



Third Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 25, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Manitoba Heritage Federation has received and processed nearly 1,200 grant applications and awarded and monitored almost 700 grants; and

WHEREAS 300 different organizations in 98 different communities representing every region of the province have received grants through the efforts of the Manitoba Heritage Federation; and

WHEREAS the government has taken away the granting authority of the Manitoba Heritage Federation and now plans to control the distribution of heritage grants; and

WHEREAS this action appears to represent the politicization of the heritage granting process; and

WHEREAS it is unclear as to what the government's real commitment is to funding heritage in the province; and

WHEREAS the Board of the Heritage Federation is composed of urban and rural members which represents a wealth of heritage experience from all over the province; and

WHEREAS this move will have a critical impact on the heritage community throughout the province

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba strongly urge the provincial government to reconsider its decision and return the Manitoba Heritage Federation's granting authority.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with the House details of my statement to the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities regarding federal offloading of responsibility for off-reserve Status Indians onto the provincial and municipal social assistance programs.

Members no doubt recall my ministerial statement of March 20, 1991, where I advised the House of the announced intention of the federal government to abrogate its longstanding responsibility to provide social assistance to Status Indians residing off reserve. This action represents a net withdrawal of federal support of about \$17 million annually.

The response of government to this unilateral action has been consistent and firm. It is our position that the federal government has a special financial responsibility for social services to Status Indians, regardless of where they live, by virtue of the Constitution, the Indian Act and the Crown's treaties with First Nations.

Indian Affairs advised that the discontinuance of reimbursement for social assistance benefits provided to off-reserve Status Indians would be effective March 31, 1992. Shortly thereafter, Indian Affairs entered into an agreement with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to provide any necessary interim assistance to off-reserve Status Indians affected by the decision through band-issuing authorities.

* (1335)

Both the province and the municipalities are obligated to provide social allowances to any Manitoban in need, yet we are now both in the position of having to provide this service without any assurance from the federal government that they honour the invoices we submit to Indian Affairs for payment. The municipalities have supported Manitoba's position that the federal government has a special financial responsibility to Status Indians living off reserve, but they have also told us that they

cannot afford to finance the cost of providing social allowances to off-reserve Status Indians indefinitely.

This action by the federal government has put municipalities in a precarious financial situation and has caused great uncertainty for Status Indians residing off reserve in need of social allowance benefits. In full recognition of this, Manitoba has decided to reimburse municipalities for the provision of assistance on a without-prejudice basis while this matter remains unresolved.

As a province, we are not accepting the federal government's abrogation of its longstanding responsibility to off-reserve Status Indians. Our efforts to successfully reverse the federal position will continue unabated on both the political and legal fronts. I thank the members opposite for their strong support in the past on this issue. I look forward to it continuing.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I thank the honourable Minister of Family Services for this statement today, and I can assure him and members of the House that many municipal leaders in this province will be relieved to hear the minister's announcement. Actually, Mr. Speaker, what the minister is announcing is a policy that really is in keeping with the law of Canada. The provincial government really had no option but to follow the law in this case and ensure that it did not allow the municipalities of this province to be left on a financial hook, as they seem to be.

Also, there should be no second-class citizens in this province. We should assure that welfare payments are made available to all of our citizens and not get involved in bureaucratic red tape and legal fights in order to see who should have what responsibility and in the meantime have people faced with the prospect of going into poverty or being without sufficient resources.

Certainly a much better position is for this minister to go forward with the municipalities to fight Ottawa. If that has to be, fine. Our concern has always been that this government had to ensure that the municipalities of Manitoba were not left holding the bag. They were indeed between a rock and a hard place. The City of Brandon was paying out approximately \$25,000 a month in good faith to ensure that these people, the off-reserve status natives living in the city of Brandon did not go without resources in this period of time, and likewise, the

City of Thompson, the City of Portage la Prairie, the Town of Dauphin and other municipalities have also assumed this responsibility because they did not want to see anyone starve or go without needed resources in their community.

So we are very pleased therefore that the minister has finally realized that the municipalities cannot and should not be left on the hook, so to speak. Certainly it is a far better position for this government to go forward with the municipalities and indeed fight the federal government if that has to be the case.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, we, and I am sure all the municipal councils affected in this province, will be very pleased with this statement of the minister today.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on March 20, 1991, this minister rose in this House to decry the offloading of a responsibility from the federal government to the provincial government, something which is becoming increasingly common. We supported him when he said that he wanted to launch a fight against the federal government because of this insidious offloading practice, particularly as it responded to those Status Indians living off reserves and living in our communities who needed social assistance. But we have been increasingly concerned that the minister himself was looking to do exactly the same thing, as he would not take a leadership role but was allowing the municipalities to feel that they were the ones who were going to have to assume this obligation.

Well, today, Mr. Speaker, he has finally done the right thing, not only legally but morally. He has recognized that it is our responsibility as a province to ensure that municipalities have funding to put in place for these people, but more importantly, has recognized that municipalities, each individually going after the federal government was not going to be satisfactory, and they needed a leadership role to be taken by their provincial government.

The minister has now said he will take that leadership role, and we support him in that. We just wish that it had not been allowed to run amuck for the last couple of months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1340)

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review

for 1992-93 for the Department of Energy and Mines.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 84—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2)

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey), that Bill 84, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the St. John's Ravenscourt School, forty Grade 9 students, and they are under the direction of Bruce Neil and Dan Stanier. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey).

Also this afternoon, we have in the gallery twelve members of the Manitoba 4-H Ambassadors Program. These students are under the direction of Mrs. Tannis Milo Osborne.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

United Nations Earth Summit Government Agenda

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, all members of this House applauded the results and the findings of the Brundtland Commission which led to a policy in the United Nations and hopefully in all countries of the world of sustainable development being a replacement for the winner-takes-all kinds of proposals that we had in our society dealing with environment and our economy.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of implementation strategies developed specifically in this province and in Canada to have round tables, national and provincial round tables. But many people who developed the ideas, many of the

grassroots environmentalists across the world who developed the concepts of sustainable development are very disappointed at what is going on and is proposed to go on in Rio at the environmental summit.

They are absolutely saddened, Mr. Speaker, that George Bush would stand out in front of the White House and say the United States would attend the conference but would not participate in any specific targets or any specific enforceable time lines for the reduction of carbon dioxide and other very, very toxic material that is sending our planet to horrific consequences in terms of our environment.

The Premier has announced today that he will be attending that summit at Rio. What action will he take on behalf of Manitoba taxpayers in attending this conference to ensure that this conference is more than just a photo opportunity for people like George Bush, to ensure that we will have real action with real timetables and real standards for the people of the world who need this environmental conference?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we used to think that it was out of order when the Leader of the Opposition asked questions about what I am going to do about the federal government or the Prime Minister. Now he wants to know what I am going to do to ensure that we get action out of the President of the United States. I recognize the tremendous confidence that he is placing in me, no question about that.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, this province has been a leader in the sustainable development movement of the world. This province's leadership in the formation of the Round Table and in pursuing the goals and objectives of sustainable development resulted in the International Institute for Sustainable Development being located here in Manitoba.

* (1345)

In recognition of that, the International Institute is holding its board meeting in Rio de Janeiro as part of the Earth Summit. That institute, and many Manitobans and others who are part of the board will be having a central role in Rio, in the Earth Summit, and will be influencing very strongly the outcome of that conference, I believe.

I can say that the president of the International Institute, at the news conference this morning, said that his institute, this province and this country will

be pushing hard so that there are real outcomes, that there are meaningful results coming out of the Earth Summit. Certainly, that is the position that I take in going to Rio de Janeiro, that the results will be meaningful and long term to the commitment of sustainable development to be implemented by way of improved environmental and development policies world-wide.

Oak Hammock Marsh Ducks Unlimited Headquarters

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): One of the problems that many people are having with the Rio conference is what people are doing in their own backyard has a real discrepancy to which the goals and objectives were supposed to be at Rio for sustainable development.

Mr. Speaker, one of the specific projects that has received international attention—and not international positive attention, unfortunately—has been the Ducks Unlimited project at Oak Hammock Marsh.

Again, Friday, the National Audubon Society came out in opposition, the International Council for Bird Preservation, the Sierra Club, both internationally and nationally, have come out against it. Many other organizations have come out against it, Mr. Speaker, and this government continues to put specific taxpayers' money into that project.

I would like to ask the Premier: In light of comments and announcements made again Friday by a coalition of groups across Canada and a coalition of groups internationally opposed to this project, will he review the provincial government funding to this project and act in concert with international environmental groups on this project in our own backyard in Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we now see that the Leader of the Opposition does not understand what sustainable development is, because he is taking a project that is a sustainable development project that has gone through the most thorough and complete environmental assessment and review than any major project in the history of this province. It has had the public hearings. It has had the public environmental assessment and review, and it has had a decision being made by a third-party group, a nonpartisan group, in assessment of all of the facts and information there.

In addition of course, that project, not only does it not take away wetland habitat but it adds about 150 acres of additional wetland habitat to the Oak Hammock Marsh. It also contributes to the knowledge and understanding of people as to the environment and the wetland habitat and the development of this kind of project, so it provides the kind of educational base that we must have in order to further the cause of sustainable development.

The only basis upon which those environmentalists that he wants to quote are opposed to it, is that they are saying there should be no development. Well, that is not the principle of sustainable development. The principle of sustainable development is that it must be development in harmony with the environment, development that can be sustained for generations to come, and this project is absolutely sustainable under all of those circumstances and meets those criteria.

The only view that is being taken by New Democrats and others is that there should be no development, and that is not what the Brundtland Commission said, and that is not what those who are proponents of sustainable development have said.

Mr. Doer: The very many people who are involved in grassroots environmental organizations across North America, international groups, Mr. Speaker, are not opposed to any development. They are opposed to the development of the complex funded by this government being located right in the middle of the wetlands region. That is what they are opposed to. They want it outside of the wetlands region—a very simple disagreement with the government.

I would ask the Premier not to misrepresent the hundreds of organizations and the international organizations on their position.

A final question to the Premier is: Many people are—[interjection] Well, I will let the Sierra Club and all the other international organizations speak for themselves. We will see who they agree with—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1350)

United Nations Earth Summit Manitoba Delegation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): The final question: The Premier is leading a delegation

of two other functionaries for a three-person delegation going to the international Rio summit. Mr. Speaker, there are many young people and many grassroots organizations that would dearly love to be at that Rio summit, to keep the politicians, to keep some of the people there just for photo opportunities, a little bit accountable on what they are actually committed to.

I would like to know: Would the Premier consider having other grassroots environmentalists and young people, in particular, who are so concerned about this summit, attend the conference with the Premier to replace the government representatives that he is taking?

Surely, if the Premier is there as an observer, he does not need two other observers who are functionaries of government. Could he not look at taking grassroots environmental people from the province of Manitoba to give us a more round-table approach at Rio to the environmental challenges that we have?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Council for International Co-operation will be attending in Brazil and will be there to ensure that those of us from the Manitoba delegation, who are going there as well to be able to see some of the Third World development projects of Manitoba Council for International Co-operation, can participate.

This conference, I might say, is one in which there is also, of much benefit to the province of Manitoba, the board meeting of the International Institute for Sustainable Development. The people who are travelling on behalf of the government of Manitoba are ex officio members of that board and have been participating in the board's meetings, the board's deliberations and in the board's actions. As such, they are the linkage between the government of Manitoba and the International Institute board, and they have played a role with that institute from its inception and foundation which has been very important to its location here in Manitoba.

When you have the secretary for the secretariat of Sustainable Development for the province and clerk of the Executive Council who is also an ex officio member of that IISD board there, you have representation at the highest decision-making levels of government of the people who must influence public policy by way of development of this theme and concept of sustainable development. I

think that is a very important factor for their presence.

Bill 70 Amendments

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill 70, The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act, is to offload provincial expenditure onto municipalities by capping the social assistance rates. On the one hand, this could cost the City of Winnipeg \$5.6 million. On the other hand, if they reduce their rates to the provincial level, it could cause extreme hardship to people on social assistance and may well be illegal depending on the ruling of the Findlay case before the Supreme Court.

Will the Minister of Family Services amend Bill 70 in order to allow municipalities to exceed the provincial rates and still cost-share the expense?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I would urge the member and other members to enter the debate on Bill 70 that has been tabled for a number of weeks. Perhaps, I was not following the debate as closely last week as I should, but I am not sure whether the honourable member or others from his party or from the Liberals have spoken on Bill 70 yet.

Clearly, Bill 70 is enabling legislation which enables the government to standardize the rates and standardize the entrance requirements for social allowance recipients. At the present time, we have dozens and dozens of municipalities and municipal corporations who are setting those rates. Some are much lower than the provincial standard, and I think there are two that are slightly higher than the provincial standard.

At the present time, department officials are working with members of the SARC committee who are looking at their recommendations and working together with them. The rates have not been set. The legislation is simply enabling legislation, and I think the member's suggested amendment shows a lack of understanding of the bill. The bill is not designed to set the rates, but simply to give government the ability to standardize those rates and standardize the entrance requirements to social allowances.

SARC Report Recommendations

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Why is this minister ignoring the unanimous recommendations of the SARC report, when just this morning Councillor Gilroy said that if those recommendations were implemented we would not be into this horrendous conflict between municipalities and the province? Why is he ignoring those recommendations?

* (1355)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, that report was produced by a committee representing the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, the urban municipalities as well as the City of Winnipeg. You are quite correct that Councillor Gilroy signed his name to that document representing the City of Winnipeg. Other municipal councils have had an opportunity to meet with department officials to talk about their concerns regarding social assistance, and there has been widespread support for that SARC report. As a result, we have come forward with that legislation.

If any municipal jurisdiction feels that the rates are not sufficient, the enabling legislation allows them to increase the rates within that municipality, and those municipal corporations will have the ability to do so. I tell you, we have referenced before the member's comments in opposition and what the NDP does in government, while we have increased our rate substantially in Manitoba, Ontario—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, how can this minister, in good conscience, force the City of Winnipeg to reduce rates for infants to bring them lower and in line with provincial rates? Why is this government using infants to offload expenses and to force people into further poverty when already we have the highest rate of child poverty in Canada?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think the member is being rather alarmist on suggesting that rates have been set. Those rates have not been set. I say to the member, of the 27,000 cases that the province is responsible for, more than half of those cases are within the city of Winnipeg and we have people who are drawing those rates now. As I have indicated, those are minimum rates.

If the member is an advocate for the City of Winnipeg and certain councillors who want to see

those rates differ, so be it; but those rates have not been set. We are in the middle of a process with department officials, members of SARC. That process is ongoing.

School Divisions Funding Information Delivery

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted when the now-Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) moved out of the Department of Education, because I thought that perhaps would end the hex on the Department of Education. It appears it has not, because information which should have been passed from the Department of Rural Development to the Department of Education and on to school divisions was not so passed.

Can the Minister of Education explain why school trustees in a number of school divisions, particularly St. Vital, were not given the appropriate information about portioning and about assessment which has led them to laying off a number of teachers in that school division because of inadequate information delivered from the province?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the province does have a process by which it meets with school divisions. That process was followed. When our new Education finance model was announced, when the Education funding was announced in January, there were meetings with members of our department and individual school divisions to assist them in applying that new Education finance model. At that time, which was late January or early February, those school divisions were told the appropriate portioning for their school divisions.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, how does the Minister of Education explain that a number of school divisions obviously did not understand the explanation, if such an explanation was given? I spoke this morning with the superintendent of the St. Vital School Division who ensures me that no such information was given.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, well, the information was given. It was given according to the process that we have followed in the past. We recognize that this was a new Education finance model and, because of the difficulties that some school divisions were experiencing in applying it for the first time, department officials did actually go out and meet

with the school divisions and take that time to assist school divisions in understanding the model.

* (1400)

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, this government likes to pride itself on the fact that it has not increased taxes. Well, the Manitoba Teachers' Society has just ranked the expectations of the Manitoba government's belief in the special levy which, of course, has to be raised at the municipal level. They have indicated that between the years 1988 and '91—they do not have the information yet for '92—the provincial special levy for education had to be increased on average by 29.4 percent leading with Assiniboine South at 51.1 percent.

Can the Minister of Education explain why they have offloaded their support for the Department of Education, so that it has deteriorated from some 80 percent in 1984 to some 69 percent in 1992, thereby forcing the municipalities to pick up the cost to fund education in the province of Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, this government has increased its funding for Education, and in this budget, it increased its funding for Education by 3 percent. Now, the support raised by individual school divisions through the special levy is an important type of support because it allows those individual school divisions a measure of autonomy within their divisions to set that special levy, but I think it is very important for the taxpayer to be reassured that the amount of money between the educational support levy and the special levy, that percentage has remained relatively constant.

Bill 70

Impact on Women

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, women throughout Manitoba, no matter what their age or their geography, make up a disproportionate percentage of people in Manitoba who are poor. Children, students, working women and seniors—women in Manitoba are poor more often and more deeply than men in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Status of Women if she has asked the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to do an impact study on the effects of Bill 70, on women in poverty in Manitoba, 98 percent of which are families headed by women in poverty and the vast majority of which live in the city of Winnipeg.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): The Minister of Family Services and I have ongoing dialogue about the needs of women and children in the province of Manitoba. In fact, we do know that there are more women than men living below the poverty line. Some of the reasons we understand for that, and we will continue to work to improve the situation of all women in Manitoba.

Women's Issues Government Initiatives

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services obviously is not listening.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Status of Women if she has discussed with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) strategies to help working women get out of poverty, such as apprenticeship training programs to enable working women who still make far less on average than men in this province and who drop out of the labour force far more—have a far higher dropout rate from the labour force—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): As the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and also in charge of the Women's Directorate, Mr. Speaker, we deal with all departments of government with issues that do affect women. I am in consultation, on a regular basis, with my colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), as with the Minister of Family Services, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), in many of the areas that deal with women's issues.

We attempt to set our priorities and our policies based on working together with women. We will continue to do that, and I will have time to expand during the Estimates process on all of the different activities that are ongoing.

Ms. Barrett: It should be a very short process—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Status of Women if she has entered into dialogue and discussion with the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme) to suggest strategies to help seniors, two-thirds of whom are women in poverty. Has she dialogued with him about strategies such as—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, unlike what has happened in the province of Saskatchewan with their recent budget—obviously there was no dialogue when they cut all kinds of programming for all seniors.

But I do want to indicate that the Seniors Directorate and the Women's Directorate share an office. We have outreach workers who work on behalf of women and seniors throughout the province. My colleague the Minister responsible for Seniors and I are in continual dialogue regarding issues that affect all seniors and senior women.

Dutch Elm Disease Program Review

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, this government's response to the widespread public outcry about the reduction of funding to the Dutch elm disease program has been to resurrect an old program of planting trees at approximately \$60 per tree on private lots.

My question for the Minister of Natural Resources is: Did the minister review his department's evaluation of that earlier program, and what program changes is he planning as a result?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that there was indeed an evaluation done in the program that was carried out, a similar program in 1990. Visitations were made a year later with a very high percentage, upwards to 84 percent survival growth, which I am told, is excellent by all measurements. So that certainly was one of the factors that encouraged me to revisit that program and to assure the sustainability of our urban forests by ensuring that there were young growing trees in place for those that we were removing.

Replacement Tree Allocation

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I would like to ask the minister, particularly to review the method of allocation of those trees, since in the last program, almost 60 percent of the trees were planted in Districts 5 and 6 in the south end of Winnipeg and only 5 percent of the trees were allocated in District 1 in the inner city.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I will take part of that

question as notice, as I am not familiar with the districts that she speaks of. I can tell her, though, that in general the applicants for the trees are taken from those homeowners who have specifically lost trees and had trees removed under the Dutch elm disease removal program. They are the ones that are eligible, and that is the criteria by which they are chosen. But I will undertake to provide the House and the honourable member with the specific area that will be covered in this year's program.

Ms. Friesen: The minister will find the numbers in his own report.

Review

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I would like to ask the minister how this year's program will act upon the three major recommendations of the 1990 report, and I am quoting from pages 13 to 15: the three major recommendations were the starting date of no later than mid-March; the restriction of customers who already have transplantable saplings on their property; and the allocation of a portion of the funding to public education.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, that simply reminds me to tell my bureaucrats to do a little more thinking in terms of those kind of objectives. I recall in mid-March, we might have had a foot of snow on the ground. I do not know, but it was a delayed spring. I suspect that the targeting of right about now, which I believe is the case, June 1, is a much more appropriate date for the starting of the tree planting.

In the final analysis, the success of the plantations is what surely counts. To have a living growing tree in place of a tree that was removed for disease purposes is the purpose of the program.

* (1410)

Fee Schedule Reform Government Commitment

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, medical practitioners in this province and in this country provide one of the best services possible in the world. When you combine those services and the universal medical system which we all value very highly and the open-ended, fee-for system, we have a serious control problem. That has been widely recognized by this minister and across this country. What is needed now is clear direction from this government.

Can the minister tell this House today when the fee reform commission or the fee reform implementation program will come, which is much needed, and can the minister tell us the model which this government is going to base upon the fee reform commission?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend might recall that fee schedule reform has been an issue of inclusion in, at least, probably four or five years of settlements with the MMA as the bargaining agent for physicians.

In terms of fee schedule reform under the current agreement, we have a consultant in place. The consultant from, I believe, New Brunswick is instructed to provide us with a report as soon as possible. It may be within 12 months that we are having some semblance of where the reform of the current fee schedule might lead us, Sir.

I simply indicate to my honourable friend that the newly elected president of the MMA, some three and a half weeks ago, offered to fast-track the fee schedule reform process so that we might be able to come to some reasonable new approach on fee-for-service physicians in the very near future.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, a 12-month period is a long period. The minister had this reform in front of his office for the last four years. We need a specific direction.

Can the minister tell this House when they are going to bring these changes? Will those changes take into account the role of other health care professionals, such as the nurse practitioners and other community-clinic concepts, to make sure that we spend our dollar in the smartest possible way?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I think my honourable friend would agree that the general thrust and direction of the reform paper tabled some two weeks ago, or 12-14 days ago, intends to pursue those avenues.

The issue specifically on the fee schedule and its reform narrows the consideration, as one might expect, to the fee-for-service compensation mechanism that has been negotiated for some 20 years with the MMA, and will be narrowed to that consideration. That does not preclude discussions with the MMA, College of Physicians and Surgeons, MARN, Manitoba Nurses' Union, and other care provider professional groups, to undertake a—how would I put this?—breaking of the turf boundaries

which prevents professionals from sharing responsibilities in the workplace, I think an issue that my honourable friend is alluding to.

Salaried Physicians

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House if they have any study from their policy analysis centre in terms of the role of the physician as a salaried physician, as we have known some physicians who have worked on a salary basis? Can the minister give us some indication about the study they have done in this area?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I do not think we have any study which specifically compares—I would presume my honourable friend would want to know—the relative effectiveness of a salaried physician working in the system versus fee-for-service.

We have in the last four years entertained the retention of physicians on either a fee-for-service basis, which is by far the majority method of compensation, but we have also seen over the last four years an increasing number of physicians undertake their work on a salaried basis working in a number of community-based clinics throughout Manitoba. Either system is acceptable to the province.

Fee schedule reform will certainly, we think, remove some of the very obvious inequities in the way the fee-for-service system works currently. We intend to take quite seriously the public offer of the new president of the MMA to fast-track that reform.

Portage la Prairie, Manitoba Bridge Inspection

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways.

For years, the local governments, residents in the constituency of Portage and the surrounding areas have been asking for a new bridge over the Assiniboine River on Highway 240 because of the condition of it and being a very old bridge, not considered a safe bridge. Saturday morning, a small compact truck hit the bridge. The impact of a small truck caused one section of the bridge to collapse and fall to the ground. Luckily, we did not have anybody killed, but it could have been a disaster under heavy traffic.

Can the Minister of Highways assure the people of Portage la Prairie that the bridge will be inspected very, very carefully before it is reopened to assure the people who use that bridge, including hundreds of school children, that it will be absolutely safe when it is reopened?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, as the member has indicated, at 2:30 on Saturday morning, a pickup truck proceeding south on PR 240 struck the west side of the bridge. As a result of the damage done there and the impact on the north-west diagonal, the approach section collapsed, and two people were injured in that unfortunate accident.

I want to indicate to the member that because it happened during the night, because of the immediate action of the RCMP, the R.M. of Portage, the City of Portage, my staff and the bridge crew, the safety action taken, no further accidents took place at that time. I want to indicate to the member as well that my crews have been working since that time, and we will have a replacement section in there hopefully within the next seven to 10 days, but before that bridge will be opened, there will be a complete inspection done to ensure that the safety will be there for the public.

Bridge Replacement

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, to the same minister, there are plans for a new bridge to be put in place over the Assiniboine a mile east of the existing bridge.

Will the minister now put the plans for that bridge into high gear and have it completed at the earliest possible moment?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the member that in the approved budget for '92-93, in my budget, I have \$200,000 designated for the design of the new bridge, which the member is alluding to. We also have \$760,000 in the '92-93 budget for the construction of the grade and embankment construction. So that is the first stage. I can assure the member that we will be escalating and moving forward as fast as we can in terms of the new bridge that is being slated for the area.

Pur-A-Tone Hog Operation Environmental Concerns

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, Pur-A-Tone is the Manitoba company that is looking to locate a major hog operation in the Rural Municipality of Dauphin near Dauphin Lake. In addition to the fact that there are always positive aspects to this kind of a development, there are also some other concerns being expressed by a number of residents with regard to the environment.

I want to ask the Minister of Environment whether he will be undertaking any kind of environmental review on this operation prior to any establishment of this operation in the Rural Municipality of Dauphin, particularly with regard to the ground water and run-off water as it may affect Dauphin Lake.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I hear a lot of offers for other locations for that company.

Agricultural operations are not normally licensed under The Environment Act, as the member for Dauphin well knows. The R.M. is having a planning meeting, a public meeting to hear concerns, and I am sure there will be a number of concerns raised at that meeting as to assurances that the public will be looking for as to the safety of the construction.

Now, the member for Dauphin is every bit as aware as I am that any infractions caused by agricultural operation is punishable under The Environment Act, but primarily in the location, the R.M. will be required to seek information, and the department of water resources and my department will be more than prepared to provide information to the R.M. on any questions that are raised in terms of the location and the matters that he raised, whether or not there might be any potential influence from that, and it will be a planning decision that will be made as to the location of that site.

* (1420)

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate whether the officials from his department will be attending any informational meetings and hearings so that this kind of information can be shared with all residents who might be concerned about the operation?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment, and I believe the department of water resources have been involved in some preliminary discussions, and, yes, they will be involved in

advising the municipality as to any concerns or issues that might be raised at that time.

Bill 82 Mandate

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Can the minister indicate, as a result of The Farm Practices Protection and Consequential Amendments Act which is now before the Legislature, whether there will be any additional reviews undertaken for major operations such as this? We are talking about 12,000 hogs at least per year, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask the minister whether these kinds of operations will be subject to any additional reviews as a result of The Farm Practices Protection and Consequential Amendments Act, which will in fact make it more difficult for questions to be raised after they have been approved.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, one of the areas that this department for which I am responsible, the Department of Environment, is quite interested in is working with The Farm Practices Protection and Consequential Amendments Act and with various municipalities to advise as to what are proper standards of operation for certain construction—lagoons, as an example.

As a direct result of that act, I believe that this is a case whereby the conditions of the operation are judged on whether or not they are normal practices and acceptable practices. In terms of regulating from the point of view of the environment, we will be advising the municipality, as I stated earlier, as will all departments of government when it comes to planning issues. As the member full well knows, information from all the departments of government is available to those municipalities.

Health Care System Reform Audiology Services

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): We continue to ask questions about the record of this government on health care as it relates to the new health care reform plan.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health how he justifies the reduction of a grant for the audiology program in Winnipeg School Division No. 1, when in fact on page 11 of his report, he states that this government is determined to target at-risk populations whose programs aim at prevention and

accessible services to populations which normally do not access health services.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, not that I want to waste valuable time in Question Period, but I have answered that question in Estimates, and I have answered that question four times in the House. Maybe my honourable friend can think of a new question and a new issue.

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

St. John's Ambulance Funding

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): This report, Mr. Speaker, was drafted after Estimates were put in place.

I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Health that I am sure the member for Portage (Mr. Connery) would be interested in, and that is: How does this minister justify the total reduction of a grant to the St. John's Ambulance program of \$35,300 for its rural service program when it states on page 36, we will attempt to transfer resources to rural areas of Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Again, Mr. Speaker, that issue was dealt with in Estimates four weeks ago and in Question Period once. Since it has only been dealt with in Question Period once, I will answer, so my honourable friend maybe can read Hansard three times after today.

Mr. Speaker, the St. John's Ambulance provides a valuable ambulance attendant training course. We have supported that, and members of our staff have utilized that course. The \$35,000 grant support had been in place for a number of years. Now, Sir, we are asking our staff within the ministry who access that course to pay the registration fees themselves. We do not expect that that will have any down side in terms of St. John's Ambulance's ability to deliver the course throughout the length and breadth of Manitoba, to volunteers in urban Manitoba as well as rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: The member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the member for Ste. Rose (Mr.

Cummings); the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh). [Agreed]

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli); Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), for Tuesday, May 26, 1992, at 10 a.m. [Agreed]

Nonpolitical Statement

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure, on behalf of the Premier (Mr. Filmon), to take part in the induction of Dr. Don Rae of Portage la Prairie into the Order of the Officers of the Buffalo Hunt, the highest honour the province can bestow on individuals who make outstanding contributions to life in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, it would be nice if the debate in the House would—[Interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Connery: Dr. Rae's tremendous sense of volunteerism and good will has contributed to the quality of life in Manitoba and far beyond our provincial borders. A family physician for 35 years in Portage la Prairie, Dr. Rae is also well known for his volunteer activities throughout Manitoba, Canada and around the world.

Dr. Rae has served as president of the College of Family Physicians, was the Manitoba Family Physician of the Year in 1990 and was chosen as the 1991 Family Physician of the Year by the College of Family Physicians of Canada. In addition, Dr. Rae is immediate past president of the World Organization of Family Doctors, an honorary professor at the Capital Institute in Beijing, China, an associate professor in the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine and a provincial medical examiner.

He is also honorary lieutenant colonel of the 26th Field Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery, a chancellor of the St. John's Ambulance Priory of Canada and a knight of justice in the most venerable order of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask this Legislature to join with me in congratulating Dr. Don Rae of Portage la Prairie.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted by Her Majesty.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 2. Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation on page 15 of the Estimates book, (a) Administration \$4,348,100.

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we were talking about the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation when we left off on Thursday, and we were in the middle of a discussion about some of the problems with GRIP as we see them and had raised a number of issues with the minister, discussed some of the aspects of a presentation that was made by the farmers concerned with the inequities of GRIP. I did not refer to it by that title, but that is the title of the group at Gilbert Plains. Audrey Stoski had sent in a proposal or a list of questions I guess to the minister, I understand, on April 9. I want to ask the minister whether he has responded on an item-by-item basis to that brief that was presented to the minister, and if he has, could I get a copy?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): No, we are still preparing the response at this time.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister indicate when he expects to have a response to this group, and whether in fact any of the changes that they have asked for he will be in a position to indicate if they have indeed been implemented?

Mr. Findlay: I would anticipate the response will be ready to go out in a few days.

Mr. Plohman: The other part of the question, in terms of any of the items, we had focused on one, for example, the verifiable records for previous years. Is there any positive consideration for any of these requests?

Mr. Findlay: The last day we spent considerable time talking about verifiable information in the past and that has not been able to be extended to anybody in the province at this time.

Mr. Plohman: The minister says "at this time." Does he mean that there is still further consideration being given to this issue or does he anticipate that is his final position?

Mr. Findlay: Well, GRIP as a program is not only provincial but it is national and involves, you know, federal-provincial partners, and it is in an ongoing process of evolution. Nothing is cast in stone in any aspect, and as I said last day we are in not only a major crop insurance review in the province but a national review of GRIP. I cannot prejudge what will come forward in the way of recommendations in the course of that review.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister indicate whether any of these identified concerns and suggestions from the farmers concerned with the inequities of GRIP, have any of them been forwarded to the GRIP review committee?

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the signatories committee, two members from Manitoba that had six meetings last spring, I will have to ask if they attended and presented that information. [interjection] Yes, they did. They attended and presented the information to the GRIP signatories review committee, or the committee that went around the province and heard input last spring.

Mr. Plohman: Well, yes, I think maybe the minister is using the term "signatories review committee" perhaps loosely. Maybe I am wrong. It was not the

signatories committee that went around, it was representatives from that committee perhaps that were looking at public input into GRIP—called it GRIP committee perhaps.

Mr. Findlay: Who went around this past—I will call it late winter were the two Manitoba representatives on the national signatories committee.

Mr. Plohman: Now, in addition to the presentations that were made by individuals, some groups made presentations, and the minister is saying that the farmers concerned with the inequities of GRIP, or at least Audrey Stoski made a presentation, I am not sure that the group as such made a presentation because they may not have formed their ideas to that point in time of the meeting. Will the minister be forwarding on, or has he forwarded on this brief that was sent to him on April 9 to the Manitoba representatives on the signatories committee?

Mr. Findlay: If both signators have not received it, I will make sure that they do receive it so that they can use it in the process of the national review that is ongoing right now.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I guess that would indicate to us that it would not be too late for them to consider this at this time. What is the status of their work in that review?

* (1440)

Mr. Findlay: The review is a national review and we expect them to make at least a preliminary report to the ministers at the beginning of July when all the ministers across the country meet. I would not anticipate that will be their final presentation to the ministers, but it will be a preliminary one so their information may eventually be presented to all ministers.

Mr. Plohman: Was this the timetable that was established when they went out for the review or is it way behind schedule right now?

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the process that has been ongoing, when the two signators—when we met this spring or, say, late winter in the six meetings across the province—received input from whomever wanted to submit it—that information was taken forward to the national committee that looked at proposed changes for 1992. What we are dealing with in terms of the national signatories committee review is for 1993, the recommendations that will come forward from the experiences of '91 and '92 from the

various provinces and the various types of programs.

The review of that will be brought forward to us for 1993, but the committee last winter met looking at the proposals for 1992, and now we are looking at 1993.

Mr. Plohman: Well, then that begs the question, what changes, and can the minister perhaps provide us with a list of the changes that were made for '92 as a result of those meetings because there certainly was a large number of concerns put forward, and they obviously have not been implemented? I guess I have two questions on that. What did they recommend and implement for this year, and what are they carrying forward, the other suggestions from their meetings for consideration for possible broader changes for '93?

Mr. Findlay: The three major things that came out of the meetings were the fact that people wanted to have SMA extended into 1992 that had been put in place for 1991. They wanted SMA in place for '92 and that has happened. It is in place for 1992.

Secondly, there were requests that since we are going into IPI, Individual Productivity Indexing, that the question of hail happening in 1990 or '91 would be adjusted in terms of a person's record. We have committed to the producers in the information sent to them about three weeks ago, I guess, that the onus is now on them to come forward with the information to verify that they had hail in '90-'91, and that will be dealt with.

The third one was the fact that information to the producers was not flowing fast enough. We recognized that for some time, and that is why we are trying to be in a position to have information out many weeks earlier for 1993. We want to have the review process brought forward, say, first to the ministers' meeting in July and hopefully conclusions can come out of that by October or November, so that by the very beginning of 1993, like January or February, more information can flow to the producers earlier than has in the past.

I am not faulting anybody for that. It is just a fact, time was not on our side. We hope to be able to get more information to producers earlier than we have in the past.

So those are the three major things: SMA extension, hail adjustment, and information flowing earlier to producers. I understand those were items also addressed in the Stoski letter that you are

referring to there. So those are positive in terms of response.

I also understand that the other signator for the GRIP national committee was also c.c.'d on that letter, so that means that the information has gone to both signators.

Mr. Plohman: Does this mean that hail losses will not impact negatively on the average for an individual for '92? What is the difference in the hail issue that the minister mentioned?

Mr. Findlay: Okay, right now, for 1992 for IPI, as I mentioned last day, 50 percent of their 1992 coverage is based on the yields of '90 and '91. If a producer had, you know, any amount of hail in '90 or '91, naturally that lowered their production.

So we are in a position to want to receive confirmation that they had hail and will make appropriate adjustments to a person's actual record in '90 and '91, which obviously will raise his IPI for '92 from where it is with the hail included.

Mr. Plohman: So that hail losses would not drag the average down, that was what I was questioning. The minister says that is the case. What about big game crop damage? Is there also an adjustment for that? Because there are a lot of farmers in my area, in particular, on the Riding-Duck Mountains that are affected by big game damage.

Mr. Findlay: The impact of big game or waterfowl in terms of causing losses is not to be adjusted in the same fashion as hail. Some of the thinking is that with hail, it is a random event, a person cannot do anything to manage himself away from hail. But for big game or waterfowl, they tend to be somewhat more predictable in terms of location or type of fowl. So it is not deemed appropriate to use the same kind of adjustments for those kinds of incidences, I guess.

Mr. Plohman: Well, I understand the minister has received a letter dated May 5. This letter is from Don Fyk of Garland, Manitoba. It concerns the GRIP program and the yield average adjustments concerning his farming operation. He said that his land is located against the east side of the Duck Mountain Provincial Park:

Because wildlife does not acknowledge human boundaries, my crop suffers severe big game losses. My production is reduced because of the this damage which is beyond my control. In turn, GRIP policy also reduces my yield average even on farms that are not damaged by big game. If this

unfair practice continues, the viability of my farming operation will be compromised. My GRIP coverage will be reduced to the point where it becomes a liability. This policy will undermine my farming enterprise, and therefore my target revenue under the GRIP program. The target revenue under the GRIP program will be drastically cut. Due to the location of some of my farms, I am being discriminated against by this policy. Farmers who suffer big game damage must be compensated in the same way as those who suffer hail and waterfowl damage.

Now, this person is mentioning waterfowl as being different than big game. The minister's answer seemed to say that big game and waterfowl were treated the same.

If viable farm operations distant from central urban areas do not receive equal treatment in policy, the result will be greater farm losses and bankruptcies. Waterfowl and big game both fall under the category of wildlife. Why has your policy compensated waterfowl damage, i.e., farms in the Portage area; and penalized those which suffer big game damage, i.e., farms near wildlife preserves?

* (1450)

I believe that farmers in all areas must be consulted when policy is being formulated that has such far-reaching effects on farm operations across Canada. I believe in wildlife management. I do not believe that I should bear the burden of what is a societal responsibility regarding its upkeep. I await your reply outlining this policy.

I just want to ask the minister whether he has considered the arguments in this letter, I think, a very well-reasoned proposal and concern by this individual farmer. There are many others in my area of the province who are impacted this way, I think unfairly, by GRIP. I want the minister maybe to elaborate a little bit on why he is doing what he is doing.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of big game and waterfowl, both are compensated for in the year of the event under separate programs. There is a compensation program after adjustment for the level of damage, but in terms of their impact on a person's IPI, they are both treated the same.

At this point in time, they do both affect his IPI, same as excess flooding and other events that are fairly serious for a farmer, but at this point in time, we are not in a position to treat them any differently

than considering a person's actual yield as a result of the events of the growing season.

Mr. Plohman: Well, I thank the minister for his explanation that the two are treated the same. It seems perhaps this individual is wrong in terms of his understanding so far as waterfowl is concerned.

But it would seem that these are acts that are beyond, really, the control of the individual farmers. They cannot go shooting big game, and I do not think anyone would advocate that they do that. They are in that situation where they try to co-exist right on the borders of these wildlife preserves and parks and so on, where they try to co-exist with wildlife.

The minister is really saying, well, you really, I guess, should not be farming there then. If you are at a disadvantage, you have to live with that. I think he should look at this more sensitively from the point of view of damage that is really beyond the control. His first answer was that, well, it is a little different; you can predict it more. I did not understand how he feels that there is any way that the farmer is at fault in this and that, therefore, he should not get any consideration.

Mr. Findlay: No, there is no question that we understand that either waterfowl or big game, the farmer is not in complete control of what can happen. His location in certain cases certainly predisposes himself to that situation, but we do not at this time have a mechanism of adjusting for that in IPI. That does not mean that we are not trying to find a way. We are trying to convince our federal partner that this is something that needs to be addressed the same as hail, but for the time being, hail is the only issue we have been able to get accommodation on. As I said earlier, that does not mean they will not continue to try to have the impact of what has happened to these producers addressed in a more favourable way.

The people who support wildlife or waterfowl have a responsibility, I think, to assist where farmers are negatively impacted. Through some programs, they do, but in the case of IPI, nothing has been worked out yet to the obvious satisfaction of those producers affected.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister clarify what his role is? He said he is trying to get these changes with the federal government, considering it is federal as well, which we all understand. Then he refers to the signatories committee and other occasions. I

maintain that the minister should have a fairly strong role to play in changes because he is in a position to have those brought to his attention by many different groups and individuals as well as in the Legislature, and therefore, it should have direct input into what is being considered by the signatories committee, not telling them what to do necessarily or directing them, but saying, here are major concerns that I would like to see you at least attempt to address.

So can the minister just kind of clarify whether it is efforts that he is making as an individual with the federal minister, efforts that he is making with the signatories committee, or what is his role versus the signatories committee on this?

Mr. Findlay: The issues that are being addressed, both the waterfowl and big game, are on the table of the signatories committee and have been there and are still being worked on.

Mr. Plohman: These issues are on the table brought there by Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: They have been brought forward by other members on the committee, but we are participating in it, and you know, we have the experiences of Manitoba to also bring to the table, as referenced in the letter you just mentioned from May 5.

Mr. Plohman: So the minister is saying then, he is referring individual concerns that seem to be falling through the slats on the program. He is referring them on as a matter of policy or course to the signatories committee, to Manitoba's representatives to take up with their colleagues.

Mr. Findlay: We are asking in many cases that the issues be dealt with at the signatories committee so that there is, you know, a national approach on the same basis, and naturally in terms of getting concurrence from the federal partner, that is the most appropriate way.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, so rather than at a ministerial meeting raising these specific concerns with GRIP, they usually go through the signatories committee, and then recommendations might be discussed by the ministers when they are finalizing some changes?

Mr. Findlay: That is the process, yes.

Mr. Plohman: On November 18, Hank made a presentation in Brandon at the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, which I attended, and I listened very

carefully to what he had to say about GRIP at that time. I wanted to, I think, characterize some of the goals of GRIP and, I think, accurately. He said it was supposed to be financially self-sustaining, not open to abuse, that it should have predictability in it, and it should be targeted to those in need. It should be individualized coverage and it should be easy to explain. I remember making some editorial comments about some of his objectives, the outline.

I think that is accurate; that is basically what some of the goals were. There are probably more. He said that, as I recall, it should be targeted to those in need. I wonder if the minister rejects that as a goal. If he does not reject it as a goal, then how can he justify continuing with the program in an area like the southwest corner of the province, where some of them will be down to \$70 an acre because the program is indeed not targeted to those in need at all.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the principle of targeting, that was one of the prerequisites or one of the principles of GRIP from the beginning. In terms of targeting, we are using offsets, offset between price and yield, whereas if a person has a high yield at a moderate price, he may achieve his gross revenue and have no payout. That is how targeting really functions in my mind in this program.

* (1500)

The unfortunate situation of the southwest is that their long-term history of production, as I said the other day, is not acceptable because of droughts and maybe lower capability of land in many parts of that region, so they do not have a yield multiplied by the 70 percent of the IMAP price that is really what they would like to have, obviously. But the principles that are used are basically the same across the province, and I guess when I look at the Saskatchewan model this year, there is absolutely no targeting going on. You will get the same top-up, the same deficiency payment no matter what your yield is in the province of the Saskatchewan, so that the hardest hit areas that might happen this year because of a drought will not have any additional support whatsoever, whereas with GRIP in this province, if you have a very poor yield, very poor number of bushels per acre on a moderate price, you will get a pretty significant payout in Manitoba.

So in a comparative sense, ours is much more targeted than the Saskatchewan model of 1992. The particular circumstance of the southwest

regarding universal principle use across the province is certainly that a situation exists there that is going to be hard to deal with, and we will look forward to the crop insurance review recommendations that they might bring forward dealing with the particular circumstances of the southwest.

Mr. Plohman: But the minister said they are dealing with '93, so for '92 the area average is being eliminated for them. I understand that is what the minister said. He confirmed the other day that they are not going to have the area average as an option for them this year which they did in the previous year, and meanwhile they are reviewing the situation. Does it not seem to be kind of a backwards way to do it, to cut them off of this kind of little bit of a fall-back support while this review is taking place that might develop something that would be targeted to that kind of a situation?

Mr. Findlay: A few months ago we approached the federal government, asking them if they would be in a position to advance area average opportunity to producers again in Manitoba, and their answer was no. For those producers, for some of them, they will have been able to improve themselves through IPI, for 50 percent of their coverage in 1992 is based on their yields of '91 and '90. SMA is again available to them so that they can improve their coverage in '92 basis their ability to produce in '92, but that is where we are at.

We talked to a few producers out of the southwest there, and first, the Saskatchewan announcement, they said, well, we want the Saskatchewan model. Then we did some arithmetic and asked them to do some arithmetic, and they realized that certainly in the case of the probability of a drought they are much better off on the Manitoba side of the border than they are on the Saskatchewan side, given the changes that have occurred over there.

But that in no means diminishes the fact that we know there is a problem there. There is no quick and easy answer for it in '92, especially when the federal government said no to the area-average approach which we had hoped we could carry forward for another year along with SMA.

Mr. Plohman: Did the Crop Insurance Corporation develop a cost-impact analysis of continuing with the area average as an option for the whole province and for parts of the province? This is really an issue in only certain parts of the province, it seems to me.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the impact of producers being below average, it is spread right across the province. It is not just in the southwest area. The actual cost last year was about \$35 million to bring everybody up to area average. That is the cost in terms of payouts that occurred.

It is fair to say that the area average question does not apply only to the southwest. In fact, I think, Risk Area 10 is an area that received substantial benefit from it last year.

Mr. Plohman: Was there a projection done for the cost to the federal government or to the province to offer this option for '92 while the review is taking place? A specific number there.

Mr. Findlay: In rough calculation, we would say that the federal premium cost when they are paying 42 percent on revenue insurance, it would be about \$5 million for 1992. We are paying 25 percent so I guess you could say that with us paying 25 percent, it would work out to about \$3 million maybe, 2.6.

Mr. Plohman: So if one were to suggest that in the absence of the federal government going along with this, that the province would offer this option, the cost would be about \$7.6 million to the province?

Mr. Findlay: That is premium cost only, and then there would be any deficit liability on top of it, but that would be premium cost only for the two governments, \$7.6 million.

Mr. Plohman: Was it, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the premium cost that the federal government was balking at, or I guess their decision was based on their liability to the program, as well.

Mr. Findlay: Basically, they just told us no. I would guess the member is right in assuming they looked at both the premium cost and the liability and then gave us a flat no.

I would just say that the one thing we did accomplish for them was the higher price for grains, in terms of using the two-year lag for the 15-year IMAP, which helped everybody in the province no matter what their coverage was. In terms of bushels, it helped their gross revenue be held up a little higher than it would have been under the federal proposal. That is the one we won with them. I suppose I say that with this one, we lost.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it just did not make any sense to agree to a moving average that would see lower prices every year in any event. As it is, it is still lower than last year, and we argued

that it should not be based on a moving average because it would roll right out of existence basically in terms of a meaningful program.

* (1510)

The minister is now saying, well, they recognize—and he, on a technicality or whatever, was able to gain something for the farmers. I would not characterize it as that. I think he should not have agreed to this kind of a formula in the first place, which is doomed to failure, and I guess we are going to see it next year. Hopefully, the prices will be substantially higher, and the minister will not have to suffer the consequences of that in terms of the flak that he will get from the farmers in terms of the support price.

That support formula was just flawed so badly. To use that kind of thing was dooming farmers to lower incomes in the successive year based on the support price. I guess he can take some consolation in winning that one, as he calls it, from the federal government, but certainly, as far as the southwest is concerned, there are a couple of other aspects that I want to ask him.

I have petitions—oh, there are a lot of them here—from people in Tilston, St. Claire and surrounding the Melita area, Pearson, and what they suggest on this petition is that we petition the Manitoba government to overrule the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation's unreasonable position and allow all producers to be covered at least the area average for the first 50 percent of the '92 GRIP coverage.

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

So they were negotiating here. They were not saying that they wanted—because they realize there is cost and maybe the chance of getting it, but they were hoping to get some kind of a saw-off on this. If they were only to get 50 percent of the coverage, would that be half of what we are talking about here, or is it skewed that there would be a higher cost to the program on the first 50 percent of the coverage, or would it be exactly half of what the total coverage would be?

Mr. Findlay: I guess I would have to ask the member to further clarify the desire there. What I could ask, is it on the top 50 percent or the bottom 50 percent, and obviously the top 50 percent is probably all payout. The bottom 50 percent, they should get from the marketplace.

I would have to assume, though, that what they are really referring to is, if they are three bushels below area average, that they be given one and a half bushels. I think that is undoubtedly what they are talking about.

I cannot answer for what our federal partner would say in that regard. Given the fact that they have said no in Saskatchewan repeatedly to any consideration like that, it kind of prejudices what kind of answer they would give us.

Mr. Plohman: How was it that they agreed to this last year? Was it done on a one time only? Was it designed to get people to sign up for the program? What would have been the rationale last year as opposed to this year? Things are not really significantly any better for a large part of those producers.

Mr. Findlay: Basically, last year it was done as a phase-in or transitional offer for producers, knowing that going into 1992 in Manitoba, 50 percent of their coverage in 1992 is based on IPI using 1990 and '91 yields. Producers knew a year ago that this was the case and that they had an opportunity in 1991 to improve their coverage for '92 by their practices in 1991. Granted, some of that is luck based on the weather and all that sort of thing, but it was granted to us as an interim measure as we move into IPI in 1992.

Mr. Plohman: Am I clear that the minister would support this proposal, or has he simply conveniently skated around that issue as to what his position is on it?

Mr. Findlay: To the best of our knowledge, we have not received that formally in any sense, that proposal that you are talking about that is there now, so we cannot respond to it, not having seen it.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, because these were not strictly in the format, which is very, very—well, I do not know if I would call it picky, but very specific on the format of the petition in order for it to be tabled in the Legislature—these did not get tabled, but they will be tabled here for the minister, and in that way, he will have those as opposed to through the regular method in the Legislature, because the Clerk ruled that there was some little quirk in the wording that did not allow—I do not know if the minister has ever had to present one of these, but they are very specific about what is allowed in these in order to meet the requirements. So I will

ask the clerks to make a copy of these and provide them to the minister.

I wanted to know if the minister would, in addition to pursuing that with the federal government, emphatically, on behalf of these producers—and that would be for this year, because there is a review going on. Hopefully, if something like this will happen next year in any event, that the minister would pursue this aggressively with the federal minister for this particular year, and also could he comment on perhaps asking the federal minister to at least refrain from attempting to collect back from Western Grain Stabilization from these producers in this area? I mean, that is really rubbing salt into the wound for producers in that area, I guess one could argue for many throughout the province, but particularly under those circumstances.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, the announcement at the end of last week that the federal government was going to pursue overpayments under WGSA was shocking to us. We did not expect that they would follow through with that. The overpayment did not occur because the farmers were at fault in any fashion at all. The interim payment made a year ago under the '90-91 WGS Program was done by the federal bureaucrats. They were making the calculation about four months before the crop year-end and obviously made an error in their calculation and paid out more money than they should have.

When the crop year was completed, they came up with the calculation that showed they paid out something like \$330 per farmer on average more than they should have, and I think the highest request for repayment is about \$620 per producer. I also understand that about 80 percent of the producers who were in WGSP are going to be getting letters requesting repayment.

It is very inappropriate that they would do it at this time with farm incomes being what they are. The amount of money is not a lot, but the principle involved in terms of the hurt inflicted on people who are already suffering because of low grain prices and poor farm incomes is surprising to me, that they would have gone through with this, really surprising.

Mr. Plohman: Besides being surprised, has the minister communicated that to the federal minister?

Mr. Findlay: We discussed this at a ministerial meeting the time before last and said it would not go over very good if they went ahead and did this, but they proceeded anyway.

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister know whether the federal minister intends to collect this off of payments that might be coming from their share under GRIP or NISA?

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the agreements, they have the right to request that payment be deducted. My understanding is that they have sent letters to all producers at this time, or they are in the mail, one or the other, and they will be asking producers to indicate whether they will make their repayment by cheque, by deduction on NISA, deduction on crop insurance or deduction on revenue insurance. It looks like they are asking producers for a response in the letter they are sending out as to how they want to correct their account, by direct cheque or by deduction in one of the three programs that they are partners in.

In the agreement, they have the authority to do that, but as I understand it, at this time, they are asking the producer to indicate his choice of how to repay it.

* (1520)

Mr. Plohman: Considering that one of the goals of the program is to target those who need it, and everything is on computer, certainly the Crop Insurance Corporation must be able to pull out those who are functioning in the program below area average.

Is there not an argument that could be made that the federal government be asked, I mean, first of all, not to collect from anyone, but certainly in terms of targeting and hardship, not to collect from those who are receiving less than the area average due, really, to no fault of their own, due in large respect to natural disasters that have occurred, and their record under crop insurance has been hurt by that?

Mr. Findlay: Well, I guess, as I said earlier, my understanding is that, at this time, the letter going out is leaving it strictly up to the producer's choice as to how he addresses the overpayment.

I do not know at this time what the next step would be if they show as none of the four options given, or whether they are prepared to address it over a longer period of time. That is another option, I guess, that would be somewhat helpful to those producers, if it was done over a two or three-year period, as opposed to one that they seem to be proposing right now.

Mr. Plohman: Well, even at such time as grain prices approach the five-year previous average or

something like that, there could be some criteria established in terms of reflecting the ability to pay. I think the minister has lots of imagination and leeway there to approach the federal government on behalf of these producers to ease any impact that this might have. My understanding is that they may choose none of the options, but the federal government can simply then impose an option; in other words, deduct it from a payment.

Mr. Findlay: Well, certainly, as the members says, we have ways and means to bring the topic forward and ask for consideration for the producers over this period of time that we are in right now. I do not think it is unjust, since the federal government, through WGSP administration, are the ones that made the error. It was not the farmers.

I do not think the federal government would be fair to demand payment immediately to correct that. We are certainly prepared to follow through and ask for some sense of leniency in terms of dealing with those who want to be dealt with over a much longer period of time, when grain prices do recover. That is a hope and dream we all have, and we have been waiting for some time.

Some of the more recent information coming out of Europe would indicate that maybe the GATT process will somehow be successful in the intermediate term and lead to that opportunity of better grain prices down the road.

Mr. Plohma: Well, we might have a chance to talk, hopefully, about GATT in these Estimates, in terms of the minister's position with regard to that, but I wanted to just ask the minister, he had mentioned three issues dealing with the GRIP committee that was out: hail, SMA, and better information—earlier, faster, whatever.

I was talking with Owen McAuley in January and at that time he had given me a list of concerns that were presented by producers. He listed suggestions that came forward from at least three of the six meetings. He listed those that were raised at every meeting and two of those were addressed by the minister. Two of the others were actually addressed as well, I believe: individual coverage, No. 1; support levels for 1992, not going to provide enough protection. That was addressed by way of the change with IMAP that resulted in, rather than \$3.84, \$4.08 a bushel for wheat, and so all of the first four that were mentioned in all of the meetings

would have seemed to have been addressed in some way by the committee this year.

In (b) there were a number of suggestions, about 10, that came forward from half of the meetings. They wanted an appeal process outlined. I guess the first one, crop insurance risk areas are too large. That would be in the crop insurance review and would be addressed there in some way. They wanted the long-term average yield as calculated by crop insurance, they said it was not realistic for certain areas, in five out of the six meetings, the long-term average—LTAY, that is long-term average yield, right?—so five out of the six, almost unanimous in those meetings. That was critical for so many, and yet was not addressed, it would seem, in this year. As a matter of fact, because of the area average not being allowed, it went backwards for people. Maybe that is what they were raising there.

A discount surcharge system should be set up. Producers felt soil classification areas hurt their coverage. That would certainly be what happened in area 12 and perhaps others the minister could provide us with information on, but certainly, area 12 farmers were in demonstrating on what happened there. The information stuff is in that one, No. 7, I see the better and more transparent information, better communication network and published forecast prices, five out of six meetings.

Producers have asked for the reduction of premiums to be continued. One of the others was: cost of production is to be used in calculating payments from the program. He said that point polarized people at meetings, the cost-production issue. In any event it was raised a number of times. Is the minister aware of whether these other points are all before the signatories committee for review in '93, or has that list been revised downward to a shorter number?

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the other points that the member raises in term of issues that are brought forward, they are still all on the agenda for the signatories committee to deal with on into '93. Some of the items that the member mentions, like soil classification and crop insurance information, is certainly dealable through the crop insurance review committee, so in either one review or the other, the crop insurance or the revenue insurance reviews all the information brought forward is still very much on the table.

Mr. Plohman: Insofar as risk area 12, the minister wrote a letter on June 7 indicating that any changes would be found as a result of the review committee which he set up June 7 of '91, indicated that those would be effective for the coverage area for '91-92 as opposed to the subsequent year. The committee eventually met and came to a unanimous decision that \$10 an acre would be the minimal adjustment that should be made in that area. I think farmers felt it should be higher than that, but that was what was agreed upon as I understand it.

Is that the minister's understanding? He must have received that report now. He was sitting in the House when we asked him and he had not received the report. Has he now got a report by that committee that recommends a \$10 per acre adjustment for coverage in the risk area of 12 as a result of the review that was done on soil classifications?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, we have the report. It is in from the committee. The member is referring to a letter of June 7. If he looks further on in the letter, he will see that the steering committee will be struck shortly to analyze data collected to make recommendations to my office by the fall of this year. That was the letter written, June of 1991 meeting, fall of '91, which obviously they did not meet because the report came to me on May the 1st, as I recall. I also proposed that we can look at the retroactivity if warranted. Certainly, at that time, in June of last year, I wrote to the federal minister. He wrote back—I believe it was August—and he said no.

* (1530)

When the committee was getting close to the end of its deliberations, this spring, in April, we wrote to the federal minister again saying that we expected the recommendations to come forward and suggest some shrinking of the difference between 12 and 32 soils and asked if he would consider looking at the issue for '91. He wrote back again and said no.

So it is basically unfortunate that the information did not come forward by last fall as we had expected it to, so that we could deal with '91. What it did was to bring forward information that we could deal with for 1992, but not for 1991.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, is the minister suggesting that it was the fault of the farmers that this committee did not get its report prepared by October of '91, rather than May of '92?

Mr. Findlay: I am not saying it is the fault of anybody. I mean, the committee was struck and numerous members are on the committee. They had meetings and deliberations and discussions and decided to have certain individuals bring forward information in the way of studies to utilize in their deliberations. I am not faulting anybody, but obviously the committee report was not finalized until many, many months after we had hoped it would be.

Mr. Plohman: The minister made this commitment for the analysis—or if the analysis came forward and recommended changes, that they would be retroactively applied to the 1991 enrollment year. He made that commitment verbally prior even to the deadline for sign-up.

My information is from those producers that it was made at a May 9 meeting in '91, and the deadline had been extended to May 15 at that time I understand. So prior to the sign-up, he informed the producers that if their concern was legitimate, and I could see how this would develop, they are raising a concern, the minister comes out and says, yes, if your concerns are legitimate, we will apply it retroactively to '91. He then put it in writing.

I notice he is referring to some other sections of the letter. The quote that I think is appropriate or significant is on June 19, the letter to Garvin Kabernick. The minister states that if in the analysis it is deemed appropriate to change crop insurance coverage—and I take it from the minister it has been deemed appropriate to change it—and GRIP coverage for the area, these adjustments will be retroactively applied to the 1991 enrollment year.

So the minister got people to sign up for the program based on a verbal promise, while they say that they signed up because they were assured of—if there were any inequity, which they were sure of, right, and it is proven that they were right. If there were any inequity, this would be addressed, and does the minister agree that this would entice farmers to sign up, based on a promise by the minister that these would be addressed for 1991.

Mr. Findlay: The discussion you are referring to there, I guess you are talking about June, I mean, that is well after the sign-up deadline. [interjection] Well, the May 9 meeting was, you know, probably the second meeting that we had with them.

We had one in late April, and they brought forward some concerns. Based on what they brought

forward, yes, I saw that there was reason to do some analysis that would justify whether there was or there was not an inequity existing between 12 and 32 soils, so that is why we struck the committee, to try to find some scientific basis on which to establish whether there was or there was not a difference.

As I said, we moved forward as quickly as we could with setting up the committee and with asking the federal government if they would concur with that for '91 and beyond. They have concurred for '92 and beyond, but they did not concur for '91. That is one stumbling block. The other stumbling block is the fact that if this report had come forward as requested in the fall of 1991, I think we would have been in a much better position to have been able to deal with '91 than we were able to do on May 1, 1992.

The study did clearly demonstrate that the difference between 12 and 32 soils is not anywhere as near as dramatic as had been recorded in the past, and clearly, for all those producers, IPI, over time, certainly deals with any differences between those soils, because now their coverage is based on their ability to produce and manage those soils, no matter whether they are drainable or poorly drained soils.

Mr. Plohman: Well, I think the minister knows that the farmers do not believe that this adjustment is the fair adjustment. They think it is the minimal adjustment. It is not like they are satisfied, but in order to get an agreement prior to the sign-up deadline for this '92 year, they at least wanted to have an agreement in so that the ministers and the committee could deal with that specifically.

If one group or part of the committee or farmers were saying \$20 and the others were saying \$10, then naturally there would be no agreement, and they could not have a unanimous report. They agreed on 10 simply to get the matter dealt with, and I think the minister knows that. They will still want to see further adjustments in future years as a result of the discrepancies between 12 and 32 soils.

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, as I said earlier, IPI helps them deal with it on an ongoing basis, but clearly, the crop insurance review will have something to say about this subdivision within this risk area. I dare say they will also have something to say about risk areas as a whole across the province and how coverages are assigned.

Clearly, major changes are probably going to be requested and looked at leading into 1993, but this soil review in Risk Area 12 in 1991 started to highlight people's concerns about the way things have been done in the past, and we are getting on with dealing with them as fast as we can in conjunction with our other partner.

I have to tell the member that I am sure that the crop insurance review, when it comes forward, will be a very interesting document, not only in Manitoba, but in other jurisdictions across this country too, as it will look at all the processes of the crop insurance coverage establishment on an ongoing basis.

I think we will be seen as being very proactive in this area in terms of modernizing coverages, so producers are able to have, in some fashion, the level of coverage that they deem appropriate and affordable for themselves.

Mr. Plohman: Is it safe to say that the minister now includes in all his letters that if the federal government agrees, he will make these changes?

Mr. Findlay: I guess if one looks at hindsight, one better be very careful that this is very explicitly laid out, because we are very much in a partnership; not only in a two-way partnership, we are in a three-way partnership in our programs, and we have been involved in a considerable consultation process in the establishment of GRIP and the ongoing management of GRIP.

On a national basis, it has become very difficult because different jurisdictions want to do different things, but we believe, as best we can, we will want to operate on an ongoing basis with a three-way partnership of producers, federal people and provincial officials to try to come to a consensus on all the various areas of contention so that we can have a program that is actuarially sound over time and predictable for the producers.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister tell us the status of the crop insurance review in terms of, when there will be an interim report, if that will be issued to him?

Mr. Findlay: When the committee was set up, the initial desire was to have the report in before seeding of 1992. They have not reported yet. That was not a definitive deadline. We said, if possible, but if it was going to take longer because of difficulty in coming to a consensus on certain issues that take more time. So certainly I do not have any deadline in front of me at this time and given none that they

can report to, but I do expect to have the report in the next few months.

I think it is important that we have it before the September-October period, because we want to get on with looking at it and analyzing it and then starting the federal-provincial discussions leading into 1993. We will also have the recommendations from the revenue insurance review, hopefully at the same time so that we can look at both together in terms of addressing the changes that need to be done for '93. It is probably fair to say that there will be some changes that will be proposed that may be somewhat controversial by one or more of the partners.

So it will take some time to be able to work our way through the appropriate decisions that can be done for '93 and those which will have to be delayed for further down the road. I am not saying it is going to be an easy road ahead in terms of making the decisions that are necessary, but I hope that we are able to have both timetables of decision making happening during the fall and early winter of '92 and leading into '93.

* (1540)

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister have the terms of reference for that review that he could table? Has it changed as they have gone along in terms of broadening what was being dealt with because of information that was brought forward at the meetings?

Mr. Findlay: I do not have the terms of reference with me at the moment. Basically, the terms of reference were very open ended. They had the freedom to investigate anything they saw necessary to investigate with regard to the operation and the principles of the crop insurance program. Clearly, we could not prejudge what the issues would be that would come out of the various public meetings that they have held and the various inputs they have had from farmers or farm organizations. So it is basically very open ended, but I will get you a copy of it. In terms of ongoing, there has been no broadening of it other than by the committee themselves as they saw fit or necessary.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister just give us an idea of how many times the committee has met since their consultation meetings to prepare their report?

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the meetings that the committee held, during February there were 15 of them. Some 530 farmers attended. Also, there

were comments provided by farm groups and individuals.

In terms of comments I have heard from some of the committee members, they have said that they expected probably more people to show up at the meetings, but they said that the depth of analysis that was done by many of the people who made presentations exceeded their expectations. They thought there were some very significant presentations, and thought went into those presentations that were given to them. So in terms of overall, they were very pleased with the kind of response they got. Since those 15 meetings, they have met several times. I cannot give the member the exact number, but I know that on at least two occasions, they met for two days at a time, so they got into some stuff in-depth and worked their way through it.

I would have to assume that they are reasonably close to the end of their deliberations, and they are getting into the process of finalizing their report. As I say, I hope it comes forward in the next two or three months so we can get on with the appropriate discussions leading to the kinds of decisions that we may want to make.

Mr. Plohman: Is the minister meeting prior to the finalization for input into that final report, or is he simply going to receive it as it is designed in its final form?

Mr. Findlay: We have asked the committee to hold public hearings and to bring us the recommendations that come from them, and I will not be meeting with the committee. I am not intending to meet with the committee prior, unless they ask me to meet with them. We will deal with their recommendations as they come forward, and we will obviously be taking those recommendations simultaneously to the federal partner.

Mr. Plohman: Will the minister make a commitment to release the report to the opposition critics as soon after he receives it as possible? I am leaving it wide open. I could say the same day, but I would like to get that information. The House may or may not—probably will not be sitting if it happens sometime during the summer. I would think that the members of the Legislature should have access to that report on a very timely basis.

Mr. Findlay: The report will be submitted to me and the federal partner, and going back to what the member said earlier, I will ask for the concurrence

of the federal partner as to whether I can release it any further. I will have to leave it at that at this time.

My basic desire is, it has been an open process, and the recommendations that come forward, I guarantee, will not be easy for all participants to deal with, and we will want to be using a pretty open process on how we arrive at decisions to make changes as a result of recommendations from that report.

I will concur with the federal partner, and if there is concurrence from them, I am prepared to make it available, in whatever form I can, to the opposition critics.

Mr. Plohman: Just on that, I guess the question should be, is it intended that this will be released publicly after being discussed with the federal partner, although Crop Insurance is a Manitoba corporation? Is it intended to be released publicly at that time?

Mr. Findlay: I will have to say that I will discuss that with the federal partner, whether it is the kind of thing we want to have released, because naturally for them, it will have impact in other provinces too, as to what recommendations are in there.

I will want to see it, and they will want to see it before we can fully answer that question, whether we should release it at this time or after some study has been done as to whether some of the recommendations are doable in the context basically of affordability and fairness to all participants in crop insurance in Manitoba and in other jurisdictions.

Mr. Plohman: Well, I suggest to the minister that it is a review asked for by the minister and paid for by public dollars, that it should be made public in an unedited form and as a report. That is what it is. It is a report to the minister. The action the minister takes may be something quite different, and he has to answer for that, but the report is a report, and I would submit to the minister that this should be made public and made available to the critics as soon as possible after he has had an opportunity to review it and release it.

Mr. Findlay: I do not disagree with what the member has said. The only proviso I put on it is provided that the federal partner concurs with that desire here.

Mr. Plohman: Does the federal partner, I guess—and I fell into that trap by referring to him as a partner just before in terms of GRIP. I agree, crop

insurance, yes, there is funding, but does the federal government have jurisdiction to give its okay on any reports that are done by the Crop Insurance Corporation?

Mr. Findlay: The administration costs are paid 50-50, so obviously, they have 50 percent of the say.

Mr. Plohman: They are paying for 50 percent of this review then. Is that their federal dollars in this review?

Mr. Findlay: It is paid for under the administrative side, so there is 50-50. That is probably a good deal for us to get.

Mr. Plohman: I will leave it at this point if some others would like to question you for a while, and I will be coming back to still some further points under crop insurance.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, first, questions have been raised in regard to the farmers concerned with inequities of GRIP, and there is quite a lengthy document. I have several questions, but as I understood, the minister is going to be replying to Mr. and Mrs. Stoski from Gilbert Plains in regard to their concerns. The minister will be supplying us with a copy of his reply. So rather than waste any further time in regard to these questions, I will await the minister's reply. It should be along before we get a copy of the reply.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, I expect it will be ready very, very shortly, and you will get copies.

* (1550)

Mr. Gaudry: In regard to a spring meeting in Neepawa, there was one last year, and this year there was none held. Was there any reason given for having no meeting in regard to the crop insurance? I know there was a retirement of a Mr. Keith Gourlay.

Mr. Findlay: I will have to ask the member, is he referring to the confirmation meetings that are normally held with each producer each year?

Mr. Gaudry: No, it is in regard to having a meeting with the area farmers to discuss the crop insurance, if there are any changes. They said they were promised a meeting, and there was not.

Mr. Findlay: In the course of February of this year, we had six signatories committee meetings around the province on revenue insurance. I am not aware of any specific request in Neepawa, and certainly the crop insurance officials have had various meetings, been requested to go and discuss crop

insurance at public meetings or smaller meetings. Certainly, any client of crop insurance at any time can request a meeting with his crop insurance agent to deal with issues.

The reason I raised the confirmation meetings is because in the past we have always had those in January, February, March, where a producer comes in and gives his production information from the year before. This year, that information was all requested by written confirmation. Forms were sent out in January, and then they were required to return them by early February. That was the final production report, and some other information was requested in that request.

Then after that came in, confirmation of insurance was mailed out to each producer, and the producer was told that this is your confirmation of insurance. If you have any questions, contact either your crop insurance agent or your Ag rep, and the meeting will be set up. So there is totally open dialogue, but I am not aware of anything that was requested that did not happen relative to getting information out for 1992.

Mr. Gaudry: I do not know whether it was in regard to the forms, but last year they were told they would fill out the one form for NISA. It was a long complicated form, and they had to go out to their accountants or lawyers to get it filled out. They mentioned again this year, they were asked to fill out that same form, and they felt that since they were told last year it was once and would not be repeated this year—they were concerned about the fact that they have to pay \$200 to \$300 to get the form filled, and whether it was this meeting they were talking about, I do not know.

Mr. Findlay: Okay, I think we are talking about two different things. Here, we are talking about crop insurance and revenue insurance or GRIP. What you are referring to is NISA, Net Income Stabilization Account, which is totally a separate program which is based on net revenue a producer has, and that is administered by the federal government. A year ago, there were some meetings that the federal administrators had to explain the NISA program, the application process, and yes, the NISA application is basically a continuation of or an attachment to the income tax form.

For the 1990 tax year, a producer had to have his NISA form in by—yes, for the 1990 tax year, the first

deadline, I believe, was February sometime, February 12, maybe, and then it got extended to May 15, and yes, the federal government is administering that program, and they told us the NISA application to be one or two pages. I think it turned out to be 30 or 40—some pages, a very complex form, but since it was basically using income tax information, a lot of people chose to use their accountant, and yes, it did cost them money. I also have to say that there were some accountants advertising they would fill the NISA form out for free, if they got their business, naturally.

For the 1991 tax year, those forms are to be in by June 30 of this year. Subsequent to this, we expect the NISA application to be appended to the income tax form for farmers year after year.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

We are talking two different things here now. Crop insurance is not involved in the administration of NISA at all. When we set up the two safety-net programs of GRIP and NISA, the revenue insurance part of GRIP is handled by crop insurance, along with the normal crop insurance program, and the NISA program is handled and administered by the federal government, basically by the old Western Grain Stabilization administrative unit here in the city of Winnipeg. So they are quite different programs.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the farmers' representative in the Neepawa area would be federal also then.

Mr. Findlay: Are you referring to the Ag rep? The Ag rep would be provincial.

The person you reference is the crop insurance agent in Neepawa, but he should not have been talking about NISA because that is not his responsibility to administer. His responsibility is crop insurance and revenue insurance.

Mr. Gaudry: Has Mr. Gourlay been replaced in Neepawa?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Gourlay retired within the last month.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, will he be replaced?

Mr. Findlay: There is a person acting as the agent there right now in Neepawa. The intention is to have a full-time replacement eventually.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in regard to the Risk Area 12 questions that have been asked in the past, there was a Mr. Richard Vermette. I asked

you before, in regard to the program, where he joined, and he signed in because he was guaranteed a retroactive increase, and now he is locked into that five-year program or five-year contract.

Has there been any further discussions in regard to these people who were guaranteed their retroactivity, and now they feel they have been caught in this five-year contract?

Mr. Findlay: In terms of Mr. Vermette, he had until May 15 of 1991 to make a decision to enroll. The letters of instruction to the review committee were in June of that year, so it was well after. He may have been under the assumption by May 15 that something could be done by the fall as the letter requested: Report by the fall of 1991. That did not happen. Nobody is pointing fingers of blame, but it just did not happen. The letter was saying: if deemed appropriate. In my mind, that meant federal government concurrence, which did not happen.

Clearly, some address has been done for 1992 in terms of offering a higher level of coverage, basis the Soils Review Committee report, which shrinks the difference between 12 and 32 soils rather substantially. So he has significantly improved coverage for 1992 as a result of that committee's report.

He is in a position to improve himself through IPI. He has access to SMA. He had access to it in 1991. He has access to improving his coverage in 1992 also through SMA. We will wait and see what the crop insurance review committee suggests for dealing with the problems of Risk Area 12 in conjunction with the problems for the areas all across the province. He has had increased coverage available to him, both for '91 through SMA and '92 through the recent improvement offer that came out of that review, plus SMA and IPI.

* (1600)

Mr. Gaudry: Yes, in regards to the rally that happened a couple of weeks ago and what came out of it, it is clear that the federal government is not going to give retroactive payments to the farmers. Has the federal government still maintained their stance since those meetings or the rally here in Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: Both in terms of the letter that they sent last summer and the one that they sent this spring, they have emphatically said no and still at

this time have not changed their mind or their position. I might say they are also saying no to many requests from Saskatchewan, so they are on a steady theme.

The only place that we won some concessions this year clearly was on the IMAP, and that was not without a lot of heartache trying to get them to interpret the agreement. A lot of technicalities, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says. The way we interpreted the technicality was to give the farmers a higher level of support this year in terms of the price per bushel based on the 15-year moving average being kept the same for '92 as it was for '91, recognizing a full two-year lag.

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): To the minister, you show on page 32 the projected secondees for the year ending 1993. What were they for the year ending 1992, the secondees from other departments to work on GRIP?

Mr. Findlay: You mean from other sections of the Department of Agriculture?

Mr. Connery: Yes.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the secondment of staff from the department to assist with the administration of GRIP, for the previous year, there were 248 staff involved, totalling 7,161.5 staff days—[interjection] 7,161 staff days, involving 248 staff.

Mr. Connery: How many staff?

Mr. Findlay: 248.

Mr. Connery: What departments did they come out of as compared to this year? You had four departments you are projecting them to come out of. Where did they come out of last year, what departments?

Mr. Findlay: The various branches that they came out of: Soils and Crops, Economics—

Mr. Connery: You have four categories in your book here, so if we keep them the same—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable member to speak into the mike? It would make it a little easier.

Mr. Connery: You have four departments listed this year. I assume that Soils and Crops would come under the Agricultural Development and Marketing sector. Could we break them down, first of all, into those departments as to where they came from?

Mr. Findlay: For '91-92, the basis of the information, the member has it in front of him, on page 32, I presume, of the Supplementary Estimates. They will be coming from the same divisions.

Mr. Connery: Can I have the comparison by division for last year and this year then? You have \$47,000 in Administration and Finance, that is possibly two staff years. Can we have it for last year, in those same departments?

Mr. Findlay: At this time we do not have the exact dollar comparables so that we can give the relatives between those four branches that you are referring to there.

In one case we have dollars, the other cases we have staff hours and days. I will get you the information, so it is comparable between the two years between those four divisions.

Mr. Connery: You are comparing, I know, staff years and then hours, and you are comparing dollars in the other. But what is the difference from last year compared to this year, roughly in terms of, is it 25 percent of last year, 50 percent?

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the total dollar figure or secondment for 1991-92 was \$1.2 million. The figure the member has in front of him for this year's Estimates is about \$642,000, so roughly half.

Mr. Connery: Are they coming out of the same departments proportionately, or did other departments carry a bigger load last year as far as where they came from?

Mr. Findlay: To the best of my knowledge they would be relatively the same proportionately between the various divisions.

Mr. Connery: The departments that we associate with, there seemed to quite a concern under 4.(g) or Agricultural Development and Marketing, the number of secondments out of that area. If it was roughly the same, it would only be relatively two staff years last year.

Yet, by the comment that he would get, and I am just saying the comment, you would think half the department was seconded. Maybe this is not quite so, but it would sure, you know, it was of real, major concern—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable member to bring the mike up again. Hansard is not quite picking you up, and we do want to keep this for the record, I am sure.

Mr. Connery: I think, you know, are these figures fairly accurate? Was there a greater concern than the facts really indicate then?

Mr. Findlay: Well, certainly I would say, yes. There was a lot of staff involved. Some staff did a few days, other staff did quite a few days. But the total amount of staff hours used this year is about half of the year before.

Yes, I know that there are staff who felt that, you know, it was an imposition on them to have to drop some of the duties that they wanted to do and get involved in delivery of this program. All I can say is that this was deemed to be the highest priority for the department. The program had to be put in place very, very quickly, and we needed a lot of staff time in order to do it.

The decision had to be between bringing on new people who did not have any experience in the department versus seconding people who obviously had a lot of background knowledge that they could bring to the table in helping farmers to understand the program, and we chose the latter, to use our existing staff, in some fashion, to be able to do a better job than hiring new people. Obviously there is a cost saving associated with that, too.

I have also heard from staff who said that they were glad that they had this opportunity because they got a first-hand chance to really work with a very current issue and get a better understanding of that issue dealing face to face with farmers. So for some it was seen as a positive experience, for others it was seen as extra duty.

* (1610)

I congratulate those who did respond to the secondment and helped deliver the program in the best fashion possible and helped the existing crop insurance staff and personnel. I think it went very, very well considering the speed at which it had to be put together and all the information that had to be disseminated. Naturally it did not satisfy all staff or all producers, but I think we did as good a job as we could under the circumstances involved, both in terms of crop insurance staff and the seconded staff.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister mentioned some groups from other sectors other than the grains, oilseeds, were concerned that their departments were maybe being neglected. I guess in the area—and I will relate to the potato one where the payments made to potato growers, and I do not know where it is at today, but the other

provinces got assistance under the \$800 million, and Manitoba's group was initially excluded. I know they are trying to get money now.

Maybe the minister can inform me if they have, but the feeling was that not any of the existing staff who really understood the program were there, that there was a greenhorn brought in late, along with, and I acknowledge that the industry person, I am told, was partly to blame for the lack of initiative on his part. But this is the concern that was raised with me, that potato growers lost out.

I think the horticultural industry would say, if they were being honest, they should not have shared in the \$800 million, but if everybody else is going to get some and your competitor is getting a payment, you need to get a payment to be competitive with him.

Mr. Plohman: It was because of the staff that they lost out?

Mr. Connery: Well, this is the information that has been given to me. My son worked with those people, so it is not just random hearsay that we had a very green individual who really did not know an awful lot about—you know, you cannot blame that individual if they are coming in green.

The minister can tell me if the potato industry really did get a payment where I think Alberta got in the area of \$200 or \$250 an acre? It was a significant payment based on—I do not know the exact amount, your staff might have it—but their windfall was based on the fact that they were able to sell to Manitoba surplus potatoes at a pretty good price so they really got double.

They should not have gotten near the payment they got, and Manitoba was getting nothing. Now, the minister can tell us what Manitoba did get or will get, possibly.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the issue we are talking about, we are dealing with a federal decision, federal money. The federal government asked for input from the potato industry in the various provinces across the country and from the provincial governments, and we sent in individuals to represent the province.

The member has acknowledged that Greg Gowryluk was there representing the producers. Certainly those people objected to the process used by the federal government to allocate the money, and that allocation ended up allocating to Manitoba nothing. Whether that would have been different had we had a different provincial person there basis

the way they did it, I would doubt that a different person would have caused the federal government to make their initial decision differently.

As it has turned out, because we objected as a province—certainly the potato producers objected to the allocation process—the federal government has allocated some amount of money to the potato producers of Manitoba. The exact figure, I have a ballpark idea, but I do not know what it is. As I recall, the Alberta figure was around \$97 or \$98 an acre.

So there has been some redress to that question. The first decision made by the federal government was not good for Manitoba at all. I will not accept the fact that the person whom we sent was the sole reason why that happened. I think the federal government had its own agenda, its own methodology of distributing the money which both our representative and the potato representative responded to.

We responded that it was inappropriate and not fair to Manitoba. Eventually, the federal government has addressed it by giving some payment, significantly greater than zero, to the potato producers of Manitoba.

Mr. Connery: Do we know what that payment is?

Mr. Findlay: To the best of my knowledge, the figure is around, in the high \$40 per acre.

Mr. Connery: It would still be half of what some of the others got. Manitoba always, or if not always, too often has been on the short end of the stick, not because of provincial problems, but because of the federal government and the politics that get involved. The payments often stop at the Manitoba-Ontario border. [interjection] It is concerned with the federal government, for the member for Dauphin's (Mr. Plohman) edification, and probably from the ineptitude of the previous government.

One of the concerns raised to me by some of the farmers in the Portage area was that because the government did not, or the department did not, foresee the problem with lentils, with the coverage for lentils, and that growers then switched into lentils because they started to farm the system rather than farm the land, that this created a real problem for the existing lentil growers who had been in there for some time and had developed their industry.

Are there any other glitches? Is the department really looking at other areas, so that next year, in some of these speciality crops, we do not come

along with the same sort of thing because it really has decimated the lentil industry and those who have made a practice of growing it.

I think it is probably going to cost the Manitoba government a lot of money in coverage of District 12, between your 12, 32 soil classifications, because the same coverage was for lentils in 12 or 32, but farmers went to lentils because it was not as high in the grains. I guess we would not want to see another one of our speciality crops get caught in that, if we can foresee it, if there is a possibility to prevent that sort of thing happening.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the acreages in lentils, it went in 1990 from 55,000 to 135,000 in last year, in 1991. Now, we raised the issue at that signatories table, that something is not quite right about the lentil situation, but they failed to address it for 1992.

It looked like the acreage was going to go way past the 135,000 of last year, and they were talking 400,000 to 500,000 acres which was, basically, impacting the international market. That was what was happening. So the signatories committee had to go back and look at it, and make the decision that we implemented this year.

In terms of looking at the future, as I said earlier, the national signatories committee review that is ongoing right now for GRIP has to look at a wide variety of issues, and clearly, this one is very close to our hearts here, and that is, how you deal with special crops in the revenue insurance program? They need to be included, but they need to be included in a fashion that is as market-neutral as possible.

When people were developing the program, they always wanted to have it market-neutral. That is why they used the 15-year moving IMAP that reflected what was really going on, but I think that some very serious considerations have to be given, in the process of the review, as to how you can establish the support price on an ongoing basis so it is relatively as market-neutral as possible.

It will never be totally market-neutral but as market-neutral as possible, so it does not cause people to swing into one crop or out of another crop just because of the GRIP coverage. What I am suggesting is that in the process of the review, the people who are involved in the marketing, in the processing of these special crops be consulted so that they can have an opportunity to have input. They can bring their experience to the table as to

how we can appropriately set the pricing system for particularly the special crops so that it does not cause the distorted signal that was created for levels in '91 and was leading to an even more distorted signal in 1992, because, yes, there are people who are long-time experienced growers being hurt in the process when a whole bunch of new growers are jumping in simply because the GRIP coverage is attractive to do that.

As I tried to explain to many of those new producers who were going to go into large acreages, the guarantee is not the full guarantee unless you can achieve the national average market price, because if you miss the national average market price by five cents a pound, that is five cents a pound of coverage that you cannot get. The program will not pay it to you. So there are more improvements that need to be made to the program, more changes that address this.

* (1620)

I do not think the problems are quite as acute for the large acreage cereal crops or the oilseed crops, but for the more minor crops which we want to see developed—and we want to see them developed both in terms of production and in terms of processing in this province—I am expecting the signatories review committee to pay major attention to them and how they draft processes of dealing with them in the future. I cannot prejudge what they will be, but I would just, as I said earlier, like to see the processors or the marketers of those commodities consulted with in the process.

Mr. Connery: I have to agree with the minister. I think the processors also play a role in how many they contract, because there is only a certain market. They went out pretty heavy and contracted way above their normal contract acreage, I do believe.

There is a new problem just brought to my attention Saturday night to do with lentils. I am groping a little because I am not a lentils grower, so I am not too familiar with them, but apparently we grow a different variety in Manitoba than in some of the other provinces. Is that right? The variety that we grow in Manitoba receives about two cents a pound less in the marketplace. I am trying to remember the figures given to me; it was done in a verbal conversation.

There was a concern that Manitoba growers, instead of getting four cents less, are going to be

getting six cents less than other areas. There was a concern in the disparity between other, I guess it would have to be, provinces. I asked: Why did you not grow the other variety? Apparently it does not grow well here. The variety they are growing is the best variety for our soils, but it does not command as high a price in the marketplace. Is the minister familiar with this?

Mr. Findlay: There are two types of lentils that are grown. There is the Laird lentil which is grown in the drier regions like southwest Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In the wetter regions of Manitoba, the Eston lentil is the one that is grown, and that is the one that is grown in, say, central Manitoba and eastern Manitoba. The Eston lentil yields a bit higher than the layered, but it is priced a little lower. The members says two cents. It is basically somewhere in that sort of differential, but in setting the support price and the market price, both are averaged in.

The Laird and the Eston are both averaged in, always have been in the two years of GRIP, so on average, you are treated the same, both in terms of market price and support price across the province. Both Lairds and Estons are grown in the province, but clearly for the Eston, they are slightly higher yielding but slightly lower priced.

Mr. Connery: The minister is saying that basic per acre then the overall return per acre would be the same?

Mr. Findlay: Probably not all that different in terms of price times yield.

Mr. Connery: I think the people maybe have talked to the department already. I am not sure. If they have not, they will be, and this was a concern raised with me. I am not fully briefed with it.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the review leading into '93, again, that is another issue to be on the table. We are dealing in Manitoba with a dry region and a wetter region and the various lentils associated with each area. Whether there should be differences in terms of how coverage is established, how market prices are established, it needs to be looked at for '93.

Mr. Connery: A comment made to me was that the growers with the cheaper variety would be getting six cents a pound less coverage, because the support price dropped four cents, and then they get an additional two cents less, but you say they have

been averaged. How does that averaging compare with the two varieties of lentils to those growers?

Mr. Findlay: I cannot give you the proportionate amount of Laird versus Eston, but I said that the southwest, which is a fairly large growing area, basically grows Lairds. The eastern region grows the Eston, which is the higher yielder, but the lower price. On average, I could not tell you the proportion, whether it is 60-40, two-thirds or one-third.

Mr. Connery: You say that it should not make any difference to the grower because the prices are average. If the support price is average and the other—but still, the one is getting two cents less, so in the real marketplace, have they given him a cent more and a cent to the Eston, and then the Lairds get a cent less, or how—I am not sure. I do not follow you in that area and you are probably right. It is not getting through to me, how it evens out to the producer.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of all the detail, I cannot discuss it with the member at this time in all the detail. I will just say there are the two types here, and it is not all-like, if the person you were talking to gave you the impression we are all growing Estons in Manitoba, that is not true. There are Estons and Lairds, and I do not know exactly where the dividing line is, but it is, I say southwest versus central, but it is probably somewhere in that No. 10 highway region.

The Lairds are recommended in the drier region, the Estons in the wetter region. Producers have been getting better and better yields of the Estons. I remember three, four or five years ago where 1,000 pounds was considered a very good yield. Now we are talking 2,000 pounds and higher. People that are growing the Estons in the eastern part of the province are doing an exceptional job with managing them and getting the yield. That also has an impact in terms of how you establish coverage in the future and what is an appropriate market price.

I remember 15 years ago where lentils were 28 cents a pound. This year, the market price started out around 12 or 13 cents, and it is probably around 10 cents now. Certainly, the price has come down, but the ability to produce has gone up rather dramatically over the past few years, and they say that when you are dealing with small crops, small acres, thin markets, the impact of a program, if it

does not respect those issues, can be very dramatic and disrupting to the marketplace.

I am just asking that in the review of the revenue insurance program, that this be very seriously considered, more seriously than it has been considered in the past on how you can establish coverage that does not disrupt the marketplace and does not send a false signal to producers as to what to grow. That may not be easy, but it needs to be addressed, not only in Manitoba but elsewhere, too.

Mr. Connery: One last question—and I would like to compliment the minister for recognizing that we do grow the best in the Portage area—are the secondments to GRIP, the program, going to fall off totally in the following year after this Estimates year or what is the forecast?

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, in terms of looking ahead, this year we have dropped off to about half of the previous year in terms of extra time that had to be seconded. We will see that amount of time in the future continuing to fall off. It is difficult to predict to the extent at this time because if their participation starts to fall off for some reason, actually we need less people, but I think farmers are beginning to understand the program better and better.

I had one year of—not even fully completed yet, they will not see the first year completed until January of '93. We will get a better handle how it works and how IPI works, how SMA works. I think that there will be less and less questions as more and more information comes directly from the farmer to the corporation with the use of the computers. All I would say is that the demand for secondment time should taper off quite a bit.

Mr. Gaudry: Yes, one question here, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. There is a substantial increase in the administration from last year, and it says that it is mainly the result of budgeting increased administration costs of the GRIP program. Can we have a detailed increase of such an amount when there is no change of staff years?

Mr. Findlay: The increases in administration are due to—do you want dollar figures attached to each category?—producer affidavits, computerization, leasehold improvements, pensions, MDA staff costs and expenses, farm practice inspections, actuarial certification, and general salary increase, so there are quite a number of items that make up the additional administrative cost between the previous year and this year.

Mr. Plohman: Just a while ago we were talking about lentils, how did the minister's antilentic campaign work?

I am serious, I was looking at letters that went out to crop insurance clients and the news release. The minister seems almost embarrassed that he is being asked this question. One news release that went out from Sylvia Poppe's Soils and Crops branch had about, I do not know maybe, 20 negative statements about lentils all the way through it.

* (1630)

We were seeing it was a definite campaign by crop insurance, by Manitoba Agriculture actually, to discourage people from getting into lentils, but I guess, because of the problems that the minister was addressing earlier on when he was answering questions from the member for Portage (Mr. Connery), that it could destroy the market if there was a large increase in the acreage.

This one news release says: Beginning lentil growers could be taking a serious gamble if they seed large acreages. Best is to start small so you can learn to grow the crop properly. The crop requires a much higher level of management than cereals or even canola, and remember Section 21 of the revenue insurance contract reserves the right to refuse compensation if crop loss or damage is due to negligence, neglect, misconduct or poor farming practices.

And it goes on: It is an expensive crop to grow because operating costs are at least \$25 per acre higher for lentils. Lentils compete poorly with weeds, and few options exist for chemical weed control. Lentils are very sensitive to residues from herbicides. Lentil harvest is time-consuming, so few should grow no more than they can harvest at the optimum time. Storage for long periods will cause grain losses at a rate of about one grade per year. Lentils are very sensitive to residues from herbicides. Lentil harvest is time-consuming, so they should grow no more than they can harvest at the optimum time. Storage for long periods will cause great losses at a rate of about one grade per year. Lentils are very sensitive to standing water.

Whoever did this must have dug out every possible piece of information that could in any way discourage farmers from attempting to grow lentils because of the high support prices relative to others. Was that a conscious effort by the department to try

to stop the big move towards lentils by the minister? Was this a deliberate tactic that was used?

Mr. Findlay: I think everything that is in that news release is true information in terms of alerting producers to be aware of these. Certainly the disease control, weed control, harvesting and grade-impact factors are all information that is true and that farmers should be aware of. Truly what we did see was that producers that had grown no lentils were suddenly going to grow 2,000, 4,000, maybe the whole farm to lentils.

Clearly it is important that we inform producers of the risks they are going to take if they are going to do that sort of thing, and Section 21 of the revenue insurance agreement clearly does indicate that if a producer grows a crop and does not use acceptable practices that they have the right to be refused coverage, which I think is only fair and reasonable in terms of the integrity of the program. So that information was put out to alert producers that it is not a crop that is as easily managed as wheat.

As I said earlier, if a producer goes out and sells it for feed at 6 cents per pound and that the average market price is, say, 12 cents a pound, he has missed 6 cents a pound—the difference between 12 and 6—he has missed it forever. The program does not pick that up. So we had to make producers aware of this, and that they are a crop that requires a lot of management. Those producers that have been in the business for some time, as I said earlier, have increased their ability to produce from 1,000 pounds per acre up to 2,000 to 2,500 pounds per acre. It is simply because of good management, proper control of weeds and diseases.

There is even another factor that is not mentioned and not recognized, the impact of disease, and I think it is anthracnose. It is a disease that has been of some difficulty in lentils in the past, and there is not an adequate chemical registered at this time. There is one that they are trying to get registered but has not been approved by the federal government yet, and it is another impact that can certainly cause the producer to lose big time in this crop. So the reason to put that out is because people were looking, I would suspect, at the coverage in GRIP and saying that is the crop to grow, and we wanted to alert them that a lot of things can happen between seeding and harvest that the producer should be aware of. That is why that information was put out.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister give the rationale for the initial support price and the rationale for deviating from the standard coverage level? I understand it was simply a change from 70 percent to 58 percent to get it down to a level that would, I would say, discourage this major increase. At least it seems to me that this was deliberately done to try to stop this movement towards lentils that would destroy the industry. So the decision that was made was to go to 58 percent coverage. Now, you have to live with that kind of decision, that precedent. What was the rationale for establishing 58 percent and deviating from the standard of 70 percent that it covers for all other crops?

Mr. Findlay: Really, the problem that developed on lentils, as I said earlier, was noticed at least a year ago, and that is that if you use the 15-year IMAP which you use for wheat and barley and durum and flax and canola, it works reasonably well for those crops, but for lentils, it is a relatively new crop, and if you go back over 15 years the first four years of that 15-year period, it was all acreage crops with a very high price. That really, if you take the 15-year average, it actually distorts the price on the high side.

In terms of the signatories committee looking at the situation as it was unfolding in Manitoba with an incredible increase in acres coming, looking 400,000 to 500,000, whereas two years ago it would have been 55,000, it is going to put on the market a tremendous amount of lentils for which there would be no market. It would be a buyer's delight in terms of buying those lentils; you could buy them really cheap.

They said that the first four years should be removed from the moving average price, but the signatories committee, in terms of the input from the other provinces said, we will not do that, but we will change the 70 percent IMAP. We will move it down to 58 percent and effectively end up with the same support price as we are moving the first four years.

So that was the rationale that they used in coming up with the 58 percent IMAP which basically took average coverage down to about \$188 an acre from \$227. It took about a little over \$40 an acre off and still left the average coverage \$40 to \$50 an acre above wheat. The average additional costs of producing lentils over wheat is probably \$25, \$30, \$35, so there was a more relative comparison

between wheat and lentils after that 58 percent IMAP was used.

Mr. Plohman: Why would the minister have waited till the last minute to do this then? I mean, he said that he was talking to industry, I believe, probably up to within a week of when he made the announcement. The minister was still saying, everything is okay with lentils, at least publicly. Then he did discuss it with some members, I guess, of farms groups, whatever, and finally went to the signatories committee, I understand, just a couple of days before the deadline to make that decision.

Why did the minister wait that long when, as he said, he already flagged this a year earlier, and everyone knew that lentils were identified as a very high-coverage crop? Why did they not make these changes far earlier instead of leaving it to the last minute and making it very difficult for a number of producers in terms of their plans, their operating loans, seed companies that had prepared orders, and so on?

* (1640)

Mr. Findlay: In terms of dealing with the signatories committee, naturally I had hoped that they would have addressed this issue. They did not, and one of the signators, I see, is quoted as saying, we should have, but we did not. We could not convince the other signators that we needed to do something in the lentil area.

I received letters from pulse growers and from Manitoba Association of Agriculture societies about the middle or early part of April addressing this and saying that there is some problem. We discussed it with KAP. They said, yes, there is a problem, something needs to be done.

The signators committee was meeting in Nova Scotia, I believe, on the 27th, 28th of April, and that was the meeting at which they could address the issue. They addressed the issue and passed a motion which we acted upon immediately by announcing the change from 70 percent to 58 percent IMAP.

So it was done in consultation with the industry, with the producers, different organizations acted upon their recommendation that something had to be done because of the impact it was going to have on the industry both this year and next year. Clearly the pulse growers pointed that out very clearly. The signatories committee then acted at their next meeting, which was at the end of April, and we got

the information out immediately that the adjustment had to be made.

Mr. Plohman: What are the final registered acres under GRIP for lentils this year?

Mr. Findlay: We will not know until the seeded acreage reports come in, in June.

Mr. Plohman: Staff seems to have some idea.

Mr. Findlay: I have heard the industry project 150,000 to 180,000 acres, but I say there is no way that can be confirmed until the seeded acreage reports come in because some producers may be growing them without contracts, too. So, I would certainly expect it to be above the 135,000 of last year, but nowhere near the 400,000 to 500,000 that was projected at one time.

The member must not forget that the changes did not put a cap on acres or restrict anybody from growing them. It was their own choice whether they stayed with the acres they wanted to grow or whether they reduced them in their rotation.

Mr. Plohman: But the minister would admit that this would dampen the inclination to move to lentils, and it probably did.

Mr. Findlay: I would expect it would. That is right. But, I think, in fairness to the industry and being able to sell internationally the amount of lentils that we were going to grow, it would have been very difficult with the present acreages, if it is in that range, 150,000 to 180,000, they are probably very able to sell them on the international market at a reasonable price.

Mr. Plohman: I am surprised to hear that it would be that low, because I did talk to the Rivers Farmers Co-op Seed Plant, and they said that they had 10 percent of their orders cancelled the day after the announcement—alone, that morning. But that they had about 10 times the orders that they even had last year, prior to that. Yet, 190,000 acres, whatever, 180,000, whatever it might be, is not substantially higher than last year. Is that correct? I think it was 135,000 last year.

So it is not a major increase. So I think the minister's estimates here must be, perhaps, a little low unless there was an awful lot of dislocation after that announcement and a lot of cancellation.

Mr. Findlay: We have no way of knowing any definitive figure at this time. As I said, we have to wait until the seeded acreage report comes in. Just

general indication is that it will be above last year, but not terribly above.

One must not forget that in 1990 we only grew 55,000 acres in the province. So we went from 55,000 to 135,000 in 1991, and if we go up to—what my feeling is—150,000 to 180,000, that is probably an appropriate and acceptable increase for the industry to absorb and be able to sell lentils on the international market.

I caution the member that we will not know until the seeded acreage report comes in, which will be at the end of June, as to what the exact acres of any crop are for 1992. The only thing I can say is that all indications are that, you know, wheat is going to be up, canola will likely be up, flax will be down, it looks like barley will be down, but overall our total acres to be seeded will be higher than the past, getting us down around 7 percent or 8 percent summer fallow which is, you know, a good thing to have happen, have less and less bare acres that can erode in this province through wind or water erosion.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, the minister talked about the program being market neutral, and certainly lentils was a prime example where it was not really neutral in terms of planting decisions of farmers, at least prior to the last-minute change that was made. Keeping in mind that the producers seem to want individual crop coverage, has the minister—is he aware whether the signatories committee is looking at the basket approach at all, in terms of the coverage? Has the minister looked at that in terms of the impact on planting decisions, on seeding decisions?

Mr. Findlay: Well, as the member mentions, producers in the province want individuality by producer and by crop, and they want predictability in terms of gross revenue coverage that they will have at the end of the growing season before the crop goes in the ground.

The basket-of-crop approach does not give them that predictability, does not give them that individuality, and we have resisted it continuously here. I am sure the member is aware that that is the direction they have gone in Saskatchewan, with many producers objecting to it. A court case here just the other day has extended their deadline, so there is pandemonium out in Saskatchewan, to say the least.

We continue to take the position in Manitoba that we want the individuality, we want the predictability

that can be had in our program. We do not want to see a repeat of what happened in the lentil situation this year in any other crop in the future. We want to see our smaller acreage crops grow constructively and with a market that is fair and reasonable to all concerned.

The signatories committee will be reviewing the experiences of all provinces and making recommendations to us as ministers in the coming months, but my basic position is that we have a program that producers want here, the individuality and predictability. We want to maintain it, and at the same time we want not to be putting in place distorted signals to the producers as to what to grow. That may require some adjustments in the mechanics of the program for '93 and beyond, but what they will be I cannot predict until we get some recommendations from the signatories committee. On the broad range of crops it has worked quite well.

Mr. Plohman: Well, there has been some endorsement of that approach, I guess, a basket-of-crops approach in terms of some economists' statements on how the program in Manitoba is affecting decisions of farmers. Hopefully there will be ways to determine and find ways to stop that skewing in terms of decision making.

I wanted to ask the minister about the court case, he mentioned briefly, in Saskatchewan. I have raised this in the House with the minister a number of times and asked for legal opinions, because Manitoba was late with getting the information out to the clients on crop insurance just as Saskatchewan was, after March 15. I notice in the contract, Clause 37 states very clearly that the changes are to be in the mail to farmers by March 15 of the year preceding. That is in terms of coverage levels and premium levels, and in addition, just to finish my question—the minister has finished consulting—I would think then that even a decision on lentils on April 29 would have been in violation of the March 15 contract, in addition to all of the other coverage levels information.

* (1650)

I realize the minister indicated now he sent his letter on March 12 or March 16 because the 15th was a Sunday, but that did not cover Clause 37 dealing with premium and coverage changes, so that is the question I am making with the minister here, is that he did say in that letter, or the officials

with that letter said, that changes would be announced later with regard to Section 37, but they did not announce what those changes would be prior to March 15.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of meeting the March 15 deadline, Saskatchewan missed it by a month. Our corporation wanted to have theirs out much before the 15th of March, but because of the ongoing discussions Saskatchewan was involved in trying to make major changes to the program, we could not get federal concurrence to sending that letter out and it was put together around the 12th or 13th of March, and March 15 was a Sunday, so legally if producers received it on the 16th that is legally called the 15th. With regard to the lentils the contract specifies April 30 for any change and legal opinion is, provided we transmit to producers any change prior to April 30, it meets the legal requirements.

Mr. Plohma: I think the minister is simply fortunate he has not been challenged on his dates as they were in Saskatchewan, because it would seem from that ruling that, in fact, it could be vulnerable here too in terms of the coverage levels, because Clause 37, which was not dealt with in that letter of March 12, talks about: in accordance with the federal-provincial agreement the eligible crops, premium rates, reference values, probable yields, coverage levels and any terms and conditions of this contract may be changed from year to year. Any changes in the contract shall be mailed to the insured not later than March 15 prior to the contract year for which a change is first to come into effect.

That information was not part of the letter, and I have a copy of that letter that was sent out. It says, paragraph 37: Permanent cover program—wait a minute, that is not the section. It just does not deal with that.

Rates and coverages: The '92 rates in coverage will be updated and mailed prior to the termination date.

That was the reference on the bottom of it. So you did not deal with it. The minister could have said that the IMAP was—he said Saskatchewan was making major changes. In addition to that the minister mentioned that Saskatchewan was making major changes so the federal government would not agree. But the minister has earlier said that, because of the dispute over the IMAP, there were delays.

I guess he can attribute the delays to one or the other, but clearly this difference in interpretation on the formula for support prices had a lot to do with the delay, did it not?

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, the support price is another item that was on the table for discussion. But the member just used the term "termination date," and termination date is April 30. Let me read the legal opinion that I have:

The contract also provides that eligible crops, premium rates, reference values, probable yields and coverage levels may be changed from year to year. The contract does not specifically state when such change is to take place. In theory, if there is a reasonable basis for a change in any of these five matters, same could still be done legally for '92-93, but in view of the April 30 cancellation date, then that should probably be done by that date.

So the termination date is effectively April 30. In terms of what happened in Saskatchewan, that is a substantive alteration of the intent of the program in the eyes of the farmers and that is why they are so upset. It is probably going to require the Saskatchewan government to introduce legislation to allow them retroactively to do what they did without facing legal challenge.

The vast majority of producers in Manitoba want the program to stay in place. They do not want to walk away from it. In Saskatchewan, because the basic premise of the program has been changed so tremendously, producers want to walk away from it. But that is not the case here.

Mr. Plohma: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there were major changes in direction made, and, yes, I realize that there will be many producers who entered the contract under one assumption, and that assumption has changed. So there would be, obviously, people who wanted to get out of it and that is why the challenge took place.

What I am saying to the minister is that had he been challenged here in Manitoba on the coverage levels—I would like him to table his legal opinion, and that is what I was asking for in the House—since the contract says, March 15. You know, you can get a legal opinion, I guess, for anything you want, but I do not know why he, or whatever the firm was that provided the legal opinion, would ignore that March 15 deadline and provide at least some explanation for ignoring it. Is there in that legal opinion any

mention of the March 15 deadline which is clearly in the contract?

Mr. Findlay: Are you referring to the first letter that was sent out in the middle of March?

Mr. Plohman: Yes, March 12. But I am talking about the contract that was entered into by people when they signed up for GRIP—it has nothing to do with the letter—that that refers to March 15.

The letter that went out on March 12 or March 16—whichever, I am not quibbling about Sunday or Monday or whatever—did not deal with Section 37 of the contract. It said that the rates and coverage will be updated and mailed prior to the termination date. That was the reference to that at the end.

None of the information provided those specifics in the letter that went out. So in other words, the minister did not meet that deadline.

Mr. Findlay: The letter that went out in the middle of March, as the member says, about the 12th to the 16th, that indicates changes that are going to happen in the contract. I want to tell him again that Saskatchewan missed it by a month, Alberta missed it by at least two weeks; at least we legally met the deadline in terms of informing producers of change.

Mr. Plohman: The point is, and I want the minister to correct me because I am under the assumption that the specifics for coverage levels which are required to be in the hands of the insured by March 15 were not as part of that letter.

Mr. Findlay: The interpretation is that the confirmation of insurance, which I have to assume was what the member is talking about, is not included in that Section 37, is not the intent of Section 37, is not to talk about confirmation of insurance but to talk about changes to the program.

Mr. Plohman: I read Section 37: In accordance with the federal-provincial agreement, the eligible crops, premium rates, reference values, probable yields, coverage levels, okay? Coverage levels, and here it says in the March 15th or 16th letter, the '92 rates and coverages will be updated and mailed prior to the termination date, termination being April 30. So they were not in their hands by March 15, or in the mail by March 15. Technically the minister did not have all the information in the hands of the insureds by March 15.

My simple point is I am not blaming or saying he did better or worse than other governments, I am just simply saying that it sounds to me here, and that

was the gist of our questions at the time, that the minister has not met the legal requirements of the contract.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The time is now 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee. The Committee of Supply will resume considerations at 8 p.m.

* (1440)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training. Will the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 43, item 5.(b) Program Analysis, Co-ordination and Support.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Madam Chairperson, I believe, when we ended on Thursday, I was asking the Minister of Education about her policy relative to defining parental support. The question specifically revolved around the point at which a parent was no longer considered to be part of the support structure for a child or when a child was deemed to be free of his or her parent.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Chairperson, it was not clear from listening if the honourable member had completed his question.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, in fact, the question had been completed several times. It was the answer that was incomplete.

Mrs. Vodrey: I have given several answers to the honourable member, and he seems to have had a little bit of trouble taking them in and applying the information. So let me give him a little more information now to the question, and we will see if this provides him with what he is looking for.

Independent status is granted to an applicant who meets one of the following criteria, and by way of independent status, we are talking about those students who then may qualify to not having parental assistance. The first is an applicant has been a member of the labour force, either employed or seeking full-time employment for at least two uninterrupted 12-consecutive month periods. The applicant has been out of secondary school for four

calendar years. The applicant is divorced, widowed, separated with no dependent children. The applicant's parents are both deceased, and the applicant has no legal guardian. The applicant is married or living in a common-law union, or the applicant is widowed, divorced, separated with dependent children or is a single parent.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for that list. That is, I believe, the first time we have had the criteria identified that clearly. I would just like to probe a little bit further, though.

One understands, of course, deceased-married or common-law, so if someone has left their parental home and has taken up residence with someone else for a period of time, then they would be considered to be independent?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, I am informed that that would be the case.

Mr. Alcock: Then someone who has been thrown out of the family home—let us start first with someone who has become a ward of the state prior to their 18th birthday. Would that person be considered to have independent status upon turning 18?

Mrs. Vodrey: I would like to give a qualified "yes" to my answer to the honourable member, because he is asking very detailed questions, which I have told him that that level of detail does belong under appropriation 16-5(g) relating to student aid.

Mr. Alcock: I appreciate the minister's qualification of that. I can assure her that we will go into this in more detail when we get to that line. I am more interested, frankly, in the policy. I have no doubt that the staff of this division—and I think the division is well staffed and well served by its staff, I think they are of very high quality, and I think that they will interpret policies and regulations accurately.

It is the policy framework that this minister sets that guides those actions. There are some concerns that have been raised to me that are troubling. One of them is—now, I will lay out the instance and perhaps the minister can then respond to it. In this particular example, it is a student who has no parental support, who had entered into a program, received a combination of loan and bursary support, who has done extremely well in her program. Her marks are fine, but each year her support level has been reduced because the department has chosen, all of a sudden, to assign to her a level of parental support, despite the fact

that she has not been living in the parental home since she was 17 years old.

This has occurred. I have the documentation going back the last three years. I am just wondering what the minister's policy on this is. It would seem that this individual is doing exactly what we would hope that they would do, and that is go to school and achieve. We are providing the support that allows them to do so, but we have all of a sudden placed such a load on this person that she has had to cut back on her course load. Then we talked about the dilemma that puts students in. I believe the minister appreciated that dilemma when we talked last time, but this one seems to hinge on the question of when someone becomes independent.

I assume from the minister's qualified yes, I suspect if we probe that one a little further, we would find that when there was a court order severing the relationship between a parent and a child that that would probably serve as evidence of independence. I may be wrong and I would be interested in knowing if that is the case. But there are other circumstances; I mean, the minister also knows from her own experience of the tremendous increase in the level of family dysfunction and the separation, divorce, remarriage, blending the looser attachment of children, particularly teens, to the family.

There are circumstances where kids are ejected from the home as they hit even their 16th or 17th birthdays. It would seem to be unfortunate and counter to the direction that this government has established or at least purports to desire of promoting more people or align more people to access higher education.

* (1450)

So I would be interested in just sorting out this whole question of when someone is independent and when they are not, and what you do to resolve it when there seems to be, as there is in this and a few other cases I have, an obvious conflict between the stated intention, the stated policy of the government to support people going to school and the actions that this minister's department has taken.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, well, we are certainly not in this business for any mistreatment of students or for any difficulty, and certainly in cases where a student can document that there is a family breakdown, parental information, and the

contribution then may be waived by the Student Financial Assistance Branch. I will also remind the member that we have spoken about the appeal process which is available through the Student Financial Branch, but he is speaking about, he has referred to one case specifically and he comments that he has others, and if he would like to submit the names to me privately then certainly we can look at those. If at that time there is revealed that there is some difficulty within the policy, some difficulty that shows itself as a result of these cases, then I will certainly be happy to look at that policy issue.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I appreciate that answer from the minister, and I will end my questioning on the policy of student aid at this point.

I would like to move on then to one other question that the minister raised in the last session that comes out of her meetings with the federal minister, and that was this announcement around the six-month interest-free grace period, or the elimination of that. One of the questions that came up was how clearly this has been defined by the federal government. When I met with the student aid people on campus, they had suggested that it was unclear at that point as to whether or not they were going to immediately start collecting interest on student aid that had been proffered, that this could cause a conflict with students who are out of school for the four months in the summer and then returning.

It was unclear to them at that time whether or not these students would be captured in this, that when a person ends a course of studies in April or May, you know, there is no requirement that they go back to school. They are for all intents and purposes at the end of that year, and the question was, would they be collecting for that four-month period and then putting people back on interest-free status—or payment-free status, I guess—until their next eight months of studies were completed? I wonder if that has been clarified.

Mrs. Vodrey: This concern was raised at the meeting that I had with the federal minister. I did raise it because there was a lack of definition around the "completion of studies." It does not appear to be the intention that, certainly, students, in a four-month period within a course of studies, should have to begin to pay the interest.

The question, as I raised to the minister, was: Students who wish then to continue a different

course of studies, a further course of studies, what would their obligation be? The federal government has yet to completely clarify this, and I cannot speak for the federal government.

But I can assure the member that I did raise the issue, and I did raise the issue with that specific example. Now, we are expecting the federal government to define the term "completion of studies" and also to inform us when they will be making their changes regarding their own legislation and their regulations.

Mr. Alcock: On the same general area of student aid then—and I appreciate that answer from the minister. I hope we will get some clarification; I realize that she is not accountable for that set of decisions.

It is the policy of the department, as I understand it, randomly to audit students who are receiving bursary and financial assistance. My question is: Relative to those students who receive approval for out-of-province study, where they are receiving bursary and loan support and studying outside of the province of Manitoba, is it the policy of the department to audit all students who are in attendance in programs outside the province?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, I am informed that it is not the practice to audit every student who is studying out of province.

Mr. Alcock: Has there been a specific decision taken then to audit all students attending the speech therapy programs in North Dakota?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that we do a 5 percent random sample. Now if the member has any concerns that something has been done differently than that, then I would be interested to know what the information is.

Mr. Alcock: I thank for the minister for that. I will bring that information forward to her.

Finally in this area, we talked a bit about international agreements. In the documentation that was provided with the information on this particular branch the Manitoba-Minnesota Agreement is mentioned. I am wondering—there was the meeting with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) some time ago, between the Premier and the Governor of Minnesota. Specifically what has that led to in educational exchanges and educational planning?

Mrs. Vodrey: In response to the member's questions and also some questions which were

raised by the member for Wolseley, I do have some additional information that this Manitoba-Minnesota Agreement, first of all, primarily affects the university and the colleges. It does not have a great effect on the K to 12 system.

There are 57 Manitoba residents who requested assistance from the Manitoba Student Financial Assistance program to study in Minnesota. The MSFAP awarded approximately \$258,000 in financial aid to 50 Manitobans, mostly in the form of the Canada Student Loan. Currently there was only one Minnesota resident studying at the University of Winnipeg in the B.A. program in physical activity and sports study.

The Faculty of Management at the University of Manitoba and the School of Management at the University of Minnesota signed a letter of understanding to co-operate in the development of an undergraduate exchange program. This would initially involve five students being exchanged in each direction, normally for one academic year with full degree credit given by the respective schools for pre-approved courses.

Future activities identified by the Manitoba Advisory Committee include the organization of a student exchange initiative at the elementary and/or secondary level, a symposium in 1992 to be organized and hosted by Minnesota and additional promotional activities to further the agreement and other possible initiatives such as an authorship exchange program and a faculty exchange program between one or more universities from both jurisdictions.

* (1500)

Mr. Alcock: Staying with the Manitoba-Minnesota Agreement then, did I understand the minister correctly that 54 students applied for assistance to study in Minnesota, 50 presumably of those 54 received assistance? So we had at least 50 heading south and only one came north. Is there any explanation for that discrepancy?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I would like to correct the number for the record. I would not want to have that incorrect information on the record. Fifty-seven Manitoba students did request assistance. The member is right, 50 did receive that assistance.

In terms of the disproportionate number from both sides, we are assuming that Minnesota did not promote the agreement or has not yet promoted the

agreement to the same extent that it is known and available in Manitoba.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, so were these 50 who went a result of some sort of promotional effort on the part of the department or the universities?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that all public post-secondary institutions are aware of the agreement. The Student Financial Assistance Branch also makes information about the agreement available. Also, through our secondary schools, there is information about this agreement.

Now, the member is perhaps expressing some concern about the, again, disproportionate number of students, fewer students attending from Minnesota, and certainly I am prepared to ask our Manitoba advisory committee to look at some reasons for those numbers, because the three reasons I have given for our students attending may not be sufficient to account for not as many students attending from Minnesota.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, terrific, I think that would be a good suggestion to make. It would also be interesting to know how many students were going south to Minnesota prior to the signing of the agreement.

On that line, does the agreement include provision whereby students going to programs in Minnesota that are also offered in Manitoba are able to access financial assistance? Is this the essence of the reason for the particular agreement between Manitoba and Minnesota on educational co-operation? Whereas, as I understand it, if you go south to a program in a school, you will not receive financial support from the Province of Manitoba unless it is ascertained that that program you are going to is not available in Manitoba. Is that a fair statement of the policy?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, I am informed that all Minnesota programs are considered as if they are being offered in Manitoba, and so funding assistance would be available to eligible students.

Mr. Alcock: That leads me to, then, the question about the authorization of student aid to students who are taking programs that are not offered here. I am thinking specifically right now about chiropractic training which, from the information I have received, suggests that there is some

confusion about whether or not this is something that Manitoba students studying abroad can receive Manitoba financial support for. Is chiropractic training one of those services that people can receive support for?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, this is a type of detail which I believe best falls under the Appropriation 16-5(g). However, to answer the member, where students wish to attend the Canadian Memorial College of chiropractic in Toronto, the college in Montreal or the Northwestern School of chiropractic in Minnesota, those students are eligible for both Canada Students Loans and also would be eligible for Manitoba bursaries. However, if students choose other than those three schools, then they would not be eligible for the Manitoba bursary.

Mr. Alcock: What is the reason for the singling out of those three schools? What is the policy that led to that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, as the member knows, there is no school of chiropractic in Manitoba. That, then, allows other Canadian schools to have an eligibility for our students to attend and Minnesota is eligible for our students to attend as a result of the Manitoba-Minnesota Agreement.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, just finally on this question of international agreements, there is the Manitoba-Russia Agreement that has been signed around a whole variety of issues. Is Education included in that in any way?

* (1510)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, under the agreement with Russia, again signed by the Premier (Mr. Filmon), this government will be seeking specific projects which can be carried on.

I also understand that the University of Manitoba has a proposal put forward to the federal government for funding to exchange in the area of management with L'vov University. We also have an agreement with the Ukraine which focuses on our K to 12 side, and that agreement will now have to be updated with the change in the political situation for the Ukraine.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Chairperson, I wanted to ask about the appropriation for board governance under this section, and then we would be prepared to move on.

I notice that there is an amount of \$261,000. Is that the line that is just for board governance, or

does that include other items as well? Perhaps I should phrase it more directly. How much is the department budgeting for board governance in this area?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the amount of \$250,000 has been set aside to assist in the transition to board governance for areas such as personnel and administration.

Ms. Friesen: Is that then on that line listed as Other? It is coming out of that \$261,000.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the amount of \$250,000 is subsumed within the \$391,200 which is the total other expenditure figure, the resources required to support the transition-related training and consulting service \$120,000, information systems development \$50,000, operation and honoraria for interim board \$60,000, and operating costs relating to the new financial and administrative requirements of board governance operations \$30,000.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell me how that \$60,000 for honoraria has been distributed? In particular, I am interested in is it on a per diem basis? Is it per hour? How are the board members remunerated?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, that amount of money has not yet been distributed. The amount of money is expected to be allocated on a per diem basis, but this is an estimate. The amount has not yet been approved by government.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, I assume that the per diems are not being paid to people who come under the Civil Service Commission so that the \$60,000 then is for the three private members to be spent over one year?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, that \$60,000 is for operation and honoraria. It is operation and honoraria for the full three college boards.

Ms. Friesen: Then I am a little confused. There is an overall committee which is looking at governance and which is composed primarily of civil servants with three representatives—one from Brandon, one from Winnipeg and one from Thompson. That is the management committee and then there are separate boards. Now is this \$250,000 for the management committee or is it for the separate boards?

Mrs. Vodrey: There is an interdepartmental conversion team which the member has referenced

and that is the interdepartmental conversion team whose role it is to provide the framework to move us into the process of college governance. This \$60,000 is not an appropriation for that interdepartmental conversion team. This \$60,000 is an appropriation for the boards of governors themselves, the boards of governors for the three community colleges who are to be appointed in September, and it is to include both the honoraria and also the operation of those three boards and the conversion team, once its job is completed, then will be disbanded.

Ms. Frlesen: Could I ask, then, what is the honoraria being paid to the three noncivil-servant members of the management committee?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that it is nothing, and that it is only their expenses.

Ms. Frlesen: And for the individual boards that will be created in September, what will the honorarium be for the noncivil-servant members of those boards?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I was explaining to the member earlier, that is a per diem figure which has not yet been approved by government. At this point, I am not able to provide her with that specific information.

Ms. Frlesen: The members of these independent boards will have their honorarium approved by government, and government has established a \$60,000 amount to be spent between September and March 31, I guess, of next year for per diems and some administrative costs. Am I right?

Mrs. Vodrey: The amount of \$60,000 was approved in the Estimates to cover the operations of the three boards of governors and also the honoraria for the members of the boards of governors who will be appointed in September.

* (1520)

Ms. Frlesen: Can we get back, then, to this overall \$250,000 figure? Presumably, this does not cover the entire cost of governance or the creation of governance by any means. How has the department included the costs, for example, that are being incurred by government services or other government departments who are part of the transition teams and also who are going to be making adjustments within their own operations?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am not sure exactly what adjustments the member may be referring to. There will be adjustments next fiscal year, and in the next

fiscal year then I will be happy to talk about exactly what those adjustments are.

Ms. Frlesen: What I am talking about is the figure of \$250,000 as an estimate for the creation of boards of governors and for creating the changes in the Civil Service in staffing, in programs, in services that have to be made as a result of the decision to go to governance, and what I am questioning is the total number that is listed here of \$250,000. That seems to me to present a false account of the real costs of the transfer to governance.

I am asking how the department or how the government in other departments has, in fact, made allocations for this quite large transition in government services, not the Department of Government Services, but in the overall provision of services. What is the real cost?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I challenge the honourable member and her use of the term, a false accounting. A false accounting is an extremely strong way to refer to a number within our Estimates book; and, if she has some information she would like to bring forward, then I will be happy to see it. Otherwise, that remark, the false accounting remark which the member made, I believe, is completely unjustified and does not have any place in this Estimates; \$250,000 is an incremental portion, an incremental amount of money.

The other departments that the member has referenced, and, by way of example, the Departments of Government Services and Justice include within their own budgets the funds that are necessary for them.

Ms. Frlesen: That is the issue I am trying to get at. Perhaps "false" was the wrong word, and I take that back if it was the wrong word. Should I say insufficient presentation in this listing of the full cost of the transfer to governance? Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars is listed here, and that covers some of the items the minister has mentioned. I have tried to suggest that the cost is larger, and I am asking the minister, as Minister of Education, does she have any idea, has the government undertaken any costing, any evaluation of the savings to other departments, of the costs to other departments in this year?

Presumably, overall there is somewhere a full balance sheet of this new process. Where is it?

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, this costing was developed approximately two years ago when the movement

to college governance was approved. It has stood the test of time. The costing to other departments, we would have to look within their own budgets, but departments are resourced to undertake projects and this is one project that the other departments have worked together with the Department of Education in looking at this completion. We will be looking at a full costing in the 1993-94 Estimates.

Ms. Friesen: When the minister says a full costing in the next year's budget, does she mean an audited statement will be provided? I am not sure what costing means at that stage when the issue is over.

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, the movement to governance is to provide a flexibility for the colleges in terms of programming and also in terms of their management. The \$250,000 is the cost to the Department of Education. As I said in a past answer, the other cost to the other departments that have been involved within the interdepartmental conversion team assume those costs within their day-to-day operations, and when we move into governance, then there will be an audited statement of the colleges' finances and that audited statement will then be available to the public also.

*(1530)

Ms. Friesen: So there will not then be an audited statement of what the cost has been to the taxpayers of Manitoba of the transition to government. The audited statements you are talking about are the costs of each individual college as they enter their first year?

Mrs. Vodrey: The government does make all of its expenditures according to the General Manual of Administration, and the member might like to review then the Public Accounts Committee. In addition, all departments are being reviewed through the Estimates process, and that would be another opportunity to look specifically at each department.

Ms. Friesen: I will do my best to attend both of those, but, as I am sure the minister is well aware, we are looking at payroll, purchasing, plant maintenance, communications, management issues, creation of new boards, a wide range of activities.

I am looking, on behalf of the taxpayers of Manitoba, for some overall statement which looks at what savings the government is proposing from this, what the immediate costs have been, and what they might propose to have been the long-term savings or costs. That seems to me a fairly reasonable

request for a major transition in public events in Manitoba, and I am wondering why the minister, the department, the government, would apparently balk at providing such a statement.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, first of all, the move to college governance was not motivated by a specific savings motivation, said the issue was to move to college governance for management issues, for the issues of daily operation to make the colleges more responsive to the areas in which they were located.

Now, the cost for the move to governance, as I have said, there is within the Estimates which we are speaking about for the Department of Education, an amount of \$250,000 set aside for this year. The other costs, as I have been telling her, are assumed by the other departments within their daily operating costs. There is no effort to fail to provide. I think that I have been able to provide for the member the amount available through the Department of Education, and also being able to explain to her that within this government, and within the other departments there is an amount of money available for their operations.

Their part of our interdepartmental conversion team has allowed those members, those departments to participate, and for their cost to be absorbed by their operations, funds available to those departments.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, I guess I am still surprised that the government is not prepared to provide an overall costing of this transition in government policy. There are many areas involved. It seems to me that it would be in the government's own interest to prepare such a list.

It seems to me that \$250,000, yes, you are able to explain what that is being spent on or will be spent on. It is not the cost even this year of the transition to college governments. There are many other costs. I have outlined some of those that I can think of from my own experience of what is involved in colleges and universities.

I am asking for information from the government which it seems to me would be in their own best interest to provide.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, well, again, I have provided for the member the incremental cost this year of \$250,000. I have also explained that the full cost will be available for discussion in the 1993-94 Estimates. That seems to be what the

member is asking for, and so I have explained when that information will be available.

The movement to college governance, when we are talking about the issue of accountability, was to improve the issue of public accountability, was to improve the availability for community input within the locations of the community colleges and to allow for a sense of ownership and a sense of direct benefit to those particular regions.

Ms. Friesen: But we are going in circles again. The material that the minister is going to provide next year will relate to individual colleges, not to the overall cost to the taxpayer.

I am not asking for the numbers now. I am asking for an overall accounting, at some point, of the cost to the taxpayer of the transition to college governance. I am assuming in that that there are savings and expenditures.

Mrs. Vodrey: There seems to be a misunderstanding, Madam Chairperson. What I have spoken of as being available in '93-94 is the full cost of implementation. I believe that is what the member is asking for. I have also said that when the colleges are operating, they will be required to submit an audited budget for public review.

Ms. Friesen: That is, what I was asking for was, at some point, a full cost listing of the implementation to college governance.

Okay, I am actually ready to move on to the next section.

Madam Chairperson: Item 5.(b) Program Analysis, Co-ordination and Support: (1) Salaries \$904,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$391,200—pass.

5.(c) Red River Community College: (1) Salaries.

Ms. Friesen: Could I thank the minister's staff who have spent such a long time sitting on this particular issue? Thank you.

Red River Community College, I guess we should—

Madam Chairperson: Order please. Would the honourable member wait just for one moment in order for the appropriate staff to enter the Chamber?

Mrs. Vodrey: I would just like to take a moment to introduce Dr. Tony Knowles, who is the President of Red River Community College.

* (1540)

Ms. Friesen: I wonder if we could start with a general introduction from the minister, on behalf of Red River Community College, as to what changes she expects to see in Red River Community College over the next year.

I am thinking particularly in terms of the community college's ability to meet the needs of a population which has very large numbers of unemployed people, which also has a very small proportion of the students between 18 and 24 and which, in the past, has had a high proportion of part-time students. So I am looking at the overall capacity of the college and whether the minister expects any changes in that, in the composition of its students, both in economic terms and, should we say, cultural terms and also the specific changes in programs that the government is anticipating?

Mrs. Vodrey: I would like to start discussing what I hope to see for Red River Community College in specific, but I suppose my first point will really be what I expect to see from all three colleges and that is, with the move to college governance, an enhanced public accountability.

The colleges through the governance model are expected to have the ability through the governance model then to respond to the communities again in which they are situated, also then, to be very responsive and accountable to those communities. We believe that this will be an improvement for the people of Manitoba.

We also expect to have more programs which we believe will provide employment. I have read into the record a number of times the additional programs or the expanded programs which we have added to Red River Community College in specific. We believe that these programs provide a much greater ability for students upon graduation to become employed.

In addition to that, we also are recognizing that Red River Community College has a very diverse multicultural population, and we do have some initiatives underway to assure, first of all, access for students to Red River Community College, and also to assist in the success and the students' engagement within Red River Community College so that they can remain within the program and be successful.

We want to ensure that all the programs are a very high quality and that those programs are to be a

proven asset, both to the students in terms of their interests and also to the economy of Manitoba.

In terms of the part-time students that the member discusses, the part-time students are primarily in the extension programs and also in the market-driven programs, and they tend not to be in the day programs. We would like to continue to offer a good mix of available programs for students in Manitoba.

This year \$1,625,000 in the 1992-93 budget has been allocated to allow the college to add 15 initiatives to meet the present and the future skill needs of the province, and Red River Community College will be providing training for 255 more full-time and 160 more part-time students in various areas of technology and business, including the Developmental Services Worker.

Funds have been allocated to allow Red River Community College to continue with its implementation of the total quality management as the college prepares for board governance in April of 1993. Also, the provision of special operating and financial status for the profit-centred activities in market-driven training, continuing education and the bookstore will be more similar to that under governance and will allow the college to better prepare for governance.

The President's Task Force on Services to multicultural and aboriginal communities has submitted a set of draft recommendations on how Red River Community College can better serve these students, and a new director of aboriginal services position reporting to the president has been recommended to assist with the implementation of the recommendations of the final report which will be due in June 1992.

The co-operative education delivery mode has proven to be very successful in the two-year Business Administration program. This format will be introduced into four more programs for September 1992. Those programs are civil engineering technology, the administrative assistant, motor vehicle mechanic and the chemical laboratory technology.

The intent of Red River Community College, and certainly my intent for the college, is to provide the high-quality educational and training opportunities that will assist with the economic and the cultural and social development of Manitoba and also assist us within the global marketplace.

Red River Community College has developed a mission statement, and they will work collaboratively with the appropriate sectors of government, education, business, industry, community organizations, to accomplish the following objectives.

The objectives include, to enhance the quality of the learning experiences by fostering a culture which makes the college a client-based customer service organization, and to expand the programming to support part-time learners through partnership arrangements both within Winnipeg and also within the regional communities; to enhance the infrastructure supporting access to programs and the retention of students, with a particular emphasis on those with aboriginal backgrounds and those belonging to ethnocultural minority groups; and to expand the development of co-operative education as a major mechanism for delivering Red River Community College programs and creating stronger links with all sectors of the community.

* (1550)

We have spoken about the benefits of the co-operative education model in assisting in the linkage between young people or adults studying and also the kind of job-related employment where they wish to become employed following their training, and also to respond to the training requirements of employers with effectiveness and with flexibility, and to continue to take an active role in supporting the general economic and the social and the environmental development of the community.

We recognize that the three colleges are situated in different areas of Manitoba and expect that they would be responsive to their specific areas, and Red River Community College is the one we are speaking of now, also to explore initiatives in the area of international education.

With the objectives which the college has set and which I have reviewed, and with, again, the movement to college governance and with some of the new programs, I look, within the next year, as we move to governance, for the college laying the groundwork for that increased responsiveness, both to the community at large, those people wishing to study, and also to employers and to the economy of Manitoba.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, could the minister, now that the staff from Red River is here,

table a list of the courses in which there are waiting lists and the length of those waiting lists?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I believe the honourable member said that she had that list last week. However, we will be glad to table that list for her the next time we are sitting together.

Ms. Frlesen: I did have a list which I brought to the House and which the minister claimed never to have seen, so that is why I am asking her for her information, and I would be pleased to look at that because it seems to me that in at least 20 courses there were waiting lists. I think we can discuss whether, in fact, those students exist. The minister has in the past claimed that students on waiting lists are not necessarily an indication of the demand for a course. That is a possibility, but in that case I would like to know how the department does evaluate the demand for courses.

It seems to me that the list that I had, suggested that there were waiting lists in a considerable number of courses which were not permitting students to enroll until '93 or, in one or two cases, even '94. I am wondering if that is also the minister's understanding.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, well, as the member may know, students can apply for programs and program admittance at Red River Community College without any fee. So the experience of the college, I am informed, is that students then sometimes apply for three or four, even five programs for admission.

That does make the list quite a bit longer than if the list were an accurate indication of every student on the list actually wishing to be admitted into that program and planning to attend that program upon admittance.

So at this point, the college has recognized the concern. I am informed that they are now changing the system regarding application to one in which students will be required to list their choices, so that there will be some indication of where students and in what ranking order may wish to apply for course entry.

Ms. Frlesen: Madam Chairperson, in her opening remarks the minister alluded to 255 more full-time students. I am not sure of the relevance of that number. I would like to know if it is 255 more than last year or 255 more than two years ago or 255 more than three years ago.

How does this relate, for example, to the large cuts that the college suffered in the recent past?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, well, as I indicated before when we had a discussion on this matter, this being the appropriation now where it should be discussed, however, I did then give the information when it was discussed under another appropriation, that the full-time enrolment for 1992-93 we expect to be similar to the enrolment of two years ago. The 255 new enrolments are enrolments in the new programs.

Ms. Frlesen: Yes, that does clarify things, so I thank the minister for that.

I want to ask about staffing at Red River College. There have been a number of staffing changes over the last few years. Two years ago the college let go 87 staff. It indicates on the lists that we have in Estimates, a net increase of 21.27 staff years due to new and expanded initiatives.

So again, I wanted the minister to clarify this. This is 21 additional staff years from last year, or is it simply 21 staff years attached to the new programs? Where does the college sit in relative staffing terms, say, to three years ago?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the staff years for 1990-91 were 772; the staff years for 1991-92 were 701; and the staff years expected for '92-93 are 723.

But I would like to remind the member that not all the reductions in staff years last year were program related, that there was also significant administrative streamlining. There were also significant savings related to the privatization of some services, for instance, the cafeteria.

Ms. Frlesen: Could the minister break down those staff years into full- and part-time and contract?

Mrs. Vodrey: I would just like to clarify if the member would like the breakdown for permanent part-time contract for the 23 new staff members?

* (1600)

Ms. Frlesen: I am looking for the changes over the three years in each of those categories. As the minister knows, I have been raising some concerns generally, and I will do it in universities as well, about the proportion of full-time staff to part-time and temporary staff in our higher education institutions.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, well, there has been some net change this year over last year, and the information that I have is that there is a reduction of 7.46 staff years in the regular employment. There

is an increase of 28.27 staff years in the temporary area, and there is an increase of .46 in the contract area for a total of 21.27 staff years. However, I am also informed that the large increase in the temporary staff years is because the term "staff years" will not be used when the college is then moved to governance and that will be as of April '93. So it will be then up to the colleges to determine what their hiring will be.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, then I am not clear, first of all, what is meant by "temporary"—that was the category you used—where there has been a 28 percent increase. Does it mean part-time or does it simply refer to—how would I put it? Is there a breakdown in that 28 percent increase of people who are full-time staff people? I was also looking, as I said, for the three-year status. I would understand if you would not have that with you, but I would like to see that at some point so that we can get a long-term sense of where the post-secondary institutions are going in this area.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, I am informed that the term "temporary" that was used referred to a number of staff years, 28.27. Those were all full-time staffings, and they were not part-time staffing. The term "temporary" was used as opposed to permanent, because the term "staff years" will not be in use when the colleges move to governance.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, overall, the numbers that we do have, there does seem to be, however, an increase in the number of part-time staff. I wonder what concerns the minister has about that.

Mrs. Vodrey: I wonder if the member is confusing part-time with temporary, because I am informed that there has been no significant increase in the part-time staffing at Red River Community College.

Ms. Friesen: Perhaps the difficulty then is over the definition of part-time. I would be including as part-time all of those people who do not teach on a 10-month basis or a 12-month basis, whatever the standard is that is used at the moment.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, again I am informed that the resources provided were all full-time resources—the new resources—and they will all be part of the regular programming.

Ms. Friesen: Does that mean that they have 10-month contracts or 12-month contracts or six-month contracts?

Mrs. Vodrey: The length of the term is determined by the program. It is then sometimes determined on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Friesen: So how many of these temporary/permanent positions are contracts of 10 months? How many are contracts of eight months? How many are contracts of six months?

Is there, for example—I do not know where to draw the line. I would certainly take the minister's staff guidance on this. Are there a large bulk of people, for example, who are teaching less than six months? Is there a small number who are teaching less than 10? As the minister knows, what I am looking for is a level of commitment to the institution.

Mrs. Vodrey: Again I am informed that the new resources for the new programs are full-time regular programs of one-year duration.

Ms. Friesen: So all of the 27 new staff positions are 12-month positions?

* (1610)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that, yes, the majority of those are in fact one year in duration programs.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, how does that compare to existing staff contracts? What proportion of those are 12-month contracts?

Mrs. Vodrey: That information will require some analysis by staff, and I will return and provide it for her.

Ms. Friesen: Some of the material that I have been reading recently from the Association of Colleges of Canada stresses the necessity—and I have raised this with the minister before—of looking ahead to the staffing of colleges. I wonder now that the minister has the staff of Red River College here whether she could give us some assessment of the needs of the college for staffing over the next 10 years. We are looking really at the renewal of a generation of teachers.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the issue of human resource planning is again of great interest and also a concern for Red River Community College, as we look at the next 10 years. I am informed that we expect a turnover of approximately 30 percent by the year 2000, as people do determine their retirement.

In order then to fill those positions, I would just like to clarify to the member that in hiring in the community colleges we look for people whose

background is in that area in which they would be teaching. When they are hired, then we ask them to work on the certificate of adult education. So the pool of people available to teach is then fairly broad and fairly large, and so I am assured that the college then will be looking within that pool of people trained within the area for teaching, and we will be looking at providing the best and the most qualified individuals to teach in those areas.

In addition, there is also a human resources task force operating at the college. This human resources task force is focusing on examining the skills and the needs of the existing staff at the college. So we are attempting to deal with it in two ways.

Ms. Frlesen: Madam Chairperson, what plans does this task force have for the continuing education skill development of existing staff, having done the inventory?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the human resources task force is now deliberating on the information that they have gathered, and I am expecting to see their recommendations by the end of the summer.

Ms. Frlesen: In the 30-percent changeover that the college is expecting, could the minister give us any sense of plans and priorities that the college would have for a better representation of the population of Winnipeg in those new hiring decisions that will have to be made?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the issue, particularly of affirmative action strategy, is a major issue that the human resource task force has been examining. They have been looking very carefully at the issues and the hiring relating to multicultural and aboriginal individuals.

But also we expect by this fall that there will be a specific strategy in place for all colleges relating particularly to some of those affirmative action groups, including women, aboriginal people and multicultural groups.

Ms. Frlesen: I wanted to ask about the market-driven training. What proportion of college students and college staff are in the market-driven training area at the moment and how does the minister see this changing over the next few years?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that we have approximately 30 SYs who are allocated to the market-driven training. The number of students, I am informed, is a very large number because it

includes part-time students as well as full-time students. But there has been no shift in resources from the regular day programming to the market-driven programming.

In the future, the market-driven programming will be operated by a special operating status, and the revenues then generated through the market-driven training special operating status will then be used for additional training and, therefore, there will not be a transfer from the base into the market-driven training programs.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Ms. Frlesen: I ask about the co-op education. I am particularly interested in the application of the co-op programs to public sector and nongovernment organizations. When the minister made the introduction, she spoke only in terms of business. It seemed to me that in some areas some of the skills would be significant in terms of the public sector, and I wonder what opportunities there are there for students.

* (1620)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the "business" in the term that I referred to, does refer to outside institutions. It was used in a very broad sense in terms of discussion. By way of example, the business administration students, when the member is asking about public sector opportunities for co-operative students, some of those business admin students are working with the Department of Government Services.

Our first priority has been to expand the offerings of the co-operative education. This has been a significant change in emphasis. So there has been, in the beginning, a greater emphasis placed on the private-sector area.

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

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the minister give me some assurance that the colleges in general, but in this case, Red River College, will also be looking at nongovernmental institutions including trade unions, including co-operatives, including the international organization sector as well, as opportunities for students?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, yes, of course a beginning had to be made somewhere, but we are looking at expanding quite far, and there will be no restrictions on that expansion.

Ms. Frlesen: Has the college approached the federal government at all? I am concerned here, obviously, because of the tremendous loss of federal jobs that we have had in Manitoba, and if we are to attract industries in the broadest sense, work opportunities, it seems to me that if we had a program which did develop apprenticeships and co-operative education in federal government institutions, it might be yet another argument to try and retain some of the more than a thousand jobs that the federal government has transferred out of Manitoba.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I certainly did mean what I said in terms of no restrictions, and I will say again that, yes, we did have a primary focus in the beginning on the private sector. However, we are continuing to press the federal government. We have made an approach to the National Research Council, I am informed the centre for biodiagnostic research. The federal government also does provide some funding to establish co-operative education programs.

However, we are somewhat concerned when the member speaks of the downsizing, in terms of the federal government downsizing, that co-op students not be caught when there is, in fact, a person available from a re-employment list then to come into that particular situation and place of employment.

Ms. Frlesen: I was not actually talking about the downsizing of the federal government. I was talking about the transfer of jobs from Winnipeg to Edmonton and Montreal, but I agree with the minister's general principle, and I assume it applies to other agencies as well that students may indeed get caught in those difficult positions.

I wanted to ask the minister about the executive salaries in this section of the department, and I wonder if she could perhaps outline for us the approach to the contract of the president of Red River Community College, the number of years that this contract is in place for, and the salary levels which are there?

Mrs. Vodrey: The contract for the president of Red River Community College is a three-year contract. The starting salary is in the range of \$80,000 per year including annual increases provided to other Manitoba civil servants. Although I do not really want to discuss the details of his previous employment, I think it is important to note that the

current president of Red River Community College did make a very significant commitment to Manitoba in coming here and assuming that position. In terms of salary, he did take a significant decrease in salary from his previous position.

Ms. Frlesen: I do not want the details of the salary. I am interested in the range and its applicability to a Civil Service level. Is there a particular Civil Service level that it is, at present, comparable to?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the answer is no. At Red River Community College it is a contract position. However, at the other two community colleges the office of president is at a Senior Officer 2 level.

Ms. Frlesen: Could the minister explain why the difference between the two in terms of approach to the salary, not the salary itself, but why is one a Civil Service and the other a contract?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed the reason is that the salary range was really not sufficient previously unless it was done under the contract basis to attract a candidate. Red River Community College is approximately four times the size of the other community colleges, and this was the second competition held for the person to fill the office of the president. In the first competition there was not a successful candidate.

It is our opinion that Red River Community College is really a very important college and system within Manitoba and also within Canada, and we really must be competitive in order to attract very good people here to Manitoba.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I wanted to ask about what appears to be a reduction in the line here for Social Assistance. I wonder if the minister's staff could give us a sense of why that reduction this coming year. It has moved from \$1.5 million to \$1.2 million.

* (1630)

Mrs. Vodrey: As part of the 1991-92 Estimates, there was the announcement of the elimination of two ACCESS programs: civil technology and electrical/electronics. The reason for this was the federal offloading which was as a result of the expiry of the Northern Development Agreement.

Now, the line under social assistance this year reflects the reduced student allowance as the previous cohort of students then graduate, and there was a large graduation of students last year.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Chairperson, could we look at the line above on capital, which has remained static? I am puzzled by two things; first of all, the fact that in a period of increased costs, second of all, new programs requiring, one would assume, new equipment, and, thirdly, the actual total amount itself seems to me very small for a technical college.

I wonder if the minister could supply some information.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am informed that this amount under capital reflects furniture, and that the capital which the member may be wishing to discuss falls under appropriation 16-7.

Also, I am pleased to note that of the \$2.5 million increase to the colleges this year, approximately \$452,000 of that was for additional capital to support those programs.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Chairperson, just so that I am sure that I am on the right line, what the minister is referring to as the expenditures for equipment related to course delivery and for laboratory supplies and those kinds of things, is that which is listed on—I have it as page 1—I am sorry, the line I was looking at was under the Universities Grants Commission of expenditures related to capital, so I am not quite sure—Could the minister redirect me again to the line she is talking about?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the line 16-7 refers to all capital, which includes UGC, public schools and colleges.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Chairperson, could the minister then give me some breakdown of that of the appropriation for colleges and specifically for Red River?

Mrs. Vodrey: Under the appropriation line 16(7), I have the information in terms of capital. For Red River Community College, the amount is \$1.273 million. The amount for Assiniboine Community College \$607,000, and the amount for Keewatin Community College \$503,000, for a total for the community colleges of \$2.385 million. Again, I remind the member it falls under the appropriation 16(7).

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Chairperson, could the minister tell us something about the future of the nursing programs at Red River Community College? I am looking at both the LPN programs, the new shorter program for nursing aides and also the RN program. What is the status of each of them

now? What are we looking at in the next three or four years?

*(1640)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, in terms of nursing education in Manitoba we feel that it is very important to wait until the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) does announce government policy relating to the entry to practice both at the RN level and the LPN level. We are aware that there are some proposals relating to collaborative education, but there has been no final decision on that. Regarding the one-year moratorium on the LPN program at Red River Community College, that moratorium has been extended into the '92-93 year, and we are waiting for the outcome of the health review which is being conducted by the Minister of Health.

In terms of the health aids, we have had discussions with the long-term care facilities, with the Department of Education and also the Department of Health, because the health periods are not at the moment a regulated profession. So at the moment there is some discussion surrounding that particular branch.

Ms. Friesen: The RN program—what is the long-term future of that over the next three years?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, with the RN program we are waiting for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to announce the government policy relating to the entry to practise for RNs in Manitoba, and at this point we will be, as I said, awaiting information from the minister. The Minister of Health has established a Council on Nursing and Education. He established that in 1990 to report on the role and the training of all levels of nurses, and so we will be looking forward to collaborating with the Minister of Health in relation to nursing education in Manitoba.

Ms. Friesen: I think that is the council which has not met for several months. I am sure the minister is aware that there are many anxious people out there who are looking for some policy on this issue. Could the minister give us some idea of when these decisions will be announced? Are we looking at fall or next spring or are we looking at a year from now?

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, I certainly do understand the concerns around nursing education in the province, and I will remind the member that I did teach within a school of nursing within this province and so I do also have a particular interest in some of the issues that we are discussing today. Again, the

determining factor is a study being done by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Some of these questions may be more appropriately asked to him within the Health Estimates, and at this point I will be happy to be in consultation with the minister, and I need to have the information that I know he will be delivering as quickly as possible regarding government policy.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am looking for an approximate date when this report will be available, and when the people who are interested in the various elements of this profession will be able to make their decisions about enrolment. This surely is an issue of planning for the community colleges, and it seem to me that the minister ought to be able to answer a little more specifically. This six months, next six months, two years from now—what time frame should people be looking at?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I understand the issue that the member is raising regarding planning, but as regards nursing education across this province, we need to get some more information from the Minister of Health regarding government policy, entry to practice within this province. These are some issues that I know the Minister of Health has been working very closely with the various nursing organizations across Manitoba, and I have met with him and have discussed this issue, but I cannot answer for him at this time in terms of exactly when he will have that report ready for people of Manitoba to look at.

Ms. Friesen: I believe that letter was tabled in the House suggesting that this council which the minister had planning nursing education has not met since February, and I wonder if this Minister of Education has conveyed her concerns about this to him and the difficulties it places in the way of community colleges in developing their planning over the next two years.

Mrs. Vodrey: As I said, I have spoken to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and in fact, we have met several times around the issues relating to nursing education, and I will continue to meet with the Minister of Health regarding the issues relating to nursing education and particularly as they affect Red River Community College and also the University of Manitoba.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I wanted to ask the minister about the difficulties that Red River College faced some months ago when the federal

government decided to withdraw its funding for job counsellors at post-secondary institutions across the country. Some institutions did choose to take advantage of the federal government's offer of interim funding and job training to people who would replace them, usually on a reduced basis. Some institutions chose to supplement the program from their own resources.

My understanding is that Red River College did neither, and I am wondering if the minister could perhaps give us an update on that, if there have been any developments in that and how, finally, the college is managing its relationships with employers.

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, we, too, are concerned that the federal government withdrew this service and withdrew the employment service across Canada. Certainly, we have a concern as it affects our own community colleges here in Manitoba, but the member is mistaken in that the college and the government did negotiate a two-year ongoing funding agreement that service would continue to be provided at Red River College.

Now again though, we are concerned about the federal offloading, because within this negotiation we do recognize that the funding is only approximately 40 percent of what the federal expenditures were previously. At this time we have two staff years provided in this area.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Acting Chairperson, I wanted to follow up with the minister in regard to the LPNs versus RNs. I know I had the opportunity during the Health Estimates to ask a number of questions to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and he often made reference to the study that is in fact being done and that will determine the need and the demand, if you will, for the different professions.

I wanted to ask the minister, in terms of why it is that the LPN course over at Red River College has been cancelled, as compared to, let us say, the RN course, because I understand the RN course is still going.

* (1650)

Mrs. Vodrey: The LPN program at Red River College was "suspended," and I think that term is an important term, instead of the term that the honourable member used. The program was suspended pending the outcome of the Minister of Health's (Mr. Orchard) study.

Now, Red River Community College uses a laddering approach to nursing education. There is a common first year between LPNs and RNs in the program. LPNs can exit at the end of that first year, if they wish to. Now MALPN did have some concerns regarding a separate program, and our department had some concerns regarding labour market development and labour market projections. With each of these areas to be considered, as well as information coming from the Minister of Health, the program then was suspended.

There has been some concern that the career ladder model can no longer serve the diverging needs of the LPNs and the RNs, and in the case of the LPNs this view has often been expressed by the Manitoba Association of Licensed Practical Nurses and by employers also. The last two external evaluations of the practical nursing course by MALPN called for either a program unique to the LPN needs or a longer program including additional skills and theory.

The labour market study done by our department, by PACE in training, in the summer and fall of 1990, concluded that the Red River Community College LPN program failed to provide the type of training required by LPNs when they enter the work force and that there would be very little impact on the labour market supply, and that a revamping of the program would seem to be in everyone's best interest.

Again, for the member, to the Council on Nursing Education which the Minister of Health established, and that council was to report on the role and the training of nurses at all levels. Red River Community College will maintain the practical nursing refresher course and will also continue to provide LPNs with credit for previous learning and entrance into the second year of the diploma nursing program. That part of the laddering will be maintained.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister tell me if the RN program has been suspended, or any moratorium put on the RN program?

Mrs. Vodrey: There has not been a moratorium or a suspension on the RN program at Red River Community College.

Mr. Lamoureux: Like everyone else in this Chamber, no doubt we have all met with the LPNs. The LPNs—and the minister, I find interesting, made reference to a labour market study, made

presentation to our caucus as an individual MLA. Some of the LPNs from my own constituency had suggested to me, and I believe that in fact that what they had suggested is true, that the LPN unemployment rate, if you will, is less than one percent, whereas the RN unemployment rate is much higher.

I would ask if the minister can confirm or deny that that is the case, given that she has had a labour market study done?

Mrs. Vodrey: Our labour market study did indicate that there was a moderate oversupply of LPNs in the work force, but I will also bring him back to saying that the focus of my earlier remarks around our labour market strategy also spoke specifically to the issue of training.

We also found that there was a great deal of part-time and casual employment in the area of LPNs. At that time, there was a projection shown of the need for RNs at that time; however, I think we need to examine this whole issue in light of the new strategy put forward by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). That is why I have explained in my answers that the Minister of Health and I have spoken on this issue several times, and that we will continue speaking on this issue to look at what the needs are in terms of nursing education from the Department of Education's side and nursing in general from the Minister of Health's side.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I find that it is quite apparent that there is a double standard that is being used towards the profession. You have, on the one hand, a moratorium put on the LPNs, a moratorium which I would have suggested cannot be justified, given that the government could have put the moratorium on after this consultation and finding out what the labour demands are, given the employment rate or the unemployment rate of the LPNs, and the reason why they are not doing anything in terms of the RNs.

I would suggest that what the government is doing with the RNs is correct. They are not putting a moratorium, nor would I encourage they put a moratorium on the LPNs.

As the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) tried to draw out of the minister some sort of an idea as to when the government plans on making a decision, the minister quite eloquently skated around the issue and could not tell this Chamber and through us to those 3,600-or-so LPN professionals

what the government's real intentions are. Over the last number of years, we have seen in that particular profession a lot of fear as to what the government's real agenda is with the LPNs. I know that when I had asked the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) the questions in respect to the LPNs, he had informed me that, well, the LPNs here and our bottom line here is one of cost, the dollar.

What he had failed to tell me is that the LPNs, when compared to other provinces—

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

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: I would just like to clarify as a point of order that I think each of us have met with the LPNs and we have spoken to them. We have gathered this information from them and that the minister—

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Rose): The honourable minister does not have a point of order.

* * *

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Rose): The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, I am interrupting the proceedings. This committee will reconvene at 8 p.m. this evening.

Call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Business.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 23—Preservation of Medicare

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans),

WHEREAS Canadians celebrate with pride the birth of medicare 30 years ago in the province of Saskatchewan; and

WHEREAS an overwhelming majority of Canadians have said that our system of medicare makes this the best country in the world in which to live; and

WHEREAS medicare guarantees health care as a basic right for all Canadians, provides medical services on a more efficient basis than the American pay-as-you-go system and is a cornerstone of Canadian unity and national pride; and

WHEREAS current federal government policies will mean the end of federal cash payments to provinces for health care in less than 10 years and place the future of medicare in danger.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recommend to the federal government that it:

1. reaffirm its commitment to a comprehensive national health care program jointly financed by the provinces and territories and the federal government, and restore the funds it has cut from the Established Programs Financing; and
2. reaffirm its commitment to the guarantees in the Canada Health Act for a system that is universal, accessible, comprehensive, portable and delivered by public nonprofit means and free of user fees or extra billing by defining these guarantees in regulations that cannot be undermined or ignored by federal, provincial or territorial governments; and
3. reaffirm its major responsibility for health protection and promotion, disease prevention and medical research; and
4. establish national health goals and standards for quality assurance programs in co-operation and consultation with all provincial and territorial governments; and
5. play a major role in health care reform and innovation and in remedying the structural, social and economic inequalities which are at the root of inequalities in health status.

Motion presented.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I am very honoured and pleased to be able to address this very important matter and to begin a process of dialogue here in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly around one of our most valued social programs in this province, and one of our most treasured national programs.

Mr. Speaker, it is fortuitous that this occasion to discuss this resolution on the future of medicare occurs just a few days into a national campaign entitled: 10 Days for Medicare. May 22 marked the

beginning of a campaign of Canadians joining together from coast to coast to coast to save medicare, a campaign that continues on to May 31 and then beyond.

It is a campaign that comes out of the hearts and minds of volunteers and individuals from church groups, from labour organizations, from health care professionals, from grassroots community groups, all determined to hang on to one of our most unifying parts of this country—that which brings us national pride, that which gives us a sense of being Canadian, that which has made a difference in terms of the health and well-being of Canadians right across this country.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution was written long before any such national campaign was conceived. As you know, we have been raising this issue here in Manitoba in this Chamber consistently and persistently for over two years now. This has been a matter discussed by all members in this House, and I believe it is a concern shared by everyone in this Chamber.

It was written—and I hope members opposite will believe this—in the spirit of co-operation, in nonpolitical terms, in a hope that the concerns we have all expressed will join us together and cause us to unite around this resolution which simply calls on us to collectively say to the federal government: Please reconsider your policies; work with us to develop better formula, new national standards, a better approach to health care in these difficult times. We recognize this is a national problem. It is a complex matter. It will take all of our creative minds and the passion from each and every one of us to make it happen, to make it possible for medicare to be a part of our country from this day forward. [interjection]

Mr. Speaker, the member for Northern Affairs says, what is this all about? What this is all about is whether or not we will have a medicare program, whether we will have a national health care system, rooted in fundamental principles recognized by everyone and established on the basis that health care is a right and not a privilege. That is what is at stake. This is no laughing matter. This is not a question of contrived political issue. This is something that even the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) recognized in his action plan as something that was worrisome and needed to be addressed.

It is something the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) outlined in great detail in his budget papers of last year, not this last one, Mr. Speaker, but the Budget Address and the details pertaining to the budget of last fiscal year, where this government outlined the crisis facing medicare, where this government outlined the fact that dollars will run out placing the Province of Manitoba, like every other province, in enormous difficulty and under great strain trying to make resources still meet those fundamental goals and objectives.

I want to have not a passionate partisan debate around this issue—I am getting dragged into it by the comments of the member for Northern Affairs and others—but I want, instead, for this to be an opportunity of joining together, of unity for this government and all members of all political parties in this Chamber to put their money where their mouths are and support this fundamental basic resolution that sends a message to Ottawa and joins us together and joins us with Manitobans of every walk of life.

* (1710)

Mr. Speaker, based on the document presented by the minister last week, the health action plan, I assume that members on the government side and, of course, members of the Liberals, since they have been very much behind the Health minister's action plan, will not have a problem in supporting this resolution. I trust that the nonpolitical tone, the nonpartisan tone of this resolution will cause members of the Conservative government and the Liberal Party to support this resolution and not to have any problem in joining with us in sending one united voice to Ottawa for something so fundamental and basic as a national health care program founded on the fundamental principles of universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability and nonprofit public administration.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says, why am I so sensitive. I am not sensitive, but I am passionately involved in this issue. I am more concerned about this matter before us than anything else we are dealing with. [interjection]

The Minister of Finance is right. I am not more concerned than others in this House, I hope. I believe that everyone in this House shares this concern. I want to say, in the spirit of this resolution, I commend the Minister of Health and his colleagues

in the government for saying quite clearly in the health action plan that they do not support user fees, that there will be no move to user fees.

To me, Mr. Speaker, that is a very important, clear-cut statement that puts us all on common footing when it comes to defending medicare. I do not try to come to this with a holier-than-thou attitude. I just simply come with this deep worry that time is running out. We do not have much time left before all cash transfers to provincial health care systems run out. We are less than a decade away. The way things are going, and if we do not reverse federal policy and we do not restore federal funding and move back to a federal-provincial cost-shared arrangement that upholds and enforces the fundamental principles of the Canada Health Act, the money runs out. Medicare ends. It dies.

That is not overreacting and being overemotional, Mr. Speaker, it is a result of federal government policy. I am not going to get into which government, when, at what point in their time, and the fact that it actually began with the federal Liberal government and was carried on by the Tories in 1984. I am simply going to suggest it is a problem we all have to deal with. It is a collective responsibility.

It is a collective responsibility that requires more than the catcalls and the smirks from across the way. They are treating this issue with disdain. They are refusing to address this matter for the seriousness with which this matter presents us.

This issue evokes emotion and passion from individuals and organizations right across this province and throughout this land because it addresses something very fundamental, something near and dear to all of our hearts.

It is a matter, it is an issue, it is a policy which is based on a belief that health care is a right not a privilege. It is based on the belief that the best health care services which we can afford and which are available are made possible for everyone in this country regardless of where they live or what their economic position is or their sex or their ethnocultural background or their age.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister wants to keep casting blame and finding scapegoats and talking about the problem.

An Honourable Member: Look in the mirror.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: He should, yes, look in the mirror and know from whence this problem comes and the origins of this difficult problem we are facing,

but, more importantly, forget looking for areas to cast blame, for individuals to focus on; look simply at the problem at hand and how we can get out of it.

How we can get out of it is, as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Liberals have suggested for the last couple of days, through nonpartisan, nonpolitical approaches. We can join together, have a committee involving all members of this Legislature work together to present one voice, one clear option, one clear message to Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, that would be standing up for principle, that would be representing the views of Manitobans, that would be being true to our roots and traditions of this fine province of Manitoba. That would be finding ways to save money in these difficult times.

That would be reform, Mr. Speaker, because as we have said so often, by building on a system that is the best in the world, that is the awe and envy of many countries right around the world, that is being looked upon now by Americans as the example to follow—so if reform is the priority, as it should be of this government, then start now.

Let us work together. Save medicare, support community efforts, draw people together and put the first emphasis on saving medicare so that we have a system left to reform.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) departs in a couple of weeks, and I believe the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) departs as well, for a federal-provincial minister's meeting of Finance and Health to discuss our health care system, to discuss health care reform, to discuss the difficult situation we are all faced with in this economic climate and in the context of federal cutbacks.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would do those ministers well if they could go to that meeting with a resolution supported by all parties in this House in their pocket, with a resolution—

An Honourable Member: We will.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Fine. This resolution—the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says—

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): As amended.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Now he says, as amended. I hope that any amendments they come forward with are in the spirit of this resolution, in the spirit of seeking reform within the context of medicare, are

in the spirit of Manitobans' and Canadians' determination to save our most vital social program and our most treasured national unifying force.

Mr. Speaker, I say one more thing before I conclude, that as those ministers depart and prepare for that meeting in a couple of weeks from this point, I hope they will go with this resolution in their pockets, and I hope they will go with representatives of Manitoba grassroots organizations who feel strongly about this issue and who want to voice their concerns along with the government, to share their views, to be a part of this process. I conclude by saying, medicare is part of our history, but it is more than that. It is a unifying force and, most important, it is literally about life and death.

Thank you.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I very much believe we can go to the June meeting of Finance and Health Ministers with the resolution approved unanimously by this House. When I propose the amendment at the end of my remarks, my honourable friend who has just spoken will have ample opportunity to agree with the amendment, the thought that went into it, so that we can go to Ottawa or Toronto or wherever that meeting is to be held with a united front from this Legislature.

* (1720)

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with some of the mythology around health care as presented by New Democrats and their supporters in the community. My honourable friend the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), as critic, has on a regular basis used the language of cutbacks in describing the funding and the policy approach of this government. I do not know how many times in Question Period and Estimates we have heard this very simple language of cutbacks being laid as an accusation against government.

The budget of Manitoba Health has increased by 39 percent since we came into office in 1988. Hardly, Sir, a cutback, as one would tend to believe should one listen just to the simple words of my honourable friend the critic for the New Democrats. With that 39 percent increase in spending, are the demands on the system lessened, Sir? The answer clearly is no. At any time that you wish as a Health critic or someone who wishes to, in a partisan fashion, find fault with our health care system, you

can find a Manitoban, one in a million, who is dissatisfied because of the time he waits for a given surgical procedure. You will find a Manitoban who may not be completely satisfied with their continuing care program. You may find a Manitoban on a stretcher in an emergency ward, waiting for whatever service that they may find they are in need of.

Those problems, Sir, existed prior to 1988. They existed prior to 1981 when the New Democrats came in under Howard Pawley, and they existed prior to 1977 when the Lyon administration succeeded the Schreyer administration.

The difference is, is whether we have the ability to recognize what the problem is and to analyze what some of the solutions are and to propose them in a meaningful fashion to accomplish the change that everyone talks about from all political parties, but no one has yet undertaken to change and to make the necessary changes.

I understand clearly, Sir, why after four years those changes are difficult, because you were dealing with one of the most emotional issues you can deal with as elected politicians, namely, the provision of health care services, and you are dealing with some of the most powerful, entrenched spenders in Canadian program delivery.

We have built our medicare system, which is valued by every single Canadian, based on some fundamental directions prior to 1969, which led us in the incorrect direction in terms of our spending. We covered hospitals and physician services. That was built into the Canada Health Act.

That is why the reform document analyzes why we have gotten today to a system where 88 percent of our funding is concentrated on the areas of hospitals, physician services, personal care homes, prescription drugs and laboratory tests—88 percent of the \$1.8 billion we spend is channeled towards those services.

I need not remind my honourable friends of who controls access to those various services, with the exception of personal care home placement, which requires a panelling process with other health care professionals involved. All of those services are ordered and citizens access them through a physician.

I am Minister of Health, and have the final say in responsibility and receive the final blame for every single flaw, perceived, real or otherwise that our

current system has. As Minister of Health, I cannot admit a single individual to hospital; I cannot order a single lab test; I cannot order a single prescription; I cannot see that anyone receives placement in a personal care home; and I cannot see anyone in a physician's office.

So, Sir, analysis after analysis has pointed out that our system, as good as it is at curing illness, has a majority of its emphasis in spending in the inappropriate areas and must be shifted and changed.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the kind of reinvestment that we are embarking upon with the reform paper that was tabled some 10 days ago. I think that we will see success for really the first time in fundamentally changing the way we approach health care service delivery and health care spending.

I am intrigued with my honourable friend's, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), new call for this co-operative approach, and I am also intrigued with some of the community groups that my honourable friend says we need to involve in this junket to Ottawa in the middle of June.

An Honourable Member: Junket, is that what you call it?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend says, is that what you call it, a junket to Ottawa? It would become a junket to Ottawa if we attached all of the trappings that my honourable friend recommends.

You see, my honourable friend, as observed from across the way when she was introducing this resolution, has to correctly admit that, while she served the Pawley administration, they turned every problem and every policy challenge facing program delivery and health care in Manitoba as one where you simply blame the federal government, and you turn it into a federal-provincial political football, and you go after the federal government for more resources, more money, and you lay all the blame at their feet. In the meantime you do not create solutions within the province of Manitoba.

Well, that is the wrong approach. That approach will not work, because Canadians recognize that dollars spent by the federal government are their tax dollars, and if the federal government has to borrow money to send to the provinces they recognize the future costs that are involved in that.

I simply say to my honourable friend that one of the more interesting writing participations that Mr.

Sale did back two years ago or two and a half years ago in his career, he pointed out that the problem with health care spending and government program spending in general was that governments for 15 years were too timid and too afraid to raise taxes to pay for program cost as the programs were incurred.

That led to the creation of massive debt, and the interest costs of serving that debt today were turning around to haunt all levels of government in that interest costs were now taking away money from vital and needed programs. Well, is that not a statement of truth, Sir? So I want to say that when Mr. Sale approaches health care and government funding from that balanced perspective, he has some credibility.

But now Mr. Sale is the NDP candidate for the by-election and is now on this tour of Manitoba attempting to get groups to lobby Ottawa. What? For more money. Where does the more money come from? Well, of course, there is no answer to that. Mr. Sale does not have an answer for that. [interjection] Oh, well, I am waiting for my honourable friend the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) to get up and speak next because she has all of the answers as to where the money would come from. This is most intriguing, Sir. Maybe there is a New Democrat in this House that has answers and solutions.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that in my honourable friend's resolution there are a number of areas which need to be changed to make this a supportable resolution by all members of the House.

First of all, in terms of paragraphs 1 and 2, the document of reform clearly identifies our confirmation of the principles of medicare. It also says we are not going to introduce user fees. It also says we are not going to cut costs, but to reallocate and reinvest and contain the growth in costs. In terms of other points, Barer-Stoddart report, Healthy Public Policy, are already initiatives of government which are making those sorts of changes to the way we approach the delivery of services, not only in the province of Manitoba, but nationally, a reality.

Mr. Speaker, that is why, when we tabled the report, one of the key and fundamental charts in that report is the determinants of health, where it places health care expenditures in the appropriate context, that it is part of the number of factors which determine an individual's health status. It is not the

sole factor. It is an important factor, but it is one of several.

* (1730)

One of the most important factors in there is the creation of wealth and the ability of individuals to enhance their living standards through productive employment. That has been the underpinning goal and drive of this government in the last four years, to make Manitoba a competitive environment for private sector investment, for the creation of employment and new wealth-generating opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, if that is not a health goal in the long run, I do not know what is. Because one of the best health policies we can have is the creation of a sound economy providing new creation of wealth, new job opportunities and thereby, Sir, providing Manitobans with the choice of buying lifestyles that are healthy through better housing, better recreation, better amenities in life, which increase their health status without formal access to the health care system. That is one of the most important health policies and falls under the purview of healthy public policy.

Now, given that this resolution, in terms of the preservation of medicare is important, Sir, I would propose an amendment. I would move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), that Resolution 23 be amended by deleting everything after the first "WHEREAS" and adding the following words:

Manitoba introduced its first hospital services plan in 1958; and

WHEREAS this plan, introduced by the Roblin government, covered most hospital costs except physician fees covered by the Manitoba Medical Services Insurance; and

WHEREAS this plan was replaced in 1969 with the introduction of medicare nationally; and

WHEREAS Canadians value their health care system and believe it to be a national issue contributing to the unity of Canada; and

WHEREAS the United Nations has designated Canada as the most desirable nation in which to live in part because of our medicare system; and

WHEREAS western Premiers in 1976 urged the federal government to consider a new financing system which would transfer corresponding equalized income tax points to the provinces, in

exchange for the provinces assuming full responsibility for program financing; and

WHEREAS this request by the western Premiers in 1976 led to the funding formula changes advanced by the federal government in 1977; and

WHEREAS this 1977 funding change has led to the current ability by the federal government to make unilateral decisions about funding contribution to the provinces for the support of medicare.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba now endorse the communique from the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Health Conference hosted by Manitoba in 1991, which stated, firstly:

The Principles of the Canadian Health System

The Canada Health Act articulates the five fundamental principles of the Canadian health care system: universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration.

The federal government and the provinces/territories are committed to the preservation of these principles.

Assurance of Adequate Funding

With these principles in mind, dialogue including federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Health and Finance will be enhanced in order to assure the future funding of our health care system, to ensure its sustainability in both the health and fiscal context and to provide the best and most viable health care system for all Canadians.

Effective Management of the Health Care System

Provision of quality health care of Canadians depends on effective management of the health care system.

Because the delivery of health care is a provincial/territorial responsibility, the provinces/territories are committed to provide effective management of the system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly recommend to the federal government that it seriously consider adopting "Quality Health for Manitobans, The Action Plan - A strategy to assure the future of Manitoba's health services system" as the blueprint for national health care reform.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I have raised similar points of order in the past on amendments very similar to this, and, indeed, I raise it again. We have fairly clear rules in terms of admissibility of amendments, in particular, that, should individual members have difficulty with a motion, the clearest way of dealing with it is to vote for or against it. In this case, I would suggest that, if the minister has that difficulty, that option is open to him.

But the amendment, as he has introduced, deals with a very different subject matter. This was very clearly dealing with national medicare assistance. The intent of this amendment is very similar to the other amendments we have seen from the government's patting themselves on the back.

I realize that they very rarely get pats on the back other than when they give pats on the back to each other, but once again it is a waste of private members' hour. I question whether it is indeed in order for the minister to try and attach onto a brief, well-focused resolution a matter that should have been more appropriately dealt with by a separate resolution.

If he wants to bring in a resolution congratulating himself, we will debate that, but let it not distort a very clear resolution by that kind of an amendment.

* (1740)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised, according to Manitoba practice and Beauchesne's 567, "the object of an amendment may be either to modify a question in such a way as to increase its acceptability or to present to the House a different proposition as an alternative to the original question."

* * *

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I am of two minds when I approach this particular resolution: one which tells me to talk about the health care Estimates and what took place in the health care and the role the official opposition and the government have chosen to take in dealing with health care; another is of the opinion that we should be talking about the resolution in a very positive fashion.

I look at it in a sense that the No. 1 issue for my constituents is health care. Even though we will go

through different economic times whereas currently or in a recession, that you will still find even during a recession that there is an overwhelming sense from the public that we preserve our health care system as we have it.

Mr. Speaker, what concerns me most is that there needs to be genuine health care reform. I believe that all three political parties believe that is necessary. What concerns me is the manner in which we have to achieve that reform. It puts an onus on the government and the two opposition parties to be responsible, to come up with what I believe is constructive criticism where it is necessary.

We have seen, since the government brought forward its report on its intentions and how it plans to see this reform occur over the next number of months, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) and our Health critic bring up on a daily basis questions as to what the government's intentions are in reforming health care by coming forward virtually on a daily basis in the last week, week and a half, asking and providing ideas to the government as to what we believe the government should be doing to ensure that health care remains universal and all five, in fact, fundamental principles.

In fact, we have introduced a bill, Bill 51, which deals specifically with what the amendment to the member for St. Johns' (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) original resolution talks about, and I believe that all political parties inside this Chamber support those five fundamental principles and would look forward to the government supporting Bill 51 because they often talk about the fundamental principles and the need to preserve them. We can only hope that feeling is genuine and that we will see some movement on that particular bill.

Mr. Speaker, I believe what is absolutely essential is that we have in this Chamber legitimate debate and open and honest debate on health care. The reason why I believe that is absolutely necessary is because there are a number of very sensitive issues. I, for one, take a look at the question of user fees, of deductibles, and what is classified as a user fee and what is a deductible. I believe those are the types of debates that are needed inside this Chamber and that all three political parties must take a position on it. I cite something that has occurred in one government in one of the other provinces where there is now a charge for someone to get their eyes examined.

Mr. Speaker, I would argue, in fact, that is a user fee that has been implemented in that particular province. What one believes is a user fee cannot be a belief based solely on convenience. A government decides to make a decision to no longer fund a medical practice or a treatment or a drug or an operation, whatever it might be, that one does not label it automatically as being a user fee. There are certain things that I am sure and convinced that all three parties would believe are user fees in terms of the different types of services that we get from our health care profession.

Some would argue, Mr. Speaker, as the Saskatchewan government has done, that some services are in fact not a user fee and have pointed one of those services out, that being eye examinations. You can go from different political parties to different political parties that are in government, and you will find that there is a difference between what is being charged and what is not being charged and the amount that is being charged—for example, with drugs or prescription drugs. In Manitoba we look at something that is continuously—that we continuously ask questions of the government why they have implemented a user fee with the northern ambulance travel. No doubt in at least two parties' opinion that it is a user fee, but in the government's opinion it is not a user fee.

(Mr. Edward Connery, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe that is the type of discussion and the type of debate that is needed. We need to find out the parameters surrounding what is a user fee from the different political parties. You cannot base a decision on—as I like to use—convenience, where because all of a sudden there is a charge for this or there is talk of a charge for that, that it is in fact a user fee, because I do not believe that there is any political party that has a monopoly on health care.

We all believe in the five fundamental principles. At least, in the discussions that I have had and in the debate that I have heard, everyone has supported, everyone inside the Chamber that I have listened to, at the very least, has said that the five fundamental principles are necessary and should be supported. Really, what needs to be discussed is how we can achieve that reform while, at the same time, ensuring that those five fundamental principles are there in the future for our children and grandchildren and so forth.

Having said that, I would encourage all members of the Chamber to bring forward their ideas on health care and health care reform and come up with constructive criticism, because I believe it is in the interest of all Manitobans that we play a much more responsible role in the preservation of those five fundamental principles which everyone in this Chamber supports and all Canadians, in fact, Mr. Acting Speaker, want us to retain.

Thank you very much.

* (1750)

Mr. Ashton: I want to begin by indicating my disappointment once again. The government is, to my mind, once again misusing the time of private members' hour. I am referring to this specific amendment, Mr. Acting Speaker, which indeed has been ruled in order and I am not questioning that. What I am questioning though is the fact that this government still does not seem to understand that the private members' hour is not a rubber-stamp hour for government ministers who want to come in and pat themselves on the back.

I refer specifically to this amendment. What I find most objectionable about this amendment is that this minister, after releasing his health care reform document only a few short days ago, dated in fact this month, of course, now has introduced an amendment suggesting that the federal government consider adopting his reform document as a blueprint for national health care reform, Mr. Acting Speaker.

This is the ultimate in this session. This is a government that is really stretching things, Mr. Acting Speaker. They just introduced this document a couple of weeks ago. This is the document they promised in 1988 and 1990. They promised a health care action plan by 1990. Well, there was not a health care action plan by 1990; there was not one in 1991. Here we are in 1992, there is finally, what is called, the action plan.

But, indeed, I ask, where is the action? The government has been in for more than four years. This is their second term. It is a government that has been talking about health care reform for quite some time.

Mr. Acting Speaker, if you read through this document, you will find that in essence it is not really an action plan. It is a philosophical discussion. It is a policy discussion paper, and indeed, that is about as far as it goes. It is only just the last week or two

we have been getting the actual decisions that are related to the supposed action plan, some of them, not all, some of them. I say, it is the height of gall on behalf of this minister, who is known certainly for his own ego, to now suggest to this Chamber, rubber stamp a resolution that says that we would recommend to anyone an action plan that has been in place for less than two weeks.

Mr. Acting Speaker, no responsible member of the Legislature would support, to my mind, a resolution that tried to recommend to any other jurisdiction an action plan that has only been in place for two weeks, and indeed where there are serious questions as to how much of an action plan it is, and how much of a document. In fact, I say the only reason that one might consider this a blueprint is the colour of the cover. It is not a comprehensive document in terms of where we are going to be going in the next five and 10 years. It talks a lot about a lot of policies, a lot of policy options, a lot of fine-sounding statements. I say that what is, I think, most unfortunate in this case is the hypocrisy of this government on health care reform.

They come out with a document after four years, Mr. Acting Speaker, much later than they promised. They have a minister who then gets up and says basically that he is only going to listen to certain types of criticisms that he determines as being appropriate criticism. We have the same minister who has, if anything, proven in the last four years one fundamental thing, and that is his inability to work co-operatively with the health care system and particularly with health care workers and professionals, who has throughout the last four years been dominated by a style of confrontation, but now he comes out and says he wants co-operation and he wants a nonpartisan debate.

Well, I can say that we have seen, in just the two weeks this document has been released, how hollow those words are because the minister has not sought co-operation. He has instead sought to browbeat anyone who dares to ask a question, to ask a question, Mr. Acting Speaker, about the policies and programs of this government. He has continued to raise the kind of cheap political shots at which he is a master. We saw in Estimates following this that when anybody ever asked a question, it was a cheap political response from the minister, politicizing it once again.

It is not just in terms of the general action plan. I know our Health critic asked questions related to

Thompson, and indeed I was in Thompson and was talking directly to the new administrator at the hospital. They are considering closing chemotherapy. They are considering closing the mammography. They are concerned about the need for funding to maintain the specialists they have in the community, community-based health care. She asked a very legitimate, straightforward, nonpolitical, nonpartisan question asking the minister for some commitments and asking to put some substance to committee-based health care reform.

In the space of the page in Hansard, one can read very much the approach of the minister. The first thing that I found rather interesting was the fact that he brushed aside the significance of mammography. He seemed to indicate some willingness to do something on chemotherapy, but mammography—it is a diagnostic service, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is providing services to six to eight women on a daily basis. It is diagnostic, it has been recommended by physicians. It is important. That is what the hospital is seeking to maintain.

It was the same thing in terms of the questions from our Health critic in terms of the regional status at the hospital. His own task force on northern health recommended it. Yet he came into the House and said, well, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) does not know the funding model. The member for St. Johns knows the funding model and knows the task force report on northern health that the minister himself seems to have left on a shelf with those many other reports collecting dust while problems develop in northern health care. That is a very recent example.

Even in the final question, the minister, again, followed through on his tried and true method, talked about kidney dialysis. This is the minister who talks about nonpartisan health care reform. He attempted to suggest to members of the Legislature that was the result of the Conservative government—this was the Conservative government. Now that is a bit of a political statement, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is also wrong.

It was funded by the Kidney Foundation. What I find particularly offensive is that even here, two weeks after, we have the new-and-improved Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) coming out with his new-and-improved reform package, he is still trotting out the same kind of political attacks that he has made, the kind of political distortions he has

made a career out of, Mr. Acting Speaker, as the previous Health critic and now as Minister of Health.

This minister does not have the credibility with the health care professionals, the health care workers, with patients, with Manitobans to be able to carry out any kind of co-operative approach and to carry out any kind of nonpolitical effort to save medicare. This report indeed is full of some very excellent analysis of the problems in health care, but we do not necessarily feel that they are the solutions.

I say, Mr. Acting Speaker, and indeed I wish the minister would listen very carefully, because he is a fine one to say he wants suggestions, and when he gets them he somehow conveniently turns a deaf ear. We need community-based care. We need to look at the model of the community-based clinics, an area that he has done nothing in terms of the past four years, he has done nothing in terms of expanding. The bottom line is we need to be dealing not just with treatment, we need to be dealing with preventative health care.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

His own report talks about Sweden. It talks about Japan and France and other countries that have better records relative to expenditure on health than

we do. Why, Mr. Speaker? I would suggest to you in many cases it has to do with lifestyle and has to do with the social problems we have in Canada. Where is the statement in this report for example on aboriginal health care that I have been pushing for in committee the last three, four years with this minister and every year getting the same sort of response, aboriginal people who have been ignored for a century and are facing the health consequences as well as the social and economic?

This report is full of holes, Mr. Speaker. It has many fine things in it, but with this minister and the approach we have seen in two weeks there is no way that we will support, no way, a resolution recommending this to the rest of the country. Let the minister solve the problems in Manitoba first before he attempts to go out and massage his own ego—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) will have six minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair, with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 8 p.m. in Committee of Supply.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, May 25, 1992

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