and I graduated there, I think, 1982. It was a four-year program and had a very active career at the University of Brandon with the students union, serving on the Senate and various committees, Board of Governors issues, student union issues, Senate issues and so forth, so got a pretty thorough understanding of the university sector from the student's perspective, not just a student's perspective from the classroom, but a student's perspective from the point of view of being very, very active.

I was involved in the provincial students' association, the national students' association—at that time, it was the National Union of Students; today it is the Canadian Federation of Students—which is a tremendous experience in terms of facilitating my understanding of universities and academic structures of universities, the political issues at universities which are, as the member knows, oftentimes quite crazy in terms of the politics of universities and colleges and so forth.

But, at any rate, I did have four years at a university and completed a specialist's degree in History, Canadian Studies, English and went from there to Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, where I did my Bachelor of Education degree and did my teacher training in a variety of school divisions in that part of Ontario and began my work career right after I finished my Bachelor of Education, with the Heritage Canada Foundation, actually. I did not go into a classroom right away after I completed my degree but took a job with the Heritage Canada Foundation in the city of Brandon working on projects that the Heritage Canada Foundation had across the country, the Main Street Canada program that Heritage Canada supported in communities across the country, which was basically business redevelopment in historic core areas of communities from coast to coast, worked in that capacity for some time.

Directly that was a result of my interest fundamentally in my previous undergraduate degree in history, but also the teaching skills, facilitation skills that you develop as part of your Bachelor of Education program which were

very, very, very helpful in terms of carrying forth the work of the business improvement area in downtown Brandon. I was very pleased to get a job back in my home community as well.

I subsequently moved into my next job after the Heritage Canada Foundation, which was working for Employment Services and Economic Security at that time. It would be the mid-'80s, I suppose, now. I was a facilitator for the International Youth Year, organizing and co-ordinating youth projects, primarily in high schools around the southern part of the province of Manitoba.

My region was quite extensive there. I think there were seven of us who were facilitators for the International Youth Year working for Employment Services and Economic Security. My region was from the Red River along the Trans Canada Highway and up the Yellowhead Route; so the Saskatchewan border, the Red River and the American border to the Yellowhead, Trans Canada. It was a huge route, and actually the amount of driving I did that year was extraordinary, and the number of high schools, particularly, which it took me into was extraordinary.

There were many, many youth projects organized by student councils, guidance counsellors, principals, school divisions all across the province. We had large projects in Minnedosa, Boissevain, Carman and a variety of other places around the province. I remember being in Deloraine and coming back at one point to Brandon, I had to stop the car. I had never been through such a huge dust storm in all my life. It was the mid-'80s period when it was so dry. I actually had to stop for about half an hour between, I think, Deloraine and Souris, because it was literally black-out conditions from a dust storm. I have never seen anything like that in my life. It would be all right if I did not see another dust storm like that in Manitoba in my life.

I guess that would be, I suppose, in the Manitoba context where I started interacting with the public school system. I would be in my mid-twenties, I suppose, at that time, through that employment.

Subsequently, I spent a year in the South Pacific in French Polynesia, Tahiti, Bora-Bora,

Raiatea, a number of islands in French Polynesia, New Zealand, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji and so forth, travelling by steamer, travelling by plane, travelling by thumb and car and boat and every other way for a year and came back to Canada at the end of that and attended McGill University doing graduate work in history for a couple of years.

Then my father passed away and I moved back to Brandon. I think that is when I applied for my Manitoba teacher's certificate at that time. Obviously, I had my Ontario teacher's certificate. So, again, it would be the mid- to late '80s, I suppose, now, and I began teaching in the Brandon School Division, Souris Valley, Rolling River, Sioux Valley First Nation. I am not sure if I was at Fort La Bosse or not; I cannot recall offhand, but doing substitute teaching as well as a number of other things.

I worked on contract with the Department of Education a few times, co-ordinating career symposiums in Brandon—which we still have—the career symposiums in Brandon and in Winnipeg which are tremendous opportunities for kids for career development and career education. So I was working in the classroom at this time, working for the department at this time on contract, and that occurred. That was my work environment for a number of years co-ordinating career symposiums, working in classrooms in a number of school divisions. I worked also during this time at Brandon University in a research capacity in the department of Economics for a period.

So I had pretty broad familiarity with the Department of Education and Training from my own work with the career symposiums, with the classroom through my work in a number of school divisions, both rural and urban and First Nations, and at the university in a research capacity, as well as a member of the executive of the Brandon University Alumni Association, and again, served on a number of board committees and so forth.

I was kind of fortunate coming into this job, as I mentioned earlier. My predecessor, Jim McCrae, was a law clerk coming into this position, and my experience was in the classroom working for the department, as well as

university. So it was quite broad, broader perhaps than somebody who would only be in the classroom; for example, or only be elsewhere, but it was quite broad. Of course, I was a city councillor during this time and had a number of contracts. I kind of prided myself on being self-employed and self-reliant. Oftentimes, we had six or seven T4 slips when I was doing my income tax.

As the member knows, I am a pretty avid traveller, so it also provided me to spend some time broadening my own experiences in Asia. I spent a year in India and Nepal, southeast Asia, a variety of countries in southeast Asia: Malaysia, Indonesia, and so forth. In September '99 I was—I was a city councillor during this time, too. My colleague from Brandon West just reminds me I was a city councillor in Brandon at this time, too, and a member of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities Board of Directors and MAUM and so forth.

* (15:10)

So it was quite a busy life and quite an entertaining time, or an interesting time, I should say, an interesting time in terms of the diversity of experience that I was fortunate enough to have.

Then in September of '99, of course, the election was held, and I was a successful candidate in Brandon East under the New Democratic Party banner. In October, I was appointed Minister of Education, and for most of October I felt like I had been hit by train, because it was quite a daunting task and responsibility and duty to be appointed Minister of Education.

The Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) is quite right. Without the extraordinary staff in the Department of Education, those of us who are privileged enough to occupy the office of the Minister of Education and Training in the province would certainly perish. The staff is very, very supportive and very, very professional, thoughtful in their work and certainly do provide the best advice possible on developing policy for educational excellence in the province.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

I asked to have my certificate brought in, and I have just been handed my certificate. I guess my certificate is TA35291 Manitoba Permanent Professional Education Certificate. Len Derkach was the minister who signed one of them, and I think I have an earlier one than that, too. It is quite a while since I have had my certification in the province of Manitoba.

My experience is quite eclectic, quite diverse, touches upon the department, touches upon public schools, touches upon universities, but it certainly is diverse. It has been broadened I will tell you, and the member will appreciate this, certainly been broadened by being appointed the minister. It is quite a privilege and quite an honour, but it is also quite a heavy workload as the member will appreciate.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I thank the minister for going all the way back to the date of his birth. Actually, I was born in Deloraine. *[interjection]* Yes, while I have not experienced that, but I know in a dry year you can encounter that, but thank you. As I say, I do recognize the fact that doing a multitude and a variety of things really does prepare you for work in public office. I know that a thank-you for being so candid about your teaching experience, which basically is as a part-time teacher, I understand, as a substitute, along with all your other things that you were doing at the same time—I thank you for sharing that and giving me some overview, because often when asked or comments are made, I really did not know the accurate information. Thank you for giving that.

I want to go on now. I know that yesterday I had asked that staffing from the different disciplines were asked to be here today. I noticed the Native Education Directorate is being represented. Could the minister advise whether the other disciplines will be here as well because what I wanted to do is just continue the global and get down on precise questions?

Mr. Caldwell: If the member would articulate who she would like specifically, we could get them. We could start with the Native Directorate first.

Mrs. Smith: My apologies, Madam Chair. We get talking back and forth. I am going to be going through all the disciplines this afternoon, because, as you know, our time is coming up pretty close with health care and with education. I wanted to be as precise as I could in my deliberations.

Mr. Caldwell: Would the member like all of the executive directors from all of the branches coming in or would the member like a certain number? We will get whoever the member would like.

Mrs. Smith: One person from each of the disciplines that the minister feels can answer questions. I picked out one or two questions from each area, just for clarification, because we have done a global discussion, and we have covered a lot of the areas. So as I said earlier, it is a little bit more concise when we do it this way. Most of it I understand. Having worked there, it has helped. I know the minister likes to have staff in when these questions are being asked. Is that appropriate, or maybe the deputy minister can answer the question?

Mr. Caldwell: No, that is fine. We can start with Ms. Dyck and move on. We will get the staff in so that we can perhaps conclude even today.

Mrs. Smith: As we go on and people come in, we will try too, because, I know it is twenty after three now, and I know we are going until six. So we will see how things go this afternoon. Thank you so much.

Madam Chair, in the Native Education Directorate, I am always keenly interested in the Native Education Directorate. I guess it is partially because, you know, our family is an amalgamated family. My daughter-in-law is an Ojibway girl, and two of my grandchildren are of mixed blood. I am very interested in the native education aspect and am a very strong supporter of the Native Education Directorate.

Yesterday when we were talking, Madam Chair, about the counts and the increase in salary, I noticed in the Native Education Directorate there is very, very, little difference in that area. I also know, Madam Chair, that I asked for a list of all department staff. I am

awaiting that, so I will not go through that aspect of it, because that is to be delivered to me by the end of July.

I did want to ask one question before we started, the boards and commissions, the minister had indicated that he would have the boards and commissions for me as early as possible. I wondered if that is ready yet?

Mr. Caldwell: The member might recall that I brought the boards and commissions into the Estimates a couple of periods ago.

Mrs. Smith: Yes, indeed, the minister did do that, and just to refresh the minister's memory, the salary ranges were not on the boards and commissions, and so the minister had taken back the list. He generously offered to give me the hard copy. So I am just wondering, Madam Chair, if the boards and commissions along with the salaries are ready to be given to me in the hard copy.

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, I believe that we can perhaps have the ranges right here today.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, going on to the Native Directorate, if the staff would be so kind as to just share some of the new initiatives that have evolved since last time we were together in Estimates. My understanding is it is a very well-organized directorate, with new initiatives that are reaching not only native children but also the public in general. So giving me the overview would be very helpful to better understand and keep me up to speed on what is happening with the Native Directorate.

Mr. Caldwell: I do appreciate being joined here by Veronica for dealing with this particular item in the Estimates book. Of course, the Native Education Directorate is a very important part of the work of the Department of Education and Training. Indeed, working with First Nations people, Aboriginal people, Métis people in our province is very much a task that is shared across government.

In terms of the Native Education Directorate in the department, of course we want to ensure an integrated approach to Aboriginal education and training within the Department of Education, Training and Youth as well as Advanced

Education to promote the removal of systematic barriers to students' success in education and training and to co-ordinate the implementation of the department's Aboriginal education and training framework.

There are a number of initiatives that are continuing, underway, and newly developed over the last 12 months since we were here last year, and the Native Education Directorate continues to play an important leadership role in policy development and in the co-ordination of departmental and interdepartmental initiatives that are relevant to Aboriginal students and communities.

* (15:20)

The highlights for recent efforts in this area include kindergarten to Senior 4 programs, as well as Training and Continuing Education programs, as well as Advanced Education programs, which I will not go into because most of those would have been covered by my colleague the Honourable Diane McGifford in terms of her Estimates, I expect, if those questions were asked. What I will review here are not exhaustive but are meant to illustrate the significant broad initiatives as well as those activities that are more focussed in nature that have been undertaken this year, and as I mentioned earlier, are continuing.

In the kindergarten to Senior 4 section, in terms of highlights or illustrations of initiatives, the School Programs Division continues to ensure that all new curriculum developed is inclusive of and reflects Aboriginal perspectives and experiences in that curriculum. Equally important is the recognition that non-Aboriginal students benefit from such an inclusive curriculum as well as do Aboriginal students as it challenges stereotypes and misinformation about Aboriginals and their history in our province and more broadly in our society.

In addition, The Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant, the AA grant, formerly the English Language Enrichment for Native Students, is entering its second transition year and has been refocussed to support flexibility for school divisions to better meet the needs of Aboriginal students. That program has been very, very well received.

The Western Canadian Protocol Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs was released in the fall of 2000. A survey and consultation session are occurring and are underway right now to determine priority areas for the development of Aboriginal language programming in Manitoba. That is a very, very exciting new initiative. It is something that is broadly supported through the Western Canadian Protocol framework for the western Canadian provinces and territories.

The Native Education Directorate, School Programs Division and Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, as well as the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents are collaborating on an information exchange with Saskatchewan, which again is a broadly representative group, to place a perspective on Aboriginal education, perhaps with some new program ideas being developed in Saskatchewan and providing opportunities for Manitoba and the superintendents as well as the principals, administrators, school trustees and so forth to broadly be made aware of successful initiatives in Saskatchewan and generate some new ideas and perhaps avoid some pitfalls that perhaps have already been experienced with our neighbour to the west.

An Aboriginal consultant has also been hired to do research and preparation for the Cree bilingual program at Mystery Lake, in Mystery Lake School Division in Thompson. This position is funded through a tripartite agreement among Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, the Keewatin Tribal Council and the Mystery Lake School Division in Thompson. So there are a number of initiatives underway. As I said, there is a broad spectrum. I want to give a localized perspective of the initiative in Mystery Lake, a broader interprovincial perspective, which is achieved through the Western Canadian Protocol framework, Madam Chair, as well as the Saskatchewan exchanges and so forth and some of the more focused programs in the K to 12 area.

In Training and Continuing Education, the department has consulted and issued a new policy on adult learning centres, which includes a funding and accountability process. The policy

emphasizes the need for centres to be responsive to specific community needs and to partner with relevant community organizations to meet those needs. Centres in northern Manitoba and in Winnipeg's inner city, which typically have high Aboriginal representation, played a significant role in the consultation process around the development of a new policy that is program based on adult learning centres.

In the area of adult literacy, as a support to adult literacy practitioners and volunteers integrating Aboriginal perspectives and providing literacy upgrading, a professional development course with a northern focus entitled *Introduction to Teaching Literacy to Adults* will be highlighted. It has been developed in both Web-based form and correspondence format. This adult literacy area places a premium on Aboriginal perspectives and integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the current literacy upgrading programs offered by the province.

Apprenticeship has also taken a number of recent very exciting initiatives. In partnership with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the branch has hired a consultant to undertake a study, with recommendations for an Aboriginal apprenticeship strategy, including the First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations in Manitoba in this particular strategy. I understand that this is the first time such a comprehensive strategy has been undertaken by the branch. The branch is currently working with colleges as well to deliver community-based technical training in First Nations communities broadly throughout Manitoba.

Training is also set to begin in a kind of a micro-context. Training is also set to begin for female cabinet makers under a new arrangement with the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development, or CAHRD, in Employment and Training Services of the province of Manitoba.

Financial and income support is being provided to the Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Career Awareness Committee to operate internship programs and offer Aboriginal awareness presentations to students, educators, organizations and the business community in Manitoba and support the organizing of school career fairs in remote and northern communities.

Certainly you know after my earlier comments about co-ordinating career symposiums in Brandon, it is very, very easy for young students in western Manitoba and the south of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg to have access to career-based information on education. It is not always very easy for that same information to be transmitted to students in our northern and Aboriginal communities. So this is something that is very near and dear to my heart as a former career symposium co-ordinator.

Through the support of Neighbourhoods Alive!, the Urban Circle Training Centre, a community-based, non-profit organization, has received funding for a family support worker training certificate program and a health care aide course for 44 inner-city Aboriginal women and men in Winnipeg. The centre partners with Red River College to provide for both programs. This is a very exciting initiative in terms of breaking down institutional silos in providing opportunities for Aboriginal Manitobans, as I said, in terms of support worker and health care aides.

Plans for full-time employment within the inner-city area upon completion of this program has been an integral part of the planning process. So it is really education and career opportunity wrapped into one. Industry human resource committees and industry partnerships supported by Workforce Manitoba are actively working on initiatives to recruit, train, employ and retain Aboriginal people in the province. These include partnerships with Canadian manufacturers and exporters, the Manitoba Tourism Education Council, the Manitoba Fashion Institute, the North West Company as well as other interested parties.

* (15:30)

Employment training has also signed a protocol agreement with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs which establishes a working agreement on shared clients. Efforts are underway to establish similar agreements with the Manitoba Metis Federation and the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development. As well, ETS funds a number of projects targeting Aboriginal clients generally. All of these are very exciting opportunities for Aboriginal Manitobans. Some of them are

continuing programs from previous governments. Some of them are new initiatives that have been undertaken by this present Government. All of them, I believe, are very positive initiatives facilitated by a very lean and active branch of the Department of Education and Training. I thank the branch for their hard work in this area.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the minister. As did the previous government, this Government is really supporting the Native Directorate. I am very, very happy to hear that. One other question that I have, you talked about Thompson and you talked about up north, and the minister talked about inner city, Madam Chair. I was wondering: Has there been any initiative to train teachers teaching in all public schools across Manitoba about the culture and the, I suppose the culture more than anything else, of Aboriginal students who come into classrooms?

I will give an example for the minister. For instance, my own granddaughter goes to a school that is, what I would say, probably predominantly a white school. I remember when I was teaching I had Aboriginal children in my classroom. I was very careful as a teacher at that time to integrate in the regular classrooms an understanding and a knowledge about the Aboriginal cultures across our nation and across Canada. Have there been any special initiatives to train teachers how to understand and work with Aboriginal cultures, because Aboriginal children are very proud of their culture, as are Chinese children and as are Ukrainian children. I was wondering if there are any special initiatives that have been started or perhaps will be started in the future in that area.

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate the question. I know that when I had occasion to teach at Sioux Valley First Nation just west of Brandon, my background at that time, this is a number of years ago now, in terms of studying at the Brandon University, which included courses in native studies, provided me personally with some insight from an academic way and, of course, also from the fact that I lived in downtown Brandon and that I had experience with an urban environment that I grew up in. That also had some sensitivity for me. Things have changed a lot since that time, where there has been far more integration. Successive

governments have put into place practices to enhance opportunities both for teacher training and for Aboriginal contact with the public education system. Of course, there is always the federal-provincial jockeying that goes about with the federal responsibility for reserves and so forth which complicates matters somewhat.

I know that the branch offers summer institutes for teachers, professional development opportunities for teachers in Winnipeg and in Thompson to develop such an integrated view on perspectives. Winnipeg is integrating Aboriginal perspectives quite well. Thompson and Manitoba culture is doing likewise with regard to First Nations languages, Aboriginal cultures and language. Individual faculties of education offer programs, from time to time, around the issue of cultural awareness, cultural knowledge and education. I know individual school divisions also offer opportunities from within their authority.

As the member knows, Winnipeg Children of the Earth and Niji Mahkwa School are fundamentally centred around First Nations culture, and those have been very, very interesting developments in Winnipeg vis-à-vis integrating Aboriginal perspectives and, I daresay, more than integrating but having Aboriginal perspectives the central focus of the learning that goes on in Niji Mahkwa and Children of the Earth.

The School Programs Division also offers professional development opportunities for teachers in this regard on a fairly regular basis throughout the school year in terms of professional development in-services and so forth. So a lot of this work that has been going on as a matter of course in the department for a number of years under both our governments' administrations continues. Certainly we are always looking, I think, in the province for ways to enhance these developments, particularly in the inner city of Winnipeg and in the North, but more broadly across the province. So it is something that I think we should not and ought not—better—shy away from and rather enhance our opportunities to do so.

As I said, many school divisions are. The department, School Programs branch is; the

universities as a teacher, faculties of education at universities do make somewhat of an effort. I know that historically this has not been central, but I think, over the last decade or so, it has been very much more of a focus. Maybe I am selling it short by a decade, but it is even within my lifetime that there has been a real push, both locally in the divisional context, the provincial context, and the national context even, to undertake more culturally sensitive programs for teachers as part of their training.

The Native Education Directorate also supports the Aboriginal Teachers' Circle in planning professional development opportunities specifically, like the Aboriginal Education Conference which actually was held last October—[interjection]—national conference in the city of Winnipeg that was held last October, which I actually attended a piece of. It was great.

Mrs. Smith: It is really good to see this minister supporting the Native Directorate. Certainly members on this side of the House are in full support of working with the Native Directorate and expanding it and taking the expert advice of the staff that is there in the directorate because they are extremely capable and extremely knowledgeable about what is needed out there for Aboriginal students, teachers and others.

I know that we have a lot right now to get through, and I do not mean to prolong this exercise, but I just really commend the staff of the Native Directorate and the people that are there for the work they are doing. It is marvellous. I think we will go on to another section and I want to especially thank you, Veronica, for coming today.

Mr. Caldwell: Could I ask the member what section and I will get the staff here?

Mrs. Smith: I think we will finish off on the testing because Gerald Farthing is here and is an expert in that area. I had some questions in Research and Planning, some questions in Division Administration, and of course Assessment and Evaluation we can do right now.

Mr. Caldwell: Just to clarify, Research and Planning and—

Mrs. Smith: Well, Assessment and Evaluation, Doctor Farthing is here, so we will start with that, and then we will go into Research and Planning and then following that I would like to go into School Programs and program implementation, both those areas, to be specific—

Mr. Caldwell: I think the member was just going to respond to be specific.

* (15:40)

Mrs. Smith: Trying to get all of this out so we do not hold anybody up. I did want to do some questions, Madam Chair, on International Education, Community Learning and Youth Programs, I have my sticky so I know, and I want the Stevenson Aviation Centre, I will have some questions on that. Employment and Training, and as I said there are maybe two questions because most of it I already know. I do want to ask some questions on the Forum of Labour Market Ministers' Secretariat and I think that pretty well covers what is needed this afternoon. So Research and Planning would be the next one. Depending on what staff can get here, I am flexible on who goes first.

Mr. Caldwell: Doctor Farthing is here, maybe we could put the Research and Planning, we could get staff here for that in 20 minutes or half an hour or something like that. So maybe if we could just move to Mr. Farthing, Doctor Farthing I should say.

Mrs. Smith: Are you talking about Assessment, Evaluation and Research and Planning following that and one crucial one is the Stevenson Aviation. I want to cover that today or else we will have to come back.

Mr. Caldwell: That is agreeable. We can begin with Doctor Farthing and then move into the Research and Planning area and see where we are in terms of time at that point.

Mrs. Smith: We will continue on in Assessment and Evaluation. We were talking the other day about the Grade 3 assessment. We had completed our discussions in that area and then Mr. Steindel came in to talk about Long Distance Education and Distance Delivery, so we cut off at that point.

If I may, Madam Chair, I would like to start with Assessment and Evaluation and I would like to ask the minister what is the intent of the Grade 6, Senior 1 and Senior 4 testing procedure that we have in place now? Could the minister please inform the Committee of Supply if the intent of members opposite is to keep Grade 6 testing optional, Senior 1 optional and Senior 4 mandatory, or what is happening in those areas?

Mr. Caldwell: When we came into office as a new government in September, 1999, our commitment was to replace the Grade 3 standards test, the end-of-year standards tests with an early-year assessment of the child in terms of numeracy and literacy competencies. We did discuss that quite extensively the other day when we were in Estimates. That was a commitment in that area.

What we determined following a review generally of the standardized testing protocols that had been in place for the last number of years in the province was, we would continue with the previous government's approach and retain the Grade 6 standards test and the Senior 1 standards test as they were when we came into office, and that is optional, and maintain the Senior 4 standards test as a mandatory test. So there is no change in those areas.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, in terms of the implementation of the tests, will Manitoba Education, Training and Youth develop the tests and continue to send them out to the field as that was done previously, or will the Government extend the invitation to teachers to develop their own tests in those areas?

Mr. Caldwell: The Grade 6, Senior 1 and Senior 4 standards test will continue to be developed by the department this year. In Grade 6, English Language Arts, français langue, French as a First Language and French as a Second Language tests are all being made available through the department. Senior 1 Mathematics, the same. Senior 4, standards tests again administered in: English Language Arts, French As a First Language, French as a Second Language Immersion, Pre-calculus Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Consumer Mathematics will be developed within the department.

Mrs. Smith: I was looking at the Assessment and Evaluation under Other Expenditures and I

was noticing that on the Transportation line, there seems to be quite an increase in dollars in transportation in Assessment and Evaluation. Could the minister please explain why this is necessary?

Mr. Caldwell: While staff confers a bit, I just wanted to introduce Mr. Henri Grimard from the Bureau de l'éducation française, who is responsible for some of the testing assessment there, who has joined us at the table. I thank Henri for coming, and Jean Vianney too. Thank you very much.

With regard to the transportation, it is the realignment of expenses, given that the 2000 year was a pilot focussed quite narrowly and this year moving to a province-wide assessment, a broadly based assessment throughout the province. That is the relationship to the increase in travel, I am advised.

I should also add perhaps that Ray Genest also joins us from BEF.

Mrs. Smith: Welcome. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to come today. We are trying to do some global questioning to sort of streamline. As you know, I used to work at Manitoba Education and Training, and a lot of the things that I see are self-explanatory so we are not going line by line. It is not necessary to do that. It is just when unusual things are happening that I query about. I think the minister and I have spent quite a few hours around this table already, and it has been a pleasure.

Madam Chair, I would like to ask also about the Communication line. There is a huge difference in Communication, \$256,900. That is a lot of money. Could the School Programs Assessment and Evaluation team explain why we have that marked increase?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, part of it is moving to the province-wide for the S4. Another part of it is the survey that we referred to a couple of sessions ago with the Estimates, the 14 000-odd survey sheets that were distributed to Grade 3 teachers and parents across the province. So it is related to the broadening of the S4 from pilot to province-wide and the consultation on Grade 3 assessment.

* (15:50)

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, thank you for that answer. That reminded me to ask the minister for a synopsis of the results. Is it possible to get a synopsis of the results of that survey that was distributed to Grade 3 teachers?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, it is. If we are still here tomorrow, I will bring one in with me.

Mrs. Smith: Again I have another question under Professional Services. There is quite a marked increase in dollars toward Professional Services in Assessment and Evaluation. Could the minister, Madam Chair, please elaborate on why this occurred this year?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, again, it involves the moving from a focussed pilot to a province-wide standards tests in Senior 4, the increase in professional services due to contract work and fee-for-service costs for teachers and so forth, moving from a small focus to a small pilot with an arrow focussed to a province-wide standards test.

Mrs. Smith: So I take that as meaning professional services, Madam Chair, of outside experts in testing and design. Would that be what the minister is referring to or would it be something else?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, paying for teacher release time, travel time, accommodations and so forth.

Mrs. Smith: So, having said that, what would be classified under "other" because there is quite a difference there too, if you added up, Madam Chair, the 203.2 and the 43.7?

Mr. Caldwell: It is part of a realignment to reflect in a more accurate way the budgeting for this part of the School Programs branch. The increase and decrease to the bottom line more accurately reflects the current spending pattern that has resulted from the changes in activity that have occurred in the branch in the last couple of years. So the number for 2001, the amount budgeted for, \$203,000. In 2001-2002 it is \$43.7 million. The remaining \$160,000 would have been better reflected in the global budget and

more accurately and correctly in the line items, and that is part of the understanding gained through the pilots and so forth.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I am interested in hearing, in Assessment and Evaluation under Activity Identification, one of the activities was in partnership and in-house to develop courses in print and electronic formats for distance learning delivery.

Could the staff please elaborate on that? Are they specific courses or specific programs, or what basically was this activity and who was the partner with? Does in-house mean at Manitoba Education, Training and Youth?

Mr. Caldwell: We are developing protocols in S3 and S4 Math with a number of partners. There are a number of divisions this year that we are partnering with. I will get a number in just a second. This year partnering with 12 divisions and next year 7 divisions, and I thank Doctor Farthing for being so patient with me as I am asking him these questions. There is also a number of in-service opportunities and in-servicing that is taking place across the province.

Mrs. Smith: At this time could we talk about the Senior 4 document in terms of the local and school-initiated courses? There seems to be a trend toward an expanding of the school-initiated courses and student-initiated projects and technology education courses. So it is my understanding that for a student to graduate from Senior 4 they can be allowed a certain amount of student- or school-initiated courses.

Could the minister please elaborate on the intent, No. 1, of the recent document that went out on the Senior 4 school-initiated and student-initiated projects? What are the criteria for acceptance of these projects as a requirement for graduation from Senior 4?

Mr. Caldwell: The courses that are developed are submitted to the department for their review and checked against outcomes and the appropriateness of the proposal by individual school divisions. The department obviously does not accept every course that comes before it. In fact, it is very, very rigorous on its assessment of the criteria of the course. It is to allow for some

broader flexibility at the local level in developing programs and courses that meet the needs of students in an appropriate way in Manitoba.

I do not know if there is much more to add to that, other than I have heard in my visits to schools and school divisions across the province that most divisions find this to be a very, very good opportunity to take advantage of local situations in developing opportunities for their students in the regions, a variety of regions of the province. The department is engaged in the review and approval in a very meaningful way. Without that review and approval of course the courses do not count for credit.

Mrs. Smith: Could the minister outline any criteria or protocol that has been put in place so schools across the province and students across the province know what criteria they have to fit before they can submit a student initiated or a school initiated project into Manitoba Training and Youth so they will have a clear picture? The reason why I am asking this is, students and schools need to have a clear picture of what is expected. If I were a principal of a school and I had some school-initiated courses, I would want to know before putting all that time into it that it is meeting the criteria that are there. If a very progressive student came up, for example, and they wanted to have a student initiated course approved, what criteria or what protocol is in place right now that they could use as a pattern?

Mr. Caldwell: I will respond to that. Before I do, I just want to clarify a remark made earlier. I talked about the partnership with the 12 divisions this year and 7 divisions next year. That is for the electronic format for delivery. There are a number of other divisions who are partnered with the division in terms of print formats.

In terms of the specific question that was just asked, there is a template that the department has for the development of courses. The template is provided so that school divisions, in developing their courses, do know the criteria that need to be addressed in the development of the course. The whole process and the template are currently under review. I think it has had some media attention relatively recently and since Christmastime around the

issue of this sort of delivery of courses developed by divisions for students around the province of Manitoba.

The template and the criteria that are expected by divisions in developing their courses are available so that the difficulties that the member speaks to in developing and spending a lot of time developing a course then finding out that it is not acceptable does not happen. I do appreciate that. It would be an awkward system if that indeed were the case. There are criteria and a template that are provided to divisions in terms of what the expectations are.

Staff just advises me that there has been a pretty good learning curve over the last number of years as this has developed. The quality of material coming in to the department has improved dramatically from school divisions in this regard. I am also advised that on occasion where there is just a little bit more work required the department will work with the division directly if asked to on this. It is a limited number because of the volume that one could get. But, if there is a program being developed in the local school division that is just about there, the department will assist the division in terms of reviewing consultative advice and so forth.

* (16:00)

Mrs. Smith: I was wondering if the minister would be so kind to provide me with an example of both those templates, the student-initiated template and the school-initiated template. That would allow for me to better understand what is going on right now.

Madam Chairperson: The honourable minister. Sorry, the honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mrs. Smith: Thank you. I had one more thing in addition. Who evaluates when school-initiated programs come to Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, and when a school-initiated project comes into the department? Is there a set group of people who evaluate these student- or school-initiated programs? Who is at the head of the helm to evaluate that so there is consistency in that area as well?

Mr. Caldwell: Joyce MacMartin in the program development area reviews the material that comes in, and I would be pleased to provide the member with the material given to school divisions on course development.

I hesitate to do this, but could we take a five-minute?

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to take a five-minute recess?
[Agreed]

The committee recessed at 4:04 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:13 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: Will the committee please come to order.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): I appreciate the opportunity once again to ask questions of the minister in regard to education and training as it pertains to Portage la Prairie.

Stevenson Aviation relocated to Portage in 1992 and has since then been a success story. The job opportunities that are available through industry right now in the aircraft maintenance engineering field have just exploded. I understand by the minister's press release that that program for the aircraft maintenance engineering is going to be expanded to another location in Winnipeg and also adopt a diploma-style program in conjunction with the existing apprenticeship program that is ongoing in Portage la Prairie with Stevenson Aviation.

I would like to ask the minister in regard to the expansion of the programming into the diploma style of aircraft maintenance engineer instruction, that meaning two years versus four-year apprenticeship where you get the theory and lab up front and your on-the-job training after the diploma has in fact been garnered. Is that going to be offered in Portage la Prairie as well, or is the diploma program exclusive to the Winnipeg site?

Mr. Caldwell: The program is formulated a little differently in Winnipeg than it is in

Portage, and there is an alignment with Red River that is unique as well to the Winnipeg context. So at present the plans are of the department to retain the Diploma Program in Winnipeg only. I know that Southport is near and dear to the member's heart being in his constituency, and, as I mentioned earlier yesterday, as a constituency-centred representative myself, I appreciate the member's ongoing interest in Stevenson. It is certainly something we have discussed many, many times over the 18 months that I have been here. I appreciate his interest in Stevenson and indeed in his constituency, because it is a similar dedication that I have to Brandon East. So, at Southport, the department advises that there is not enough capacity in the program or in the infrastructure, as well, for this sort of program, so the Diploma Program is centred in Winnipeg only at this time.

Mr. Faurshou: Capacity limitations are perhaps in the eyes of the beholder, and those that are in charge of Southport Aviation would like to debate that particular capacity because there is one hangar still on line there that could very easily be renovated and placed into the available chart for Stevenson Aviation's use. I would like though to ask the minister: In regard to the very expensive nature of creating the equipment for the laboratory component, is the minister considerate of that element being enhanced in Portage la Prairie that could be used by the Diploma stream as well, rather than recreating lab facilities in both Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie?

Mr. Caldwell: There has been some replication obviously in the two facilities at Southport and Winnipeg. The primary factor in the Winnipeg decision is to maximize industry contributions and industry opportunities. Certainly this has been a major topic of discussion with the aerospace industry in Winnipeg and their desire is to focus as much as possible within easy access of Winnipeg International Airport. So we are conscious of the pressures on the system both at Southport and in Winnipeg and are conscious of the program offerings in both Winnipeg and Portage that do complement and support the aerospace industry as well as employment and training opportunities for Manitobans.

The primary factor in that regard though is the industry partnership that is involved. We have tried to maximize, as much as we can as a government, and, I think, as an industry, opportunities in Winnipeg and around Winnipeg International Airport. The size of the new Winnipeg program is quite large. The first program intake is planned for 2002 with three intakes of 16 students each in year 1 and new intakes of 80 students annually by year 2, to a total enrolment of 150 students annually by year 3 and 175 students annually by year 5 of the initiative, which should produce between 275 and 300 new licensed aircraft maintenance engineer personnel for the industry in Manitoba by the end of year 5.

It is a very, very dramatic increase in aircraft maintenance engineer training for the province of Manitoba, to support industry in Manitoba and support the aerospace industry in Manitoba and to support the opportunities for Manitobans to achieve success in cutting edge jobs in the aerospace industry.

* (16:20)

Mr. Faurchou: I appreciate the information that the minister has provided and, it is indeed, an area of explosive employment opportunities. I do not know if the minister is aware, that south of the border the settlement that was achieved recently, if converted to Canadian dollars, a fully qualified and experienced aircraft maintenance engineer for some disciplines now receives, in Canadian dollars, over a \$130 thousand annually. So one can appreciate that those kinds of wages are achieved in times of demand and shortages of qualified individuals.

I want to stress, though, insofar as maximizing the resources already at the avails of the Department of Training through Stevenson Aviation, and I mean, specifically, of some of the laboratory acquisitions that have been made over the last number of years that are available in Portage, that perhaps duplication is much more expensive for a Winnipeg site, rather than the class potentially taking the trip to Portage la Prairie to have that lab in an evening or a weekend. I leave that with the minister to consider. I will also say that Stevenson in Portage has expanded and has asked Southport

Aerospace for an additional three classrooms. So renovations are underway and, I believe, the working agreements are one of a positive nature for both concerned.

Now, in regard to the overall doubling of the Stevenson Aviation and the administration of that doubling, can you share with me, specifically the administration, and how those bodies are going to be allocated to Portage versus Winnipeg, and under which jurisdiction they are going to be under, whether it be Red River, or under the Advanced Education portfolio, or whether they are going to be under Stevenson Aviation, which is in the Education and Training portfolio?

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate the member's remarks on Stevenson in Portage. I know I have had a number of occasions to visit Southport in the last 18 months, and, certainly, I am impressed with the facilities that are in Southport. I do think it is important to assure the member that we are interested, as a government, in maintaining Southport as a viable entity and have no intention of doing otherwise.

One of the initiatives that is being undertaken in government is a determination to increase the international component of students, and, perhaps, there will be an opportunity for some of those students to come to Portage. I believe my colleague in Advanced Education made similar remarks in her Estimates. We are interested in developing further possibilities in Portage la Prairie and around Southport in developing that resource, because it is an extraordinary facility. I certainly enjoy visiting out there. In fact, one of my cousins lives in Southport. It is some place that I do enjoy visiting.

With regard to the program management there will not be two departments. We are there are two management teams managing this program, but we are, as a department, discussing the matter with Red River College as to how the best administrative structure could be formulated, recognizing the distances between the two infrastructures. We do have many, many examples in Canada, in Manitoba, and elsewhere, where widely ranged, in terms of geographic space, is managed by one

management system, and that is certainly what we want to achieve in the aerospace industry as well.

Mr. Faurischou: I appreciate, once again, the remarks, the amenities which the minister has mentioned which, from the perspective of a student, are enormous. Anyone having the opportunity to go to Southport, which is a retired military base, has almost anything that one can consider to provide for a student in enhancing the environment in which that student has the opportunity to learn.

So anyone who has come to Portage la Prairie in recent times, they had an open house at Stevenson Aviation. They said that that was a superb day, and the students who came out there and actually saw what was there, they were really impressed and they certainly said that was their first choice to go and take their programming there. So that is why I ask. Even of the diploma nature, there are persons who are considerate of that stream of education for the aircraft maintenance engineer, if you could consider, because much of the classroom is similar to that of the diploma. It is just a matter of structure, the time frame in which you receive that course material. The course material is virtually the same. So I am sure with minor modifications the diploma program could, in fact, be offered in Portage la Prairie as well.

As far as the management and administration of it, I will say that at present under the Education and Training portfolio, Stevenson Aviation has been able to achieve enormous recognition, not only just in Canada but worldwide for their ability to produce high-quality individuals for the aircraft maintenance engineering field. They were recently written up in the aviation magazine with a ranking that would put them in the top three within the country. That is really to be recognized and a credit to the individuals who are involved at present and in the past.

I would like to leave it with the minister that if he has not had yet the opportunity to fully go through the Southport facilities and those areas which we could consider additional capacity, I would encourage him to do so and would introduce him to Mr. John Pitman [*phonetic*],

who is the CEO of Southport Aviation incorporated.

I leave that with the minister for final comment and would like to thank my honourable colleague from Fort Garry for the opportunity this afternoon.

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate that. I do know Mr. Pitman [*phonetic*] and have had occasion to discuss Stevenson and Southport with him. Certainly the staff and management at Southport are very competent and very capable, are very excited and have been excited and enthusiastic about Southport and the development of Stevenson for a number of years since Southport was divested from federal responsibility to provincial. I think there has been a lot of very positive economic development, generally, at Southport and specifically in terms of the Education file through Stevenson Aviation at Southport.

In global terms, in 1999, again just previous to my appointment, previous to the election, a study commission by the previous administration did identify a critical skill shortage of trained aircraft maintenance engineers, Madam Chair, within Manitoba's aviation industry and, as the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurischou) also notes, internationally. I know that having salaries of \$120,000, \$130,000 U.S. is certainly attractive to every single one of us in this room who are making substantially less than that. There are about 20 people in the room here, so we are all kind of smiling. It is interesting to be turning and creating job opportunities for young Manitobans who are far younger than us who will be soon making far more than us in this industry nationally, internationally. So it is an exciting opportunity for young Manitobans. It is an exciting opportunity for the industry in this province. In Manitoba the demand for aircraft maintenance engineers is projected to be in excess of 825 new hires over the next five years. So even at a dramatically increased rate of training there still is some capacity for growth in this particular sector.

* (16:30)

In Manitoba, Air Canada represents the majority of the total demand, as I believe the

member does know, but the Manitoba demand does mirror as well a global skill shortage in the aviation industry caused by things we are commonly familiar with, such as accelerating attrition rates, the booming industrial growth in this sector, as the member referred to, and fewer new interests to the industry, something that with this new training strategy we are seeking to reverse and indeed provide more entrance opportunities for Manitobans into this particular industry.

Just to give a broader perspective, the training for this sector and the aerospace sector is currently provided by Stevenson Aviation in terms of aviation maintenance; Red River College in terms of aerospace manufacturing; and the University of Manitoba in terms of engineering as well as various secondary level co-operative education programs that industry has undertaken in partnership with the educational sector. Education and training capacity is not sufficient to meet current and future industry demand. I think that has been broadly recognized by both of our administrations, the previous government and this Government, and that is why I think we are putting intense focus on this particular sector.

The continuing shortage of skilled aircraft maintenance engineers is impacting on industry growth and business development plans in Manitoba and has threatened the current and future competitiveness of this sector in Manitoba. This is something that is very, very important for the Government to invest in. This is cutting edge technology in an environment, in an industry that is undermanned right now with future projections for increasing opportunity looking outward to the future five-ten years.

The Province, in collaboration with Stevenson and industry stakeholders as well as Red River College, has embarked upon the \$7.5-million training expansion strategy that was announced. I think I was out at Winnipeg International Airport about a month ago with the Premier on this particular announcement, which was a very exciting day. There were many, many students there as well as many instructors as well as many members of industry in that huge, immense Air Canada maintenance hangar at Winnipeg International Airport.

The key thrust of the initiative which industry has been very, very, very bullish in promoting our new training programs to meet industry demand is the integration of existing training capacity between Stevenson and Red River expanding their capacity. I take the remarks about the Portage infrastructure seriously. If there are opportunities I think that we would be well advised to pursue them. The acquisition of new training facilities in Winnipeg is largely incumbent upon industry requests and industry offer of providing infrastructure for these programs. We are, as I mentioned, leveraging from industry as much support as we can from them in a meaningful way through infrastructure and so forth.

The two new programs which were announced will be a 14-month aircraft maintenance engineer, general maintenance, diploma, as the member was referring to the two-month program, and a three-year aircraft maintenance engineer air frame structures apprenticeship program. The impact positions Manitoba industry for a new area of growth in this particular sector and provides new training and job opportunities for Manitobans obviously in a high-skill area with well-paying jobs which we have referred to and are envious of, in response to immediate local demands as well as future job needs with potential for other economic spinoffs in the aerospace sector, which is a pretty dynamic and exciting and growing sector. It also supports happily the College Expansion Initiative that is a cornerstone of this Government's commitment to post-secondary education in the province and expands apprenticeship training in the province, which is a happy thing for me, being the minister responsible for apprenticeship and a happy thing for my colleague the Honourable Diane McGifford, who is responsible for the College Expansion Initiative.

So it is pretty broad. It is pretty exciting, and there are, as the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou) advocates, opportunities for south Portage as well. So I am cognizant of them. I think that south Portage is extremely viable and we do wish to maintain it and enhance it as a government. I know, and I am very confident, that the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou) will continue to meet

with me on a regular basis to make his case. I am pleased to know he just noted that I can count on that and I appreciate that, because it is always a pleasure to talk about south Portage. Maybe we will get out there together some day in the future. I certainly enjoy going out there. I have been out there a few times. It would be fun to go out there with the Member for Portage la Prairie and both of us wander through it. I think it is a good thing to do.

Mrs. Smith: We neglected to say that the testing and evaluation part is complete now, so we should have said that before the break. I just naturally thought, since the minister wanted a break—it was just at the time when my questions were finished. So thank you so much for coming. I am sorry that you had to wait through the Stevenson Aviation plan, but, hopefully, you gathered more knowledge today. Thank you so much for coming.

Madam Chair, could we go on to the Stevenson Aviation Centre again? Under page 116, I have a couple more questions following this. We wanted, on this side of the House, to know whether those new regulations and appeals have been approved, yet, at this time.

Mr. Caldwell: I have just been advised that the new regulations have been approved by the board. They are being submitted to my office soon. They have not arrived yet, but the board has approved the new regulations and I will taking a look at them, I suppose, in the days to come.

Mrs. Smith: Also, there are two questions under Managerial, on page 114. Again, there is no new full-time equivalence, and yet the dollars have increased. I would take it that that is the same reason as has happened under the other disciplines with the flow of personnel through this area.

Mr. Caldwell: Could I get a clarification? If the member would be so kind to just state her question again. We have some confusion as to what area, exactly, on page 114.

Mrs. Smith: It is the top line, under Managerial. You have full-time equivalence being the same in the year 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and yet the

increase in dollars has increased in 2001-2002. This is again the thread that we have seen in Estimates, and my question again is: Is it the same reason where people are flowed through the system and come in at higher wages or increase in wages/salary?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, the difference, the variance is about \$9,500, from \$140,900 in 2000-2001 to \$150,400 in 2001-2002. I am advised in this case there has not been any change in managers at the level, but there are merit increases that were in the range of \$3,000 and general salary increases. Staff is not in on that so I think that would accommodate that \$9,000 and change within that, although it does seem rather high so there may be some ancillary items in the hundreds of dollars of range in there, but for the most part it has to do with merit increase and general salary increase.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, in the next line, Professional/Technical, on the same page 114, there are six new full-time equivalents. Could the minister please outline why these six new people have come on board and yet I have seen a decrease in dollars? I found that curious, an increase in full-time equivalents and a decrease in dollars, and I wondered what the reason was for that.

* (16:40)

Mr. Caldwell: I kind of like that where we can expand the workforce with no new expenditures. The reason for it, there is a small note at the bottom of 114 that the additional staff obviously were required due to the Expansion Plan Initiative, and the salaries for those new staff flow with them from the College Expansion Initiative. So that is the factor for that, but I do like that when it occurs where you get a fairly good, healthy staff complement without a corresponding increase in expenditure from the department.

An Honourable Member: You get the benefits and somebody else pays for it.

Mr. Caldwell: You like that too. The Member for Portage la Prairie also likes that.

Mrs. Smith: I think this ends our questions. As you know, we are having a global discussion. We do not need to go over every line unless my colleague from Portage can think of anything else he would like to ask on that. Please feel free to do that. Is that okay? All right, so I will take my colleague's lead on that because I know he has had a special interest and is very supportive of this centre.

Now as we are finishing, as our previous conversation, we have about an hour and 15 minutes left today. We still have some things to get through, and I notice that Jack Gillespie has joined us. I know Jack wears many, many hats, so I am wondering if it is Research and Planning we are going into or which one.

Mr. Caldwell: We could go into Research and Planning. Claudette Toupin joins us from this branch and Jack Gillespie also joins us, as the member notes. I am again very thankful that we have such capable staff on hand to keep me in the know. Thank you for coming. So we could go straight into Research and Planning. That would be fine, unless we want to let Jack go or we could keep him here for a bit longer.

An Honourable Member: For the Amalgamated Human Resource Services, I have two questions.

Mr. Caldwell: Okay, maybe we will start with the Amalgamated Human Resource then, and we can give Jack his leave then.

Mrs. Smith: The minister and I have spent many hours over this table now, and we had agreed on a global discussion to streamline the process because, as I guess Jack would be well aware, I worked at Manitoba Education and Training have, I think, a fairly good understanding of how the program is run.

So the initial questions we asked were global kinds of questions, and the questions that we are dealing with now are more specific within each of the disciplines. Both the minister and I are aware we are running out of time, as well, so we are trying to streamline this whole process to save time but to get the necessary information that we need. So Amalgamated Human Resource Services, is that what you would like to start with? That would be just fine. As I said, as you read Estimates, you will see

that a lot of the crucial points that we wanted to cover are already covered, but the specifics of the discipline need to be answered.

I also want to thank the staff of Manitoba Education, Training and Youth for coming today, because I know the level of expertise, again, that is there. I know the two people who have joined us, definitely they are a great asset to Manitoba Education and Training.

So not to take up any more of your valuable time, on Professional/Technical, second line on page 38, when you take a look at the full-time equivalents which are the same and the increase in dollars, could the minister, Madam Chair, please explain why the increase in dollars has occurred when the full-time equivalents have remained the same? What happened in this particular department?

Mr. Caldwell: The complexities of Amalgamated Human Resource Services. This branch operates on a cost-recovery basis with a number of different partners, I think six within government. The primary reason for the increase is that last year in the 2000-2001 Estimates, one of those positions was reflected through a cost-recovery basis in another area. This year, the cost has been reflected in the budget of the Amalgamated Human Resource Services branch.

So there is the one salary year, and then part of the other rationale for the increase in the expenditure this year, apart from that reflection of that salary year, is the standard GSI and merit increase as well. So it really reflects a position that was cost-recovered previously and has been absorbed internally now.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, when I looked through this part of Estimates, I felt that it was an extremely well-run part of Administration and Finance. There was not anything that really leapt out at me. My other request that I have given to the minister for the listing of all department and political staff, et cetera, will be given I think by the end of July, we had agreed. So those other questions had been covered off by that one global question that was asked.

What it was, basically, I wanted a list of all department and political staff, including their

positions and whether or not they were full-time equivalents. There was a whole list of other requests, like a specific list of all staff in the minister's and deputy ministers' office, the number of staff currently employed in the department and their wages and the number of staff hired since 1999 and a description of any position that has been reclassified. It goes on and on. I gave this request, a written request, actually, to the minister. So I know that that will be coming to this particular department as well. That does cover off a lot of the questions.

* (16:50)

The minister has advised me there are over a thousand people working at the department, so it will take till the end of July to complete that request. I thank the minister for that, because it is a thorough list. Also I have asked him for all the boards and commissions, which I am looking forward to getting by the end of the day. Is that not right, Madam Chair?

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate that. I do have for the member the boards and commissions remuneration. I will read them into the record and then pass the member the hard copy. The Board of Reference for the Province of Manitoba, in terms of remuneration, the chair receives \$175 per sitting plus out-of-pocket expenses; members receive \$150 per sitting plus out-of-pocket expenses. I will table that with the Committee of Supply.

In terms of the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Board, the remuneration for the chair, Mr. Ian Sutherland, who has been chair for quite a number of years, is \$12,000 per annum plus out-of-pocket expenses; for members it is \$75 per meeting plus out-of-pocket expenses. I see a unionization drive taking place there in terms of the Public Schools Finance Board. I am glad the Member for Fort Garry appreciated that joke. We got a smile out of it here too. The remuneration for the Public Schools Finance Board, the chair receives \$256 per half day or \$425 per day plus out-of-pocket expenses; the members receive \$146 per half day or \$225 per day plus out-of-pocket expenses. That, again, is for the Public Schools Finance Board

The final board I have under my mandate as Minister of Education, Training and Youth is the

Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Board. The remuneration for the chair of the board, who is Ms. Sobering, who has also been chair for quite a number of years, is \$336 for a full-day meeting, \$191 for a half-day meeting; for the board members the full-day meeting remuneration is \$192, for a half-day meeting it is \$109. None of these levels of honouraria have changed since I have been minister. It is consistent with the remuneration that the previous government also provided. I will table that material for the Committee of Supply too so that the members and other interested parties can receive more details.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the minister for that information. The two questions that I had over and above my original request have been answered. If the people from Amalgamated Human Resource want to leave now, that is just fine; I will not be taking your time. He does not want the crowds coming. I thank you for that. I would like to go on now to Research and Planning. So I thank you so much, Jack, for coming.

I hope the minister appreciates the efficiency with which these Estimates are going. We are getting our information without a lot of painful discharge. *[interjection]* Sorry, I am not finished yet, Madam Chair. Having said that, I will be going into Research and Planning. We have got about an hour and a few minutes left, so from there I am going to be going on to Capital on page 131, capital for schools. So perhaps that will help the minister.

In Research and Planning on the second line, under Professional/Technical, there are the same full-time equivalents and again an increase in salary. The thread that we have seen throughout this Estimates process, I would imagine, would be the same; however, I would like the minister just to expand on that so that I do not miss something.

Mr. Caldwell: I am advised that part of the reason for this in this particular branch is that the branch was begun in September so that the amount of the expenditures was expressed to reflect the fact the branch was begun in September. There are, of course, the general salary and merits as well, but the main reason for

it is the fact that the branch was not established until September.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, September of what year?

Mr. Caldwell: Of the year 2000. We are looking at the bottom, Total Salaries and Employee Benefits: \$730,500 in 2000-2001, and \$779,200 in 2002. I believe that is what the member is referring to, and maybe I should just clarify.

Mrs. Smith: I was referring to the second line, Professional/Technical, where the full-time equivalents were the same, and in 2000-2001, we have 285.5, and 322.4 in 2001-2002. What would be the reason for that?

Mr. Caldwell: Just to clarify, the increase in salaries of \$36,000 is due to general salary increases as per the collective agreement, increases due to the realignment of salaries to reflect actual levels—so the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) was more accurate than I in this—increasing the provision of casual staff and budgeted for projected issues around, as I said, general salary increases, collective agreements, realignment of salaries to reflect actual levels and so forth. So the Member for Fort Garry is quite right.

Mrs. Smith: In Administrative Support, reflecting on the information we have, I would assume that the same thing has happened with the collective agreement, that the increase in full-time equivalents is the same, but that the increase in wage would be due probably to the collective agreement then.

Mr. Caldwell: That is correct. I am also advised that there was one person that came on in September who was receiving as remuneration more than was budgeted for. That is part of it as well.

Mrs. Smith: Again in Administrative Support, there was a change which we have just explained, but, just overall, it seems to me that this Research and Planning is quite a small area. It seems to me to be a very, very important area, Research and Planning. Can the minister, Madam Chair, please let the Committee of Supply know how this has downsized from the previous government?

Mr. Caldwell: There was not a Research and Planning branch in existence when I came into the office. It was disbanded three or four years ago by the previous government, and we reinstated it last year. So that may clarify for the member.

Mrs. Smith: It seems to me that this would be a very important function, research and planning, especially in the year 2001. Does the minister have any plans of expanding this very important program?

* (17:00)

Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Caldwell: Not at this time. I felt and my colleagues felt that in 2000-2001, 1999-2000 when we began to discuss the benefits of having a research and planning branch so that our policy discussions reflected best practices and best available data for educational practices, it was important to undertake to reconstitute a Research and Planning branch. The department at that time included both college and public school, and it was a \$1.4-billion enterprise. It did seem, and I agree with the member, untoward not to have a research and planning capacity that was identified as a specific branch within the department.

At this time the branch is functioning at seven full-time equivalents. That is consistent with the previous year, 2000-2001. The dilemma, as always, is one of finite resources and trying to allocate those resources in the most thoughtful way possible across the department. If and when additional resources become available or if and when the workload undertaken by the Research and Planning department warrants the consideration of expansion, those sorts of things will be considered. But at present there is no plan to redirect resources away from other areas of the department to Research and Planning.

It is a pretty lean branch, I acknowledge that. I know the member has made reference to it. But we do take some pride, I have to say, in the last 18 or 19 months of being a lean and efficiently functioning department. We, I think,

take some pride in that, but that is indeed the case in this branch as well.

Mrs. Smith: I take it from the Estimates that this particular branch services the K to Senior 4 as well as the advanced education part. I just want to put on record from the Committee of Supply from this side of the House that I do commend the minister for putting this Research and Planning branch in. I would suggest that being in the education business, whatever, profession, for years, I would consider this a very important aspect, a very important branch.

I would suggest, with increased responsibilities to ensure the staff does not have burnout, that perhaps in the future it might be expanded to some degree to service both of those areas. However, I thank the staff for coming and being here today. I did have some pertinent questions.

I will move on now to Capital Grants for school divisions.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Caldwell: I would like to thank Claudette Toupin for being here. I appreciate her time, and I echo the comments of the member that the branch does do yeoman service and very good work on behalf of the public and post-secondary education system. Certainly, I do have a keen appreciation of the several challenges that exist within government in terms of resourcing. We must be mindful of the ability of Manitoba taxpayers to pay for increased administration in government, in this case, the branch responsible for research and planning.

I know the member made reference yesterday to supporting teachers' salaries. That is a major expenditure in government, and, certainly, within this department, in terms of providing support to school divisions to underwrite their operations. I am always mindful of the balance between the taxpayer, and the need for caution and care in reaching into the public purse, and then, correspondingly, how we invest in government.

So I appreciate the member's remarks supporting the branch and supporting teachers

generally, yesterday, in this regard. We are very mindful of the balance that has to occur between taxes and monies available, and expenditures and responsibilities in that regard. So I thank the member for those comments.

Mrs. Smith: Before we go to capital, if the minister would just indulge me for just a minute. With the Forum of Labour Market Ministers Secretariat, I just wondered, what were the responsibilities? This is a new department, as well. It was newly put in. Could the minister please advise the Committee of Supply why the Forum of Labour Market Ministers Secretariat was put in? What are the responsibilities of this department?

Mr. Caldwell: The co-chair of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers for Canada is shared between the provincial ministers responsible for labour market development, and the federal minister responsible, which is presently the Honourable Jane Stewart. Manitoba was privileged to become co-chair of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers this past winter, which translates into Jane Stewart and Drew Caldwell being the co-chairs of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers in Manitoba, assuming the responsibilities that come with that co-chairing of the Labour Market Ministers.

The branch activities include the support and co-ordination of any activities related to priority directives of the federal and province and territory ministers, who are responsible for labour market matters. Activities also include expenditures management. That is the branch that would be responsible for financial accountability in management of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers budget, which includes expenditures related to the FLMM Secretariat, the Labour Mobility Secretariat, and the Labour Market Information Secretariat.

Activities also include information management. The branch is responsible for maintaining records and documentation, including records of decisions from meetings of ministers and deputy-ministers involved in the Forum of Labour Market Ministers. It contributes to the production and distribution of products developed through the Forum of Labour Market Ministers, and develops public

communication products, as required from time to time by the Forum of Labour Market Ministers. The branch also supports relationship management in undertaking responsibilities for maintaining productive relationships amongst all federal-provincial territorial members, mediating differences among and between members, and seeking to establish consensus on key decisions, which, I know the member from Fort Garry will appreciate, is sometimes a very challenging task, given the diversity of provincial governments and different party stripes and different regional interests and so forth.

The branch also provides working group management, which includes responsibilities for facilitating the activities of a range of working groups, including the monitoring of progress towards outcomes and maintaining the work plan through which status updates on activity is communicated to all provinces. Finally, the branch undertakes meeting management in co-operation with the federal co-chairs. They are responsible for planning, organizing, and co-ordinating meetings and conferences for the ministers, deputy ministers, and other involved parties to the Forum of Labour Market Ministers.

Co-chair, as I said, I am privileged to co-chair with Jane Stewart, the Minister responsible for HRDC from the federal level, my federal colleague, co-chairing the meetings at the FLMM, as well as attending to ministerial and deputy ministerial, senior officials' and working officials' meetings. It is quite a major role, but it is also quite a privilege for the Province of Manitoba to undertake leadership of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers Secretariat for the next three years, I believe. Is that right? *[interjection]* Two years, for the next two years, I am sorry. I have just been corrected. For the next two years.

I should also add—and the Member for Fort Garry will be interested—that the cost associated with this branch has fully recovered from the joint sharing of the provincial responsibilities. So the provinces and federal government reimburse the Province of Manitoba for its role in this, so it is cost mutual to the Province of Manitoba.

* (17:10)

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, could the minister just clarify something? I am not understanding how much the Province has put into this Labour Market Ministers Secretariat. Also, my second part to that question is: Why would this particular secretariat be under the umbrella of education?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, all the provinces and the federal government cost-share the operations of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers. The approximately \$750,000 that is involved in the operation of the branch—and the branch will move in a couple of years to another province and then it moves on. I think we assumed it from Newfoundland, as I recall. The Province puts in a very small amount into that global pool with the other provinces and the federal government. It is in the range of \$3,000 to \$4,000, so it is a very small amount that the Province puts in for that.

If I could get the second question again. I am sorry.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I just wondered why it would be put under the umbrella of education, as opposed to the umbrella of labour.

Mr. Caldwell: Primarily, across the country, the ministers of Education and Training, whoever those ministers portfolios may be. In Alberta, it is the Minister of Learning, in other provinces, Minister of Education and Training. It is primarily ministers who are responsible for education and training. Madam Chairperson, it is a training component. It is the development of labour market opportunities for Canadians and for provincial residents. So it is a choice of the particular provincial government, I suppose, as to who the lead minister is, but for the most part, my colleagues are ministers of Education.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I would like to move on to Capital Projects, page 131. Could the minister please give a listing of the capital projects that have been approved by his department for the province of Manitoba at this time, in other words, new schools that are being built, renovations to schools, a listing of the

capital projects that are happening across the province?

Mr. Caldwell: We are just waiting for Mr. Bob Goluch who is the member of staff responsible for the Public Schools Finance Board who is responsible for this particular area. I do not have my sheet listing the priorities. Is this it? Okay, let us see what we can do here. I have just been handed a three-inch binder here. I will just wait for a second while the member confers with her colleagues.

The details of the individual projects, because they are going out to tender and will be going out to tender over the course of the next number of months as school divisions decide to let tenders on particular projects, ought not to be made public at this time until the tender process is underway because of exigencies around increased bids and so forth.

But I can perhaps give the member some global information around priorities for expenditures this year and so forth which may be helpful to her, but the details of individual projects, until they go to the tender process, we are advised, would have a negative implication on school divisions.

Mrs. Smith: I am not asking, Madam Chair, for the tender or the cost of the building, but there have been approvals made, certain buildings that are going to be built, and last year in Estimates we did have a listing of those buildings. This is public information; for instance, the school in Beausejour, and I am sure the minister will remember Mountbatten School. Having a list of those capital projects as we asked for last year is what I am referring to, not the cost of them.

Mr. Caldwell: I do appreciate that. Perhaps when Mr. Goluch does get here, he will be able to provide me with some information directly associated with that. I can provide some information globally perhaps in anticipation of his arrival, that this 2001-2002 budget year, there was \$76.6 million in total funding approved for capital programs in the province which represented \$31.640 million for funding instalments for previously approved projects which is ongoing construction and \$45 million in new capital funding. Of that amount, \$38.7

million was assigned to critical repairs to infrastructure, mechanical systems, electrical systems, roofs, windows, that sort of capital funding for critical repairs to existing infrastructure and \$6.3 million for new capital projects. That reflects or compares with the 2000-2001 announcement, which was \$51.2 million in total funding. Those two years reflected the two highest years in the province's history in terms of capital support for public school infrastructure. Each year school divisions of course submit their capital plans in a prioritized basis to the Public Schools Finance Board. Their requests are reviewed and prioritized by the Public Schools Finance Board in a provincial context, reflecting on the 730-odd schools in the public school system. That process has been ongoing for a number of years.

I can, just briefly, discuss a number of previously announced capital projects that are still underway. That may help the member. At least it will get us a start. There are a number of them.

In Winnipeg 1, Wolseley School, the Adult Education Centre, Argyle School, Children of the Earth, as well as Kelvin High School, phase one, were all approved and have been underway in the 2000-2001 budget year. I do not know to what degree the projects, at what level the projects are at this stage, but that is something that is a nuanced issue between the Schools Finance Board and the school divisions. St. James Collegiate, the gymnasium addition, in fact I made the public schools funding announcement this year at St. James Collegiate in St. James-Assiniboia School Division No. 2 with yourself, Madam Chairperson, the MLA for St. James and also the MLA for Assiniboia, who were both in attendance with me at St. James Collegiate. That project has been before the Public Schools Finance Board for almost a decade, I was advised when I was out there. They were all very thrilled to have the gymnasium at St. James Collegiate going up. Certainly when I was out there it is quite a major project.

* (17:20)

River East, Salisbury Morse Place and Prince Edward schools; in Seven Oaks, West

Kildonan Collegiate as well as H. C. Avery School; Transcona-Springfield, Springfield Middle School; and Agassiz, the member noted the Beausejour School; as well as Garson-Tyndall, the new Gillis School, which is a tremendous contribution on behalf of the Gillis family in terms of supporting the development of the Garson-Tyndall school. I am very, very appreciative of that initiative by a very respected business and family in the Garson-Tyndall area.

Seine River School Division, the Ste. Anne complex; in the Hanover School Division, the South Oaks School; in Rhineland, phase two of the Gretna School; in Evergreen School division, the Gimli early years school replacement, Gimli middle years renovations, as well as the Winnipeg Beach phase two renovations. I was out at Winnipeg Beach actually to see their school this fall as well. It was a pleasure to be at Winnipeg Beach. They are all excited about school renovations and the demolition of the 1948 section as part of that work to rebuild the school infrastructure at Winnipeg Beach.

In Rolling River, very close to my home, in fact I have substitute taught in Elton Collegiate before, there are some additions and renovations at Elton Collegiate; in Brandon, Linden Lanes and J. R. Reid; in Souris Valley, the Souris school renovations; in Frontier, Chemanowin; in Norway House, Thicket Portage; in the DSFM, Jours de Plaine, Gabrielle-Roy, École Lavallée have all seen support; in Churchill School Division, the Duke of Marlborough School.

Mr. Goluch has just joined us now, so I may be able to get some additional information.

I am just advised that there have not been any schools approved as of yet by the Public Schools Finance Board for the 2001-2002 year. They will be approved, I guess, as the process continues between the school boards and the Public Schools Finance Board. There will be a number of approvals in the weeks and months to come. I will try and keep the member apprised as they are approved, and, of course, in terms of the dollar amount, that will be reflected in the tender process, so we do not want to jeopardize that.

Mrs. Smith: I really appreciate the minister taking time to be very patient, I know, with staff. I want to welcome Mr. Goluch. I know that his work is, again, just exemplary in Manitoba Training and Youth. *[interjection]* Yes, stellar would be a good way of putting it.

I so much appreciate the staff from Manitoba Education and Training coming and sharing and giving the expertise that we so badly need. The questions that are asked are always for different purposes and basically to get a clear understanding of how things are working.

Madam Chair, I know the minister had a lot of questions going on on Mountbatten the other day. I appreciate that in Question Period sometimes you do not get all the questions asked that you need to ask, and during this Estimates time we certainly have had a lot of good information and a lot of dialogue back and forth.

Now, two things: No. 1, the first one is I understand the schools are not approved. When they do get approved, could I make the request from the minister that that listing of approved capital projects be submitted to my office at that time? Could the minister let me know when does he expect that the approval process will be completed?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, I believe that the approvals process will take place throughout the month of June as the Public Schools Finance Board makes decisions on the list submitted by the school divisions around the province of Manitoba. The Public Schools Finance Board has quite a daunting task. They do have substantial resources at their disposal this year, as I mentioned earlier, the largest resource allocation in the province's history, but there is also, as the member knows, substantial infrastructure challenges in the field, and the demand on those resources is very, very high.

I will undertake that when the Public Schools Finance Board makes their decisions on approvals and when school divisions are appropriately notified in terms of protocol and so forth and we are prepared to make an announcement, that I will share those announcements with the member.

Mrs. Smith: I want to thank the minister for accommodating me. So, hopefully, by the end of July, perhaps that would be a reasonable time. I know I have been involved in some ongoing things, so by the end of July would expect that they would be forthcoming.

I also want to thank the minister for the listing of the boards. If I could just go over them, I asked for all boards and commissions, and I received the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Board. I received the Public Schools Finance Board. I received the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund board, and I received the Board of Reference.

Are there any other commissions or boards that are missing? It seems to me there are two other ones, or are there any other under your mandate, Minister of Education?

Mr. Caldwell: My understanding, Madam Chair, there are none, although I just was passed a note that the classroom size commission in fact, is one, and Dr. Glenn Nicholls is the commissioner for that particular board.

There is a budgeted amount for the deliberations of the classroom size commission. It is a global budget figure which is contained under the Research and Planning section of the Estimates booklet. I do not believe there is any other that is my responsibility. It used to be the colleges and universities, but with the splitting of the department those are no longer my responsibility.

Mrs. Smith: That helped to clarify because there were two that I was looking for, and one of them was the class size. Could the minister be so kind to give me a listing of who is on that board besides Mr. Nicholls?

Mr. Caldwell: Doctor Nicholls is the commissioner, and he is entrusted with undertaking the work of the commission.

Mrs. Smith: So I would assume that Doctor Nicholls would get a committee of people together to go out far and wide in the province of Manitoba to assess the class-size initiative.

Mr. Caldwell: The management of the commission's activities is at the discretion of

Doctor Nicholls. He is the sole member of that commission.

Mrs. Smith: So in the event Doctor Nicholls feels he needs a committee to assist him, because it is quite a large mandate, I would appreciate having the listing of those people that he does assign to a committee when that occurs.

* (17:30)

Mr. Caldwell: The department does provide and will provide support to Doctor Nicholls on an as-requested basis for his work, but we do not anticipate any expansion of the commission.

Mrs. Smith: So further to what the Minister of Education has stated, Doctor Nicholls will be the one person going out gathering the information, and that is understandable. Madam Chair, could the minister please advise this Committee of Supply what Doctor Nicholls is paid for this exercise?

Mr. Caldwell: Just as staff looks over the Estimates booklet in this regard, I have advice that it is up to \$25,000 for the undertaking of the work, but I think we should take this matter under advisement because we do not have the answer readily available here with us right now. We may have it before six o'clock rolls around tonight.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the minister very much. Talking about the class-size initiative, this ties into Bill 42 to a certain degree. Bill 42 states that the class-size initiative would be examined this year. Perhaps the minister could correct me if I am wrong, but in the final end it is the Minister of Education who actually decides about class size, is that not correct?

Mr. Caldwell: This is a very, very important issue for Manitobans, for educators, for trustees, and I daresay for parents and children and the public at large. We felt during the committee hearings for Bill 42 last year and entering into Bill 42 previous to committee hearings that there was sufficient interest in having a discussion on this matter of classroom size and composition, both of which are important to the learning environment in the classroom. It was something that we wanted to

have, as a government, a broader public discussion on. The decisions, I suppose, ultimately for all areas of government do not reside merely with ministers or indeed Cabinet or caucus, but rather for the Chamber as a whole in terms of regulations, in terms of legislation. Obviously the legislation is the House. Regulations, there are different levels of authority depending on the issue and on the area with which regulation is sought. Apprenticeship Board often is responsible for regulations of the Apprenticeship Board, and so forth.

This is an issue, I think, of substantive importance. Certainly the responsibility, I believe, for classroom size is broader than the department. I think that we are trying through this commission to broaden the input on classroom size and composition to include a broad range of Manitobans, as I said, educators, trustees, parents, children, and the general public at large, ultimately on things educational, whether it is me occupying this chair or some of my predecessors, the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), my friend from Brandon Jim McCrae, who held this chair previously, the former minister, Linda McIntosh, and so forth. The responsibility does ultimately come down on our heads as ministers.

This issue, though, I think is very, very important. It certainly is reflected in having a commissioner of Doctor Nicholls' stature undertake the commission hearings this coming fall. It is something that I really do wish to have a broad and meaningful and thorough public discussion and debate on.

I think that this is a hotly debated issue across Canada and the United States. Certainly in the literature and research on education internationally, classroom size and classroom composition is a fundamental feature of a positive or negative learning environment, depending on the conditions in the classroom. It is something that ultimately I take responsibility, I suppose, as the minister, for advising my colleagues to have a commission on this matter. I think it is something that I am happy to do, because I do believe that we should have a wide discussion on this matter. So I hope that answers the members questions.

Mrs. Smith: One other question, I notice Doctor Nicholls is also on the public finance board.

Does Doctor Nicholls have any other responsibilities under the umbrella of Manitoba Education, Training and Youth?

Mr. Caldwell: No, he does not. I was actually quite thrilled when Doctor Nicholls, I dare say, acquiesced, was dragged kicking and screaming in some regards into this. He sees it as very important as a public service in furthering the cause of education in the province of Manitoba. He does in fact have tremendous responsibilities with the Public Schools Finance Board and certainly he does with the commission on class size and composition.

Mrs. Smith: Could I ask, does Doctor Nicholls do anything else? Does he have another career, or does he just work on this?

Mr. Caldwell: Doctor Nicholls is a former deputy minister that has served in a number of governments, but he is retired and has no other responsibilities or obligations. I dare say that he has pretty much taken on a full-time job with these two areas in his retirement. He certainly does have an awful lot to offer in terms of insight and wisdom in terms of educational issues in Manitoba.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the minister for answering as clearly as he can at this time. I appreciate that, actually, from the Minister of Education. I want to just go over, I have asked if there are any more boards and commissions and been reassured there are not except for the class size. Also, by the end of July I will receive from the Minister of Education the requests that I made. I will put this on record. I asked for all departments inclusive, Administration and Finance, Department of Education, Training and Youth, K to Senior 4, a list of all departmental and political staff including name, position and full-time equivalent, whether or not they are full-time.

I asked for a specific list of all staff in the minister's and deputy minister's office. I asked for the number of staff currently employed in the department and the number of staff employed by the department for each year from 1998 through 2001. I asked for the names of the staff who have been hired since 1999, including whether they were hired through competition or

appointment. I asked for a description of any position that has been reclassified. I asked for a listing of all vacant positions. I asked if all the staff years were filled in Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. I asked about the details of how many and what type of contracts are being awarded directly and why this is happening and how many contracts are going to tender. I also asked how many positions have been relocated since taking office; for instance, relocated from rural or northern Manitoba into Winnipeg or relocated from out of province to this province or relocated around the province and why.

The minister has reassured me that this is a huge task, and I can certainly appreciate that, and he has assured me that by the end of July, by July 30, I would have all that information. I want to publicly thank the Minister of Education for providing this information for me.

I know that we are running out of time, and I want to personally thank the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) for allowing this global dialogue to take place because I do feel we have covered a lot of information in a very expedient time range. What I am waiting for still is a listing of the approved capital projects when they are approved, and I would like that on the record, that the minister has reassured me that I will get a listing of those approved capital projects. I want to personally thank him for that.

* (17:40)

I did have a couple of questions on Adult Literacy and Continuing Education. I know earlier in Estimates I had asked the minister who was involved in making the decision about splitting the departments. *[interjection]* As Mr. Goluch is going, I want to thank you so much for joining us. Thank you.

I wanted the minister to clarify who was in that decision making, and we went through that earlier in Estimates, but I was curious because Adult Literacy and Continuing Education appears to be still under the umbrella of Minister Caldwell, and I just wondered why that was the case when post-secondary education and adult learning aspects to education have gone under another portfolio. What was the rationale for that?

Madam Chairperson: Just to caution about using names and not titles, please.

Mr. Caldwell: Just to go back a second, I do have the information on Doctor Nicholls' remuneration and it is up to \$25,000. That is the way it is phrased.

With regard to the decision about the splitting of the former department of education and training into the Department of Education, Training and Youth and the Department of Advanced Education, that is a trend that has occurred across Canada over the last number of years, and we have had instances of that occurring with more regularity in recent years because, I suppose, of the tremendous volume of work and the institutional cultures between the post-secondary sector and the public school sector in other jurisdictions; Manitoba as well as other jurisdictions across the country.

The decision on Cabinet is fundamentally and foremost the Premier's prerogative. Of course, the Premier (Mr. Doer) had some discussions with myself around this division in advance of the division. It is something that we anticipated upon my original appointment as Minister of Education and Training in October of '99, and it is something that I was very supportive of and continue to be supportive of in raising the profile of education generally in government at the Cabinet table and providing both sectors with the minister directly responsible for it.

So it is a trend that other jurisdictions have also embraced and is something that Manitoba did this past January, I guess. It is a pleasure to work with the Honourable Diane McGifford, the Minister of Advanced Education. With regard to the adult learning centres being retained in—

Madam Chairperson: Order. Just a moment. I just feel it is only fair to remind the minister also to be careful of names versus titles.

Mr. Caldwell: The honourable Minister of Advanced Education. Thank you. I am sorry. Excuse me. We are so collegial in this environment that sometimes we forget, so I appreciate the reminder.

As for the adult learning centres being maintained under the Education, Training and Youth portfolio, we are trying to, as a government, create some seamlessness in education generally. We are attempting to facilitate the philosophy of lifelong learning. All of the partnerships for adult learning centres in the field are with school divisions, with the exception of the Brandon Adult Learning Centre, which is with Assiniboine Community College. That in itself is the primary reason at this time.

As policy evolves, as the Member for Fort Garry knows, we have moved from a nominal based funding model for the adult learning centre to a program delivery model. So the logistics of that may change in the future. But, as it stands right now, 53 of the 54 adult learning centres—and I am just speaking off the top of my head—that is the appropriate accurate number—43, I am sorry, I am advised. The vast majority, the only exception is Assiniboine Community College. So logistically that is the primary reason at this stage.

Mrs. Smith: Would the minister please list all the new departments that have been created since the present Government came into power that were not there before. It seems to me there are three of them now. Am I mistaken on that, or what new departments have been created under the reformation of Manitoba Education, Training and Youth?

Mr. Caldwell: Maybe if I could just clarify, I believe the member is likely referring to branches as opposed to departments. Branches, research and planning branch—the adult learning centre is not a branch, but I think the member has moved on to another question, I believe, away from adult learning centres. Last year we also combined two branches to form one, and that was the program of student service branch, which brought together program implementations, student services.

There also is the international education branch, but that was ongoing previously. It was previously funded but did not have branch status. I think the branch status reflects the work that was begun by the former government and which has been taken on in a very enthusiastic way by the new government, in terms of we

spoke of Henan the other day in China, and so forth.

If the member has another branch than those three that I have outlined there—okay. I have addressed three areas, I believe.

Mrs. Smith: That is exactly what I was asking. I thank the minister for that, because looking over it has changed since I was there, and it seemed to me it has changed in those three branches. Also, when I get a listing of the staff that have been hired in each of the disciplines, then I will get a better picture of how the staff has been relocated as well. Of course that goes into the wage part of it, where the minister has explained quite categorically that because of staff flow and wage increases that is why there is the discrepancy.

I did ask earlier whether there was any thought to putting another deputy minister in place. Earlier the minister indicated no. It was not expected to happen, because at this time Doctor Levin does cover the Honourable Diane McGifford's Department of Advanced Education, and he covers the Department of Education, Training and Youth under the umbrella of the Minister of Education, Drew Caldwell. Having said that—oh, sorry, I used the name. My apologies. I am just trying to sort out how this department has changed.

Now, are there any other new initiatives that the minister expects will be happening in the area of developing new branches in Manitoba Education, Training and Youth? Are there plans on board right now?

Mr. Caldwell: No, there are no plans currently underway for new branches.

Mrs. Smith: I want to just spend a few minutes talking about, back to the adult literacy and continuing education aspect, because adult education, it was a bit confusing this year to decide whether or not to talk about adult education under the Minister of Advanced Education or under the Minister of Education, Training and Youth. Clearly it has still stayed under this umbrella at Manitoba Education and Training.

Could the minister explain how the adult literacy and continuing education will be changing from the local sites to perhaps Red River, or are the local sites that are already established in adult education going to be put in place? An example would be the adult education learning centre in Selkirk. It is my understanding that it is going to be closed or is closed now. I would just like the minister to clarify what is going on, because I am not clear on that particular adult education location.

* (17:50)

Mr. Caldwell: In Lord Selkirk School Division, the Selkirk learning centre last year was funded at levels of \$221,814. The total budgeted amount for this year is \$220,000. So last year's funding level has been maintained with the Lord Selkirk learning centre, in co-operation with the Lord Selkirk School Division No. 11. If that is the adult learning centre in Selkirk that the member is talking about, that is in fact the only one that is supported by the department.

Mrs. Smith: I just recently got a phone call from that area. I was not clear on it either, because there apparently is some adult learning centre that is scheduled to be closed, but they did not give me enough detail to understand what is happening there. I thought the minister might be able to clarify it.

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate that, because I get confused by calls that come in from out of the blue from time to time. Nobody has told me they have seen UFOs, but I have certainly heard my fair share of rumours that we are very close sometimes. I have certainly heard my fair share of rumours and phone calls coming in from residents of Manitoba in the last 18 months. I know, indeed, the Lord Selkirk learning centre last year, supported at \$221,000, is being funded at last year's level of funding—\$222,000 is the budgeted amount. I cannot comment on the veracity of the particular call. It does not apply to this adult learning centre.

Mrs. Smith: The call came, actually, last Friday. There were not enough details in it. It was from a resident in Selkirk. I thought I would ask the minister to clarify that because I knew nothing about it. Apparently, he does not either, so we are on the same level there.

Before the six o'clock bell goes, I would like to talk a little bit about international education. I know this is a subject that is near and dear to the minister's heart, as well as to my own. The minister now has international education as a branch in Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. Are there any plans to expand the international education initiative, because I feel this is a very important initiative that does many positive things, in terms of cross-cultural education? As the minister knows, in Fort Garry, we have had a very active international education program. I am delighted to hear from the minister that international education is a priority for this present minister.

If the minister could expand on this and tell me what the plans might be in this area.

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate the member's comment. Certainly, Fort Garry has been a leader in this area. In fact, we did draw staff from Fort Garry for the province's activity in international education.

The member is quite right, I am very bullish on international education, for the reasons as she outlines. In 2001-2002 Estimates, we are undertaking a modest expansion of the branch, moving from one full-time equivalent to two full-time equivalents in the branch. There are very, very exciting opportunities in international education, as the member knows, and has made reference to.

In terms of our colleges, universities and secondary schools in the province of Manitoba, we currently have 2869 international students, which represent a tremendous number of students in the province. They are attending school in the province from outside our national boundaries of Canada.

As the member also knows, each one of those students brings with him or her tens of thousands of dollars in new money to our province, as well as provides opportunities for cross-cultural education to occur at an individual level between young Manitoba students and these international students, and broadly opens up opportunities for the future through such contact.

I am very bullish on international education. I was astounded, as I made mention of earlier in our Estimates process, when I did review this particular area. Being appointed minister, it was something that I initially viewed with some scepticism, but when I saw the economic indicators, it certainly changed my scepticism quite dramatically. There is an estimated value-added economic impact potential in the province of Manitoba in this area of some \$104 million that the department has estimated in terms of international education potential impacts. We are realizing right now somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$30 million.

So we have got some fair potential growth opportunity in this area that can have a tremendous economic benefit for the province of Manitoba, as well as a tremendous educational benefit both for the international student and for young Manitobans.

Mrs. Smith: Clearly this is an initiative that I would very much encourage the minister, for a number of reasons, to continue to support in a very real way, to continue to support the principals and the teachers and the students that

are involved, because it has many positive ramifications.

I see that our time is just about up. I know we have not got to the place of passing our lines. There are a couple more things, but I think we have covered a lot of territory in a very systematic way. I thank the staff for their patience here today.

Mr. Caldwell: Just in concluding, I thank the member, too. I think we have covered an awful lot in the last few days. I, in my dreams, dream of the job as an international educator in terms of the department. So, when Mr. MacLeod left the department and there was a job opening, it gave me cause for pause. I thought perhaps it would be a good idea to leave this current position and apply for that particular job.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m. committee rise.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being six o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 29, 2001

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