

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 30, 1989.

The House met at 8 p.m.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—HEALTH

Mr. Chairman (Mr. Harold Gilleshammer): I would like to call the committee to order to consider the Estimates of the Department of Health.

This afternoon the committee had been considering item 1.(d) Research and Planning: (1) Salaries \$416,000.00. Shall the item pass—the Member for Seven Oaks.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), although I will keep them just to a few. It is a matter that has been raised by a constituent with respect to Americans coming into Manitoba to use our health services. I am just wondering if the Minister can advise whether that is in fact correct, this allegation that has been made to me. I advised my constituent that I would in fact ask the Minister of Health at the appropriate opportunity about that. I am just wondering if he could comment on, and confirm or deny, whether Americans do come to Canada for treatment.

Mr. Chairman: I am wondering if this is the appropriate opportunity. We are on Research and Planning.

Mr. Minenko: I realize that. Well, it does have some certain relevancy with respect to this topic as I am sure every other element has had over the last 50, 100 years that this Legislature has continued, but with respect to research and the impact on research and development for continuing, are there Americans who are using our health care services?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can help my honourable friend in his quest for an answer. What services are you referring to?

* (2005)

Mr. Minenko: Mr. Chairman, all I was advised by constituents is that they had heard that Americans were coming to use our Manitoba health services. I am just wondering whether the Minister's department monitors those situations. I have had conversations earlier this summer with people from other provinces who confirm that Americans seem to come up to Canada to have certain services performed, finding that they were cheaper to be performed in Canada than in the United States.

I am just wondering if the Minister at this point can advise us, or perhaps could he identify another point in the Estimates at which time perhaps some of the staff that might be a bit more knowledgeable in this area would be present.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, that is the whole reason why I asked my honourable friend "what services"? If it was hospital services, the commission would be the appropriate area to discuss that; if it was physician services, it would be appropriately posed in the Medical line under the Manitoba Health Services Commission.

We do have a reciprocal agreement in southeastern Manitoba with a hospital in which we jointly share. The Americans have a hospital in one location; we have at another, and we share services, but that is a formalized agreement.

Mr. Minenko: So is the Minister—am I correctly interpreting his remarks that he is not quite sure at this time, from his own knowledge or the staff that he has with him right now, whether Americans do use any of the services that he has cited?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I just indicated to my honourable friend that it was a reciprocal agreement that has been in place for a number of years. If my honourable friend has other services that he wants to question, tell me the service and I will try to give him an answer, but it is obvious, my honourable friend either does not have that or is not willing to share that at this time. If he does not have the information he might wish to get the information. If it is hospital services, he can pose the question when we reach the Manitoba Health Services Commission Hospital line, but without knowing what my honourable friend is talking about, I cannot very well give him an answer.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—the Member for Thompson.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Chairperson, I just wanted to raise one point following up from our discussions prior to the adjournment and also I would like to once again thank the Minister for the information he provided in terms of the position breakdown.

I think one of the other pertinent points that needs to be put on the record is in regard to the current ratio between the City of Winnipeg and rural and northern communities in terms of the number of physicians. The situation is that essentially as of 1989, 78 percent of the physicians in Manitoba located in the City of Winnipeg. Once again that is disproportionate to the population or, put conversely, only 22 percent are located outside of the rural areas. I think any analysis of that particular breakdown would show once again that some rural communities are far worse off than others.

I note from the Minister's answer as well that the physician population ratio is also totally disproportionate and I know he had referenced general figures on this the first time we discussed this matter but I think it bears putting on record that in Winnipeg the ratio was 1 to 422 in 1985, is now 1 to 400. There has been a

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decrease in that ratio, whereas in rural communities it has gone from 1 to 1158, now actually it has gone up to 1 to 1164. There is a major imbalance in terms of the supply of doctors in urban and rural communities.

I did however have a question on the planning side in terms of medical shortage of another type, and that is in regard to nurses and particularly in some fields. I know in some hospitals, once again particularly outside of Winnipeg, there are increasing problems with the lack of trained nurses available in those communities. I know I pointed out in my own area to the Minister, a number of months ago, the problems in the Thompson General Hospital related to nursing staff, there continues to be a shortage. They have gone to the extent of going overseas to attempt to bring nurses in and have had some success but it is still far short of the number required.

* (2010)

What is happening is that there is a major problem with turnover among nurses, particularly in certain specialties, and it is because of the burnout factor, it is because of the workload, it is because of the working conditions.

There was a report just released on nurse abuse and that is certainly a factor that has been cited to me by nurses. Nurses have had terrible problems in terms of hospitals across the province and I think it has to be recognized. They are the ones who get the flak.

I have noticed that even as a Member of the Legislature, half the time you check in any office in this building, the people that have to deal with the flak are the people in the front line, the people answering the phones, the people meeting directly with the public. It is not the politicians, the MLAs and the Cabinet Ministers. It is the same thing in hospitals. You talk to the nurses, it is not the doctors who are getting the abuse to anywhere the same extent, it is the nurses. In fact in some cases some of the abuse is actually from the doctors themselves, not generally, but there have been reported cases of that being the situation.

With that backdrop, I am wondering if the Minister could provide the committee with some information on the current supply of nurses in the Province of Manitoba and in particular what areas we have a shortage of nurses in at the current time.

Mr. Orchard: I realize that the Research and Planning section is open to almost any discussion my honourable friends want to get into. I do not have that information at my disposal. That is a question that would be appropriately posed when we reach the Manitoba Health Services Commission wherein most of the facilities who employ nurses are funded.

If one is interested in the nurses who are employed directly by Government in the continuing care program and as public health nurses, Regional Services would be an appropriate area to pose those questions. I realize we are having nice, wide open discussion and everything is huggy-bear, kissy-face, but there are certain areas that my honourable friends are talking about now and then when we get to the appropriate, we are going to

reinvent the wheel and we are going to talk about it again. I do not have that information tonight for my honourable friend and I suggest that as critic he might wish to pose that when I have the commission staff here that could respond in detail to those questions.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, I am raising them now because they are phrased in a general sense. I am not asking about the shortage at one particular hospital, or in one particular segment. We are dealing with Research and Planning which does deal with research, it deals specifically with Manpower Planning. That is one of the responsibilities of this particular section. I am not expecting the Minister to have all the answers at his fingertips but I did find the information that the Minister provided on positions to be very useful.

I do not think that anybody at the committee on that particular day expected it that day, but I am wondering if the Minister perhaps can agree to provide that information. I do not suggest that we hold up this item to discuss it but I think it is important information, strictly from the Research and Planning perspective in terms of planning for the needs in terms of nurses. I wonder if that is the case if the Minister is willing to provide that information, if he could provide some information, first of all, on the overall situation in terms of the supply of nurses; second of all, in terms of shortages, particularly in terms of specialties; third of all, what actions are being taken to deal with any shortages that do exist, just a general summary of the situation in terms of nurses. So I am posing more as a question of notice to the Minister now, recognizing that he does not have the information at this fingertips. Can the Minister agree to provide that information at a committee day?

Mr. Orchard: We will make every attempt to provide that information.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(d)(2) Other Expenditures, \$94,000—pass.

Item (e) Communications. Provided development of communication policies and initiatives for the Department and the Manitoba Health Services Commission (1) Salaries \$205,000—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister tell us how many positions are vacant in the Branch of Communications?

Mr. Orchard: No vacancies, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us the general policy for the Communication to the public at large, other than the news media, just the report coming to us once in a while, what are the announcements that are made, can the Minister tell us how do they reach the public at large through this branch?

* (2015)

Mr. Orchard: Through direct mailings of consultation papers, position papers in which we are wishing to

receive public input and feedback. This is where distribution, for instance, of the AIDS brochures and campaign took place. It was co-ordinated by the Communications Branch. They make sure, in general, that the policy consultation, the ad prepared brochures, et cetera, are circulated to interested Manitobans.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us about the AIDS campaign, can he further elaborate here, or shall we wait until the Communicable Disease Control section comes up? Just to deal with the—

Mr. Orchard: If my honourable friend had some specific questions we may well be able to deal with them here. I just simply tell my honourable friend that the funding for the AIDS campaign is not in Communications, it was in Communicable Disease, but if my honourable friend had questions about distribution, et cetera, et cetera, and methodology, we could attempt to answer them here.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Honourable Minister of Health tell us, as during the Question Period he repeatedly indicated that there is going to an AIDS campaign, full planning is coming out to deal with the problem at the level of straight workers' position. Is this a part of this branch? Are they playing a role here to communicate to the public such a policy will be put in place and—

Mr. Orchard: The major role of communications in phase 3, if you will, will be in terms of the press conference communication of the press release and the initiative to interested Manitobans and to the media in general. By and large, the details of the program, et cetera, will be available for discussion when we hit communicable diseases where the initiative is staffed and undertaken.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, we will wait for that area for discussion to come up. Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us what other media campaigns are in the planning stage, for example, in terms of to teach the public because we have seen this and the drug abuse problem is quite prevalent in Manitoba, especially in City of Winnipeg, what action this Minister has taken since it became very clear that we have to deal with the drug problem at the street level? What kind of media campaign have they started?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba has one portion of their responsibility. My honourable friend might be aware if he has watched television recently, I saw one of the ads over the supper hour of a joint—I believe it is joint federal-provincial, initiative on drug abuse awareness that was not undertaken through my department, that was through, I believe, the Attorney General's Department.

The drug awareness initiative is co-ordinated and will be co-ordinated through the AFM, and the role of communications will be, again as it is with the phase 3 AIDS campaign, in terms of the press conference, the media communication, the distribution of the background to the initiative to interested Manitobans.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, what other media campaigns are in place, for example, to teach the public regarding the ischaemic heart disease, other sexually transmitted diseases, hazards of smoking, because we raised these issues during last year's Estimates and the Minister assured us that some of these were in the planning stage and they were going to communicate to the public now. Are there any specific plans now to teach the public in regard to some of the more preventable diseases?

* (2020)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I suppose a more appropriate place to discuss at least one of the initiatives would be under the Health Promotion Directorate but you know I know my honourable friend is greatly interested in this ischaemic heart disease and a week ago Saturday I had the privilege of announcing at the Healthy Heart Fair at the St. Boniface Research Centre, Manitoba's participation with the federal Government in a \$2 million-plus program on a Healthy Heart Survey and certainly a very extensive campaign designed to promote awareness of high-risk factors in heart disease, et cetera, and that was kicked off, as I say, at the Healthy Heart Fair, St. Boniface General Hospital Research Foundation.

I guess one of the things that was interesting about that is the St. Boniface Research Foundation has done a lot of research into the issue of heart disease and has a fairly substantial significant reputation nationally as well as internationally. They have held Healthy Heart Fair information symposiums for professionals and other interested groups before, but this was the first time that they opened it to the public, the general public. As a result, I took the opportunity to add more focus to it by announcing our \$2 million Healthy Heart Survey Program. It was very well received, but I have to tell you, Mr. Chairman, I was indeed impressed with the Healthy Heart Fair as an initiative of St. Boniface. They had a number of booths that the public could go through so at the end of which you could have a rating given to you as to whether you are low or no or medium or a high risk individual in terms of heart disease.

The booths were staffed by nurses and others who had volunteered from St. Boniface Hospital to be there on Saturday, on a very beautiful Saturday a week ago, about 10 days ago, to donate their time to promote heart health in the Province of Manitoba, a very, very successful and a very, very rewarding initiative that St. Boniface undertook and the response from the public was quite significant. There was a much larger turnout than what St. Boniface had anticipated.

Mr. Chairman, if my honourable friend wishes I can indicate the kind of parameters in that healthy heart survey that is being undertaken right now through the health promotions or else, my honourable friend, I can wait until we get to that line.

Mr. Cheema: As we indicated last year to the Minister that they were missing the communication with the ethnic press. Can the Minister of Health tell us now how far they have achieved this year?

Mr. Orchard: Now I cannot give my honourable friend specifics but if he had specific pamphlets and issues I could indicate in what languages the translation had been achieved, but there is a fairly substantive, other than English and French translation, of a number of our health promotion and informational materials designed specifically for use in the non-French, non-English ethnic communities to provide better communication in their native languages.

Mr. Cheema: It may not be entirely possible to translate all because there are a number of languages, but we are asking simply that to communicate with the public through the ethnic media and maybe use the same language. I mean that sure is not the major problem because economically it is going to be very difficult to produce all those brochures in different languages and I think if we start opening that area it may be a tremendous cost, and considering what is happening with the health care probably we will be better off just dealing with the ethnic person in that way.

One of the activity identifications under this branch as we discussed last year and the suggestion was made whenever there is a supposed week for an AIDS campaign or there is a week for osteoarthritis, a week for mental illness and the Minister of Health indicated that he will be issuing a press release or communicate in that respect. Can he tell us how many times they have issued a press communication to the public at large to let them know what is happening during that particular week?

* (2025)

Mr. Orchard: I have been present, or I should not say that. Whenever asked by the various proponents of, for instance, the Manitoba Stroke Association for their stroke awareness month, the Head Injury Association is one of the new ones, any of the awareness week or month organizations I have upon request signed on behalf of the people of Manitoba as the Minister of Health a proclamation so declaring that week or month. It is that proclamation that has been used by the association, by Government, to communicate the message on awareness of mental health, as I say, the stroke, any number of groups I have signed, well, I would hazard a guess, probably at least two to three dozen proclamations over the course of a year, over the course of a 12-month period for various awareness and educational and fund-raising activities undertaken by different associations involved in specifics of health care.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, the reason I raised that issue last year and now again because when we are having all these events I think the most organizations have campaigns going and if we just add communication from the ministry of Health it will add and it will save us tax dollars in the long run because most of the people are aware of the situation of what is happening during that particular month. I think that does enhance specifically the awareness of illnesses, especially the Minister of Health has done very well in the awareness of Manitoba illnesses. I have no further questions.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(e)(1) Salaries—pass; (e)(2) Other Expenditures, \$19,400—pass.

Item (f) Administration and Financial Services: Includes the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister and provides for central co-ordination of administrative activities relating to space, transportation, equipment and supplies, central accounting, budgetary and agency relations services. (1) Salaries, \$964,400—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I just have a few questions in this area. Again my first question, is there any vacant position at the managerial level and also at the professional and administrative support level?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, there is one vacancy among the senior analyst category.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, how long has that position been vacant and what is the function of that position and who is performing the function now?

Mr. Orchard: Approximately eight months vacant in that position and it is being covered off with the other incumbents. There are three analysts positions.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us how come they have not filled this position for the last eight months? What is the reason?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, it has been a position that has not been filled and we will be filling it, probably advertising toward the end of this year to fill it, filling sometime early next year if an appropriate candidate can be found.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I just want clarification again, what is the special function of this position and what is the role of this specific person?

Mr. Orchard: Well, it is one of the senior analyst positions of which there are three. There are two currently providing analytical service to admin. and finance.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(f)(1)—pass.

Item (f)(2) Other expenditures \$50,200—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, under the item of Communications there is \$16,000.00. Is this separate from the Communications that we have already passed? What is the role? How is this \$16,000 spent under the Communications Branch? Is there any specific position?

Mr. Orchard: Telephone bills.

* (2030)

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—pass.

1.(g) Human Resource Management: Provides comprehensive human resources management services encompassing recruitment and selection; position evaluation and classification; payroll administration; labour relations; human resource development and

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personnel policies and standards. (1) Salaries \$596,000—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, again my usual question: are there any positions vacant?

Mr. Orchard: There is one vacant position of one of five human resource specialists. It was boarded last week so we expect to have that one filled shortly.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister tell us how long this position has been vacant and what is the function of this position?

Mr. Orchard: I am advised, since April, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister tell us what is the specific function of this position and who is performing the function now?

Mr. Orchard: The individual is a human resource specialist involved with recruitment, classification issues, merit issues, and in labour relations issues within the ministry.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—the Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: I have a number of questions under this particular item. I would like to first of all ask the Minister for an update in terms of affirmative action within the department. In previous reports it was listed as a major emphasis on human resources activities. I am just wondering what activities, if any, were taken in this particular regard over the last year?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, would my honourable friend have some specific questions that he wants to pose?

Mr. Ashton: I am basically asking the Minister for an update, if any initiatives have been taken in this regard. I will go back to previous reports that this has been identified as, '87-88 fiscal year for example, the report which the Minister recently distributed, this was identified as a major area. I am just wondering what progress there has been in terms of affirmative action over the past year.

Mr. Orchard: Okay, from April 1, '89 to September 1, '89, let me just give you recruitment. There was a total recruitment of 279 to the department as of March 1989. I presume that is in the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989. Of those 279 appointments within the ministry, 88.17 percent were female, 246 in total; 3.94 percent were visible minorities, totalling 11; 6.09 were Native, totally 17; .358 percent, one was disabled.

In terms of promotions there were 148 promotions; 114 or 77 percent were promotion of females; four or 2.7 percent were promotion of females, 4 or 2.7 percent were the promotion of visible minorities and two of the promotions were Native, amounting to 1.35 percent of the total promotions.

Mr. Ashton: In other words, in general, within the department, the number of hirings and number of

promotions is considerably lower than the generally accepted targets in this particular area?

Mr. Orchard: What is my honourable friend saying, general accepted targets?

Mr. Ashton: The whole concept of affirmative action is to attempt to have the civil service reflect more, or whatever organization you are dealing with, reflect more the composition of society. The figures the Minister has given in terms of for example, visible minorities, Native people, disabled, are lower not only than the percent in society; but normally when you talk about affirmative action, an attempt is made to exceed the existing percentage of in terms of new jobs in order to catch up on previous situations in which those people in our society that are under representative. In other words the hiring has not been up to the normally accepted targets for the Civil Service.

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend might be aware that over a 20-year period, '85 I believe to 2005, there is the long-range targets of 50 percent for women, which means if we are going to meet that target, we are going to have to significantly reduce the number of women in the Ministry of Health. I know my honourable friend would not at all recommend that, and 10 percent is a target in terms of Natives, 6 percent on visible minorities and 7 percent in terms of physically disabled.

Mr. Chairman, those are goals that were set two decades worth of goals, and the department is actively pursuing those goals and has achieved hiring success in meeting those goals year by year. If we were here debating this year 2005 with the exception of the 50 percent women, I think we would achieve that goal.

Mr. Ashton: I would suggest that in fact that would not be the case. The difficulty is the percentage of hirings is actually lower than the percentage of people in society. For example, .358 the individual that was hired, the disabled individual, that is less than the number of disabled in society, similarly the number of Native people, similarly the number of visible minorities. The targets are the number of people in society and one would expect that to be reflected in hirings.

Incidentally, for the Minister, I would suggest he perhaps talk to the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission (Mrs. Hammond) if he feels that he would have to lay off female employees in order to meet the targets. Surely he should be aware since we are discussing this item of the initiative that was taking this section of his department for career advancement of women in clerical categories and that was in particularly moving women, giving them the opportunity to have promotion far beyond clerical positions into for example, personnel administration. In fact in previous years budgets, a specific position was allocated for affirmative action affecting women. When we are dealing with hirings, we are dealing first of all not just in terms of numbers of jobs but also the type of jobs.

What has clearly been the problem, the difficulty facing women, has been the number of senior jobs,

the number of administrative jobs, the number of jobs with the possibility of advancement that they have been placed into. What I am suggesting is that, and the figures do bear this out, even if the Minister continued to hire at the rate he is doing, in fact what would happen would be he could end up potentially being further from his targets unless there is a significant improvement.

* (2040)

The number of people in the target categories that were indicated is particularly I think distressing in the area of the disabled because to my mind the Health Department should if anything be a leader in regard to hiring of the disabled. I do not mean this as a criticism to the Minister personally in any way, shape or form or to the department. It is just one of those things that I think has developed in the hiring process and that is despite the commitment that most Members of the Legislature have made to affirmative action, it is often not all true to the extent it should be at the hiring process. As I said in fact in this department, this would lead the department not to reach those goals, nowhere near those goals, during the time period the Minister has outlined.

In fact given that, I would like to ask the Minister what actions the department will be undertaking in the upcoming year to attempt to improve the situation in terms of hiring in terms of affirmative action, and also in terms of promotions within the department to ensure that all affirmative action target groups are given the opportunity, not only to be initially hired, but also to be advanced?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, let me tell my honourable friend something I think he already knows that the numbers I gave to my honourable friend are numbers composed of those individuals who through self-declaration want to be categorized as Native, disabled, or visible minority. There are a number of individuals within the ministry, and I think a fair rule of thumb throughout Government, who would fit those categories, i.e., disabled or visible minority or Native but do not choose to self-declare. Hence, they cannot be used in the statistical makeup.

It is only those who self-declare that are contained in those statistics. So I am simply saying to my honourable friend that is the minimum reportable statistical analysis. There are others and some of them are very obvious who are visible minorities who chose not to be declared as such but yet have been advanced and/or hired within the department. They cannot be shown as such unless they so declare, but they wish to be listed as visible minority, disabled, or Native, or female for that matter, I guess.

Mr. Ashton: I am surprised at the answer that the Minister has given because certainly there will be underestimation in that sense, but it does not answer my question. It does not deal with the fact that the hirings are not meeting the affirmative action targets in any way, shape, or form. I am not suggesting this is unique or that it has not been a continuing problem in other departments of Government over periods of time.

What I am suggesting is even if there are some individuals in that situation, these figures are not going to result in any substantive new opportunities. I particularly focused in on terms of the disabled because surely if there is one department that could be a leader in this regard, it would be the Department of Health, and the Minister's own figures show hiring of .358 this past year.

What I am asking the Minister for is to first of all recognize that the affirmative action—and in previous to reports and incidentally the report I just quoted from the 1987-88 report, I realize that was in the term of the previous Government. It was issued under the Minister's signature, but it did indicate that affirmative action would continue to be a major emphasis during the 1987-'88 fiscal year, the year in which this report was issued and a full-time affirmative action specialist was hired during that period.

I would like to ask the Minister again, what actions is the department taking? What for example is this affirmative action specialist doing, if that position is still in place, to improve the record of the department in terms of affirmative action?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend is saying that because people are hired and not wishing to be declared as visible minority or disabled, that hiring that individual does not mean there is progress in the department. What we are talking about is an enumeration of those declared or self-affirmed disabled, visible minority, or Native individuals. Recruitment of non-declared happens on a regular basis, but I do not have, nor can I provide those numbers because there are simply no ability of personnel services, human services, to keep track of that figure. So that my honourable friend ought to know that, and I simply indicate to him that recruitment of visible minorities, of Natives, of disabled Manitobans, is an ongoing fact of life in the department. In the six-month period, April '89 to October '89, six physically disabled individuals were hired and that was in a six-month period of recruitment. Four were clerical, one was professional, one was administrative.

Now, I hope my honourable friend is not leaving the impression that nothing is happening in this regard because recruitment, hiring and placement is indeed going on. But the only numbers I can offer to my honourable friend are those who have so declared.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, I think the Minister should do some research, perhaps talk to some of his colleagues, perhaps talk to the Minister responsible for Affirmative Action. I am very disappointed, he still clings to this idea that perhaps the figures are not reflective of the fact that the targets are not being met. Perhaps, in actual fact, because of this lack of declaration they may even in fact be met.

I think if the Minister was to talk to the Minister responsible for Affirmative Action that Minister would indicate that these show that clearly the targets have not been met. They are not even within the statistical range of error. There may be individuals who do not wish to declare themselves, but what is happening in

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this particular case is in the statistics we are looking at. The statistics provided by the Minister, what has happened is we are not even seeing the hirings that are reflective of society as a whole, let alone any additional hirings that would go toward rectifying the previous imbalance. Let us just look at it.

When we are talking about this here, if you want to get progress over 20 years toward achieving those goals and you start short of those goals, what that means is you have to be hiring in each particular year a higher percentage than those goals that exist for the 20-year period. I mean, if in society we have a situation where 10 percent of the population is Native and we have 2 percent Native employees, that means you not only need 10 percent of hiring in terms of each year if you are going to get achievement of those goals, you need to have higher than that. What I am suggesting is there is less than 10 percent.

The Minister gave me a figure of just over 6 percent, when the figure in society should be in terms of 10 percent. What that means is that in 20 years, the Minister will be nowhere near achieving those targets. In fact, if you look at it statistically, he is really falling back each year in which those targets are not being met, and I am not trying to belabour the point. I am just trying to suggest to the Minister that he not try and suggest there is a problem with the figures, that he look into what problems there are in the system.

That is why I ask the Minister, above and beyond, whether hiring of target groups is a fact of life? I mean, in the 1987-88 report, there is reference to major emphasis in all human resource activities during the '87-88 fiscal year. There is specific reference to a number of outreach initiatives that were taken. For example, a clerical training program offered by the Core Area Initiative; there was particular reference to career advancement by women within the department, which is all part of Affirmative Action; there was specific reference to the full-time Affirmative Action specialist that was hired, the position that was put in place from existing resources in the branch to provide the opportunity for clerical staff people to develop skills; personnel administration; and provide human resource services. I mean, these are initiatives right out of the report.

* (2050)

I am asking the Minister, what initiatives is he going to take to correct the imbalance? I am not trying to lay blame on the Minister for those figures, but they are clearly indicative of the fact that affirmative action targets are not being met. I do not want to debate the figures, I just want to ask the Minister what is he going to do in the upcoming year, the fiscal year which has already been in place for six months? What activities, new initiatives, has the department undertaken, if any, to improve the record of affirmative action in this department?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I know my honourable friend is saying he does not want to blame anybody, but my honourable friend is wanting to blame Government. It is as simple as that. I simply point out

to my honourable friend that it is a very real fact of life which existed not magically since May 9, 1988, but indeed existed when his Government was "failing to meet the target" of hiring in visible minorities and other areas; that some people do not declare themselves, and if they are hired, they are impossible to become part of the statistic of target.

Now, my honourable friend does not want to accept that even though it was fact when he was sitting on Government side of the House. I want to tell my honourable friend that in terms of the identified targets which are approved by the Civil Service Commission for the Department of Health, we have for this fiscal year a target, for instance, of 18 Natives to be hired. To date in the first six months of this fiscal year, we are 50 percent there; nine have been hired. Our Civil Service approved target on physically disabled is eight for this fiscal year; we have hired six in the first six months. In terms of visible minorities, our Civil Service approved target hiring, which is no different than what my honourable friend's Government went through, was 15; and as of the first six months, we are at eight.

So I suggest to my honourable friend that by and large, it would appear as if we are going to meet targets, and indeed if our hiring practices particularly in the physically disabled continue, we will exceed targets. So my honourable friend ought to give some sort of recognition and not try to seek blame or condemnation that those targets, if you will, as approved by the Civil Service Commission at least for the first six months of the year are being met and/or exceeded.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, the Minister, it takes him about three or four questions before he provides an answer of some sort to the questions. We finally got some sort of an answer on the question, and I will say if the Minister reaches the targets, I will be very pleased. That was not the indication over the previous year in terms of the figures given, but I will ask the Minister again the very specific question.

I said in my preamble to the question to the Minister, it was not a question of assessing blame to the Minister or anyone else. I asked the Minister specifically what programs, what activities the Human Resource Management Section of the Department of Health is undertaking in terms of affirmative action? I just outlined and I read from the report for the Minister in case he was not aware of some of the activities that have taken place in the past. What activities are being undertaken at the present time in terms of affirmative action with the department?

Mr. Orchard: What we are doing is that the job bulletins, when they are distributed by the Civil Service Commission, are distributed in many of the outreach agencies servicing the target groups. Personal contacts have also been established with some of these groups to facilitate the referral of target group members for specific competitions, e.g., Reaching Out Employment, Women's Immigrant Counselling Centre, and Native Employment Services.

The Employment Counselling and Support Services Branch of the Civil Service Commission has an

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affirmative action applicant inventory which is also accessed by the department. Additional outreach is also carried out by the department's participation in programs designed to train and place affirmative action target group members. For example, Core Area Initiative, Business Learning Opportunities Program in the university, Community College Access Programs.

Several participants in these programs have been placed with the department in the past year. The department also advertises job opportunities in relevant ethnic newspapers and publications on occasion.

Mr. Cheema: I just want to add my comments to this affirmative action. It troubles me a lot, this area. How can you even hire people when they are not aware of the position and their qualifications are not considered at par and they do not know which direction to go? The people do not want handouts. They want a simple, get them to the system at an equal level, but they want some kind of programs put in place where they can upgrade their education.

Recently I attended a conference on surgery with the Spanish Student Association, and there are a number of people, not only in the area of health but in any other area where they have all the qualifications. The general feeling was they do not want a handout, they want simply to get to the system but they want to relearn their skills. Most of them just have a language barrier. I think that is the most important point, and I do not think any Government is going to reach this target without having all those programs in place. It is going to take a long time.

I do not think it is even, I mean for political purposes, very easy to say, have you achieved your target? How can you achieve your target when you are not reaching the base of the problem? The problem is to educate the public first of all, to upgrade education; secondly, let them know what kind of job opportunities are there; and thirdly, treat them on equal matter.

I will give you a personal example. My wife, who has been in this country for 22 years, was educated in Saskatchewan. She did her Bachelor of Education, she taught in Saskatchewan, and she applied this year in Seven Oaks School Division. Because her name was East Indian, somehow she was lumped into the same affirmative action group and she was not even given a job. Later on the school superintendent, who was very kind, admitted the fault. She was upset why she had to be given a special status to get a job. A lot of people do not want that kind of thing, they want to be treated equally and fairly on their merits.

I think the point I am trying to make, people want to upgrade their education, upgrade their skills and then compete. I think it is going to take a long time. No Government can just come up with the numbers 10 or 15. I am not defending the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) or anyone here. I think this is a simple reality of life, and I think we have to start some of the programs which will enhance their education and retrain them so that they can use their skills properly.

Mr. Orchard: I just think my honourable friend has made some very fair comment.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—the Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, I also have some questions in terms of the other functioning of this particular part of the department, that is in regard to labour relations.

I would like to ask the Minister if he could give us an update of current contracts that have either expired or will be expiring in the current year in the health field generally. By that I mean hospitals within the Health Department because this department does provide human resource staff and support in consultation and negotiations, and that is why I am asking under this particular section.

* (2100)

Mr. Orchard: I know the information my honourable friend is seeking but the personnel department, or human resources here, only deals with the hiring within the department. Those health field contracts are more appropriately questioned when we get to the Manitoba Health Services Commission where most of those individuals are employed. All of our employees in this department are under the MGEA Agreement which I believe has a year and five months to go before expiry.

Mr. Ashton: The reason I am asking the question here is because the department does provide support and consultation in negotiations with, I know certainly in the previous reports, not just MGEA, also the MMA contract is listed. I assume, and my understanding of this section of the department is it is a central resource facility of the Department of Health that does become involved in negotiations at various different levels. That is why I am asking at this point in time?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, we do, in the specific example my honourable friend uses in terms of the MMA, do the negotiations on behalf of Government-employed physicians, the MMA being their bargaining agent. The negotiations with the MMA for the fee-for-service physicians is accomplished through the Manitoba Health Services Commission.

Mr. Ashton: That is fine, the department will deal with it under MHSC if the Minister feels that is more appropriate.

I also have some questions. Perhaps the Minister would advise me as to when he would like to deal with them. That is in terms of the general policies of the Government in terms of contracting and in terms of layoffs. I assume probably the Minister will wish to deal with that under MHSC. Does he have any other preference as to in terms of where we should deal with this?

Mr. Orchard: I think that those questions might most appropriately be posed to the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission (Mrs. Hammond), because any layoffs or change in employment status of departmental personnel have to comply with the main agreement with MGEA.

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Mr. Ashton: One other question, I just wanted to get an update in terms of the pay equity, in terms of the health sector. That would include both the department and also within the hospital sector. Perhaps if I can pose that now, if the Minister would prefer to deal with that later under MHSC, that is fine, but I would just like to give notice that I would like to ask a number of questions on pay equity.

Mr. Orchard: Pay equity is in place for the staff of the department and the commission.

Mr. Ashton: I will deal with pay equity in terms of outside of the department when we get into MHSC.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—pass. 1.(g)(2) Other Expenditures, \$62,700—pass.

1.(h) Internal Audit: Performs financial, compliance and operational audits to assist management in improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness of operations; 1.(h)(1) Salaries, \$151,300—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us if there is any internal audit going on with any specific branch of the department now?

Mr. Orchard: Let me just go through that for you, yes. These are all going on right now I believe, are they not? In 1988-89 the Brandon—I almost gave you last year's. I will give you this year's now. We are doing an audit in the funding and monitoring outside agencies where we are reviewing program policies, processes and procedures involved in the funding of outside agencies and the monitoring of that funding.

In Maternal and Child we are doing a review of program policies, processes and procedures in selected regions, and if my honourable friend wants to know the regions I will have to provide that later. In Mental Health we are doing a review of program criteria for mental health clients in the region and doing a review of the caseload and workload statistics. Under Continuing Care we are doing a waiting list panelling process review, a review of program policies and procedures in two regions. In Human Resources we are doing a review of the policies and procedures followed by this branch of administration division. In Commitment Accounting we are doing a review of the processes and procedures in a number of regions, and in Health Promotion we are doing a review of program policies, processes and procedures.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, could we have a copy of that. I may have some questions on each and every item. That would be helpful if I could get a copy.

Mr. Orchard: I will make a copy.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us about the order for the outside agencies because from time to time I also come across people complaining that they are not getting the funding proper or the funding was cut. What kind of mechanisms are put in place to ensure that the funds are properly used?

Mr. Orchard: We have, I think, fairly mature and sophisticated auditing capability in terms of the funding of external agencies. We pretty closely monitor the level of funding and assurance that the funding to the outside agencies has been used for the purpose that the approval was given. I think you will find that, and I say this as a rule of thumb, our funded outside agencies are generally within their budget and have been because of their management systems which are under review periodically by internal audit, fairly consistent and sophisticated in their use of taxpayers' money that has been granted to them through the department.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister be prepared to give us a list of all the agencies funded this year? I do not have a list and I think that will help us as the process of Estimates goes on.

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I would be prepared to give that to you, but I think that comes up under Regional Services.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, is there any policy of random auditing the agencies or is there any specific order or are the agencies only audited on the request of any complaints?

Mr. Orchard: I am informed that one of the requirements of funding for the outside agencies is that they provide us with an audited financial statement at year end. It is from that that we review every one of them to assure that they have met the funding intentions for which we had provided resource. I think it is fair to say any variance from that is of course questioned by internal audit of the agency.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I think maybe this may not be the right place to ask this question. It is regarding the self-help group for depression which had a problem when the restaurant was closed at Selkirk Avenue. Later on there was confusing reports coming both from the previous people who were running the agency. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) indicated in the press that they were having a surplus for the last couple of years. Can the Minister of Health tell us what is the real situation now as regards that particular agency?

* (2110)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend might recall the confusion surrounding that. I think my honourable friend, with information from the self-help society, held a press conference in which he said the restaurant was closed only to find upon arrival of the television crews that in fact the restaurant was open. That was the sort of, shall we say, mixed message that we were receiving in Government that prompted a review by internal audit to determine what the circumstance was for the society, because if my memory serves me correctly, at the time, Mr. Turbovsky was advocating enhanced Government support to continue operations of the restaurant. Every indications we had is that there was almost 100,000 in surplus funds that

were there. I have to admit that I was somewhat taken aback to receive the letter from Mr. Turbovsky in my office indicating that if we did not fund the restaurant that he would be closing it down, laying off the individuals who were employed there and that if we did not give him the money he would go to the media.

The letter to me was carbon copied to Peter Warren on CJOB, the Winnipeg Free Press, and every media outlet in town. I thought to myself that is rather a strange advocacy letter to threaten a Minister with immediate funding of a new program or else there was going to be a public exposé. Because of the tenor of the letter, I immediately asked the department, what goes on here?

It was during that preliminary investigation that the indications were that the society had at last accounting some surplus fundings which would indicate they had the ability to carry on the operation of the restaurant. To put it gently, the efforts of the letter writer might be described as trying to lever Government through the threat of public pressure into funding. I tend not to approve funding under those circumstances. There has to be some greater motivation to use taxpayers' dollars than simply the threat of a public exposé of the inadequacies of Government when in fact the organization appears to have a surplus.

So as a result of that, we are attempting to get to the bottom of the issue. I know my honourable friend must share in some of the concern, because I do not think he particularly enjoyed holding a press conference about a closed restaurant only to be embarrassed that the restaurant in fact was still operating.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, in regard to this particular restaurant, what we were told and that the owner of the place had threatened and in fact that he put the locks on the door and later on he opened on his own and we confirmed that. For us or any politician, it does not matter which Party it is, we do not have the control that somebody else goes and opens the locks and they have their own self-interest at the public's expense, but the lesson we have learned is that there has to be more accountability.

I think this is one way of having the audits done, because tax money does not grow on trees that people are just going to pick up and give it to anyone and say that is the way it should be. I think the auditor for any spending should be a regular one rather than complain of certain individuals. It should be if you are giving a large amount of money to individual groups or self-help groups. They must be accountable because after all it is coming from Manitoba taxpayers.

My next question is about Mental Health, the review of program criteria for mental health clients in the regions. Can the Minister tell us how far this review has gone and what regions they are looking at?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, this is a review throughout the regions to assure that the kind of client that is being assisted by regional services within the department, that there is a consistent level of service for those clients throughout the regions.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, what kind of special specific services is the Minister talking about?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, again I think the previous answer pretty well explains what we are attempting to determine, trying to assure that there is consistency in the accessing of the program and the needs of the client throughout the regions and how they are being met by our service deliverers throughout the regions, to assure that we have got a consistently available and consistently accessible program throughout the regions.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, maybe I am missing something, because we usually hear a lot of complaints about the services at the level of when the patients are discharged from the hospital to the community and how the mental health care workers, whether they have enough numbers available to provide these services. Is the Minister talking about a service provided by the mental health care workers, or the other professional groups?

Mr. Orchard: No, no. What is being determined is what kind of client is being served by regional staff in each of the regions, within their respective communities by the regions of the province. It is the Community Mental Health Program.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I just wanted to confirm. Is it a community mental health worker? Thank you. Mr. Chairperson, again about the waiting list for the panelling process. Can the Minister update the information on that audit?

Mr. Orchard: Again, because we have got a number of regions, urban and rural, this review of the waiting list on the panelling process is to assure a consistency across the regions in the criteria used for placement on panelling. Bear in mind the panelling is achieved by independent individuals in each region. Within for instance the central region you will have several panels that operate within that region by itself. We are attempting to assure that there is reasonable consistency in establishing and utilizing the panelling criteria so that you do not have, for instance, substantial numbers—and I am exaggerating here—but substantial numbers panelled in one region that would not be panelled in other regions, in other words to assure some consistency in the application of the guidelines, then to take it the next step to see how each waiting list, by region, is dealt with in terms of the prioritization.

Out of the waiting list you will hear, from time to time, the concern that an individual has been panelled and waiting for a number of months, and someone who is just very recently panelled has exceeded them on the waiting list and has achieved placement. I think my honourable friend can understand, from that, that is the kind of issue that causes—how do I word this without being accusatory, because that is not what I am intending to do—but that sort of judgment places in question, or allows the accusation, of favouritism and that sort of thing. What we are wanting to assure is that within each region the maintenance of that waiting list and how people are taken from the waiting list, the panelled waiting list, to the personal care home

placement follows again some consistency. My honourable friend as a practising professional knows that some people develop rather immediate circumstances wherein they cannot care for themselves.

* (2120)

They are panelled and even though they are on the waiting list only for a matter of days, they will receive priority placement in the personal care home because their need far exceeds others who have been on the waiting list, even though they have only recently been placed on it. We are trying to make sure that there is no potential for accusation, that there is anything but an impartial placement once on the waiting list. So those two things are under review.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I think it is going to be extremely difficult to achieve what the Minister has said. Each and every personal care home has its own ways of dealing with things. Also as you are well aware, each and every patient panelled is on a different level and it depends on the availability of the person in the personal care homes.

I want to be very careful here, but there still is a general feeling in the public that, how come some people get to few nursing homes earlier than the others. Without giving any specific nursing homes' names, I do not want to particularly kill myself giving somebody's personal care homes' name. I think there is a general feeling and to some extent it may be true or it may not be. I do not have any substantial evidence to prove that, but I think that kind of audit may be helpful if it is done region-wide as you said. On a few personal care homes too, see how those personal care homes are taking few patients from the hospital at an earlier date than the other even though it differs from time to time because you may have a patient in the hospital. Circumstances may differ from the person who is in the community and family may not know that.

It is very difficult for the staff of the hospital to tell them, what are the regulations? It takes for people a long time even to know the normal procedures. It is a difficult problem, but there is a perception that a few nursing homes, you may just have to give some donation or some kind of jump the line. I would like the Minister to probably look into that in the matter of looking at a few personal care homes, investigating the whole matter.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I guess in many ways the sort of thing my honourable friend is talking about is what the review, the two areas of review are designed to prove or disprove. Look, I know what my honourable friend is getting at in terms of, some personal care homes have virtually nonexistent waiting lists and others have very, very long ones. In some circumstances that is unfortunately a reality of the uniqueness of the home.

Some homes are Francophone in terms of the majority of their staff provisions and many panelled Francophones want to be in a place where they can speak in their maiden language. Similarly a number of personal care homes can communicate very ably in Polish or Ukrainian or Yiddish. From time to time

placement in them does take longer because of the specific desire to be in a German-speaking home for instance, or an Icelandic-speaking home.

The issue that my honourable friend is alluding to, if it exists, is for instance a person were able to through a donation to the home possibly jump the queue. I mean that is a pretty serious allegation and I realize the sensitivity of that, but if my honourable friend had something he wanted to share on that in confidence, that is something we take very seriously and would investigate it. I mean in confidence if my honourable friend had a concern about that, we would be prepared to investigate that.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, I have to be very careful because certainly this is a very serious problem. The public at large and some of the patients have expressed their concern personally to me, not only from my own riding, but a number of other areas. For them to come forward I think it is very difficult, somebody who is already on the waiting list and to have that kind of allegation, they are afraid and they simply will not come out. Certainly as soon as I have information I will certainly share with the Minister, but in confidence, because this could cause a lot of problems for a lot of people.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I would sincerely appreciate that if my honourable friend does run into a circumstance like that, that he would share that with us. That is the kind of allegation that the whole system of fairness and perception of fairness the system needs to uphold.

The reason I ask my honourable friend that if he runs into that circumstance to share it with us in confidence is that quite often what happens, and I know my honourable friend is aware of these circumstances, you will have a person whose loved one is on the waiting list and has been for a number of months and someone within the same town, or in the same circle of friends, all of a sudden is put on the panelled list and gets placed before their loved one does. It causes concerns. I simply say that I think with very, very few exceptions if any, those advanced placements are because of the medical needs of the individual, which have developed very rapidly. However, they do lead from time to time to speculation, as my honourable friend has given the committee tonight.

If my honourable friend believes that speculation has some foundation, I would be more than willing to investigate that, because that is exactly the kind of thing that we simply will not tolerate in Government. I do not think any Government would tolerate that.

Mr. Cheema: As I have said earlier, this is a very serious matter for a few people. If someone is waiting say for a number of years, and in the same room or the same unit somebody with the same panelling criteria is going to the same nursing home at an earlier date, I think it causes a concern. It is a difficult thing to prove. If there is circumstantial evidence, certainly we will share with the Minister. That is just speculation, but I thought maybe the Minister had some information. As soon as we find something I will let him know.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—pass. Item (h)(2) Other Expenditures, \$25,900—pass. Under Manitoba practice, the debate on the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of a department.

Accordingly we shall now proceed with consideration of the next Resolution, No. 2, Community Health Services; 2.(a) Program and Operation Support: Provides for the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister and provides program policy and direction to the Community Health Programs and consultation and direction regarding all elements of delivery of health services at the regional level, 2.(a)(i) salaries, \$1,179,800, shall the item pass—the Honourable Minister of Health.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I was negligent back when we got into Financial Services to introduce my Deputy Minister Lloyd Searcy—what did I say, Deputy Minister? I am sorry Frank, that was sort of an instant promotion. Assistant Deputy Minister Lloyd Searcy, for Administration and Finance, and Assistant Deputy Minister of Community Health Services Dr. Sharon Macdonald. I apologize here, it was oversight, not intent. Such encouragement need not follow.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass? Item 2.(a)(1) Salaries \$1,179,800—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, how many positions are vacant in terms of the professional and technical support staff and administrative support staff?

* (2130)

Mr. Orchard: We have a total of three vacancies out of the 21, is that correct? Yes, three vacancies, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health tell us what are those vacancies and how long they have been vacant and when shall we expect them to fill or who has been filling their functions and what are their functions?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, under I guess in all of the cases they are long-standing vacancies in terms of the medical officers of health positions in which the Assistant Deputy Minister Dr. Macdonald has been filling in. We have redirected one of the positions to retain the services of Dr. Wiser who has been on staff now for about six weeks or so, four weeks I guess would be closer.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health elaborate on these two positions, the medical officers position and, as he said, Dr. Macdonald is looking after that work? What are the special duties for this particular position?

Mr. Orchard: The position that Dr. Wiser is filling?

Mr. Cheema: Yes.

Mr. Orchard: Dr. Wiser is under a one-year contract which will be subject to renewal depending on how well

the individual carries out his duties, but basically it is in the area of special advisor on policy and other matters to the Deputy Minister. Naturally that kind of advice, unless the television show, "Yes, Minister" succeeds and ends up at my desk as well, and he said, working within the department and within professional groups, the commission, the hospital system, to provide us with advice on such areas as technology assessment. The individual has had quite a varied work experience in terms of working not only as a fee-for-service physician, but worked with a community health clinic type operation servicing or helping to provide medical services to Native communities in northern California. His strength to us now stems from a most recently completed Masters in Health Services Administration. I think if there is an area that certainly the ministry and indeed the whole health care field is never in surplus position of, it is in the administration analysis field. The individual can provide us we think some fairly substantial strength there.

Mr. Cheema: I think I did receive the Order-in-Council copy of Dr. Wiser, and we were curious to know the qualifications, and the Minister of Health indicated that this person is qualified certainly for the job.

I just want to know that now we have this special advisor. There was a press report earlier this year and the Deputy Minister of Health was quoted in the Winnipeg Sun, I believe, that he did not need any advisor. Now, I just want to know, what has changed over the period of a few months?

Mr. Orchard: Well, the capacity of advice needed.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us what has changed? What was the special need of this person now, when it was not required a few months back?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend is referring to the individual by the name of Sonny Arrojado who was working as—for I suppose a lack of better terminology—a special advisor to the ministry, special advisor to the Associate Deputy Minister, and the individual was undertaking certain specific areas of study. Those were completed and the services were no longer needed, so having completed those areas of investigation, there was no need for the individual. I might indicate to my honourable friend that I think Health sort of ended up being a natural recipient of the individual after the previous administration no longer had need of the services of that individual at the Workers Compensation Board.

So that area of policy investigation was completed, services are no longer needed. This individual brings with him to the position of special advisor some substantially wider educational experience, in terms of the masters in Health Services Administration but, more importantly, a blend of practice, of pragmatic hands on medicine, fee for service, and in some cases to a salaried physician in a community-type clinic, primarily providing services to Native Indians in northern California. Part of his Health Services Administration education, or completion of that area of his education,

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had substantial research into technology and health economics. Both of those areas are ones that are going to challenge not only this administration but every provincial administration across Canada, not only today but for many years to come. I think the background, the educational experience, the work experience provided a very useful combination for the ministry at this point in time.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I do not think we have any difficulty with this individual's qualifications and the job he is hired for, but what we have discussed for the last, about 10 days, we spent about three days discussing the Health Advisory Network and we are spending \$500,000 on the Health Advisory Network which is doing very, very good work. There are a number of physicians and a number of other health care professionals who are giving their valuable time and they all think that this is probably an excellent way of dealing with the health care issues.

Now can the Minister of Health tell us, is he not duplicating this particular position at all?

Mr. Orchard: No.

Mr. Cheema: I disagree with him because he just said some of the reasons he has given that why they have the Health Advisory Network and this position, this person has been hired for a special purpose. I think to some extent that there is a duplication of services here, and I would like the Minister to clarify that. This person's position will be in what respect, what will be the special function which the Health Advisory Network or his present Deputy Minister of Health or his present Assistant Deputy Minister of Health, other people can do it?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I realize my honourable friend is seeking that throat-slitting issue so that he can get at me and lay waste in devastation to my ministry. I certainly do not want to give him that opportunity now, because the Health Advisory Network and the responsibilities of Dr. Wiser are not one and the same.

The Health Advisory Network is charged with the responsibility of attempting to provide recommendations to Government on the resolution of some rather long-standing problems. That is substantially different than focusing expertise in terms of technological assessment or health services management which are the skills and training of Dr. Wiser. Because let me tell my honourable friend that in any given funding year the Manitoba Health Services Commission, hence the Ministry of Health, may well receive hundreds if not several hundreds of applications by the various facilities to undertake new programs based on the very latest technology.

This individual's training lends him to provide a medical background researcher position, if you will, on the efficacy of some of these new and emerging technologies. Bear in mind that I tell my honourable friend that Dr. Wiser had experience in the United States, and a lot of the technological push comes from the

U.S. medical establishment. So the two roles are entirely different, and I simply tell you that already Dr. Wiser has provided some pretty sound advice on some new wizardry gimmickry that was being proposed and they were growing to be some pretty substantive proponents of this technology that we ought as a province to take on.

* (2140)

Dr. Wiser indicated from his contacts, his research, his ability to provide opinion, that this would not be an effective use of scarce resource. That opinion, before we got too far down the line in terms of accessing that new technology, has since been confirmed by some of the top clinical professionals in the field in medicine in Manitoba.

So the two roles are different. They are utilizing in some cases similar experience in educational backgrounds, but certainly the focus is on entirely different problem solvings and issue resolution within the department. The Health Advisory Network has its role as does Dr. Wiser.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, as I said earlier, we do not have any difficulty with the qualification of this person. I have a question about the process.

My next question is: was this position advertised?

Mr. Orchard: No, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, then how was the decision made?

Mr. Orchard: We undertook quite a substantive search to other provinces, our sister jurisdictions, to find out if they were aware of an individual who had some health services management training and ability to serve in a special advisory capacity at the salaried level that we were able to offer. This individual's name came to us from, I believe Saskatchewan—no, Alberta, pardon me.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, was the MMA contacted about this individual, whether their input was taken or not?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, the MMA was asked as to whether there were any difficulties, any reasons why we ought not to hire this individual, anything that they were aware of which would indicate the individual was not as good a looking candidate for the position as we first expected. From that standpoint, yes, they were consulted and as a result we ended up hiring the individual.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, what is the salary of this person? I missed the salary on the Order-in-Council, I cannot recall.

Mr. Orchard: \$95,000 annually.

Mr. Cheema: What is the total term for this position? Is it one year, six months, or what?

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Mr. Orchard: It is a one-year contract with an option, a mutually agreed upon option, for extension to another year.

Mr. Cheema: About the other medical officer's position we talked about, Sharon Macdonald, is it as the Minister of Health said, that she is working also in a medical officer position? Now have we not filled that position?

Mr. Orchard: We are recruiting right now for an epidemiologist in the medical officer of Health category.

Mr. Cheema: Is that the position where the Minister of Health said there were three positions that were vacant? One was the epidemiologist, not a medical officer then, am I correct?

Mr. Orchard: That will fill one of the vacant positions.

Mr. Cheema: One vacant position. So these two positions will be filled, how about the third position now?

Mr. Orchard: We are using the Assistant Deputy Minister in terms of the medical officer of Health position, in terms of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. In terms of the Winnipeg region, when the reorganization is finalized, we may well be using that vacant medical officer of Health position. It is somewhat dependent on the recommendations and the direction of the reorganization.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—pass.

Item 2.(2) Other Expenditures, \$174,300—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, just for clarification again, this qualification pays, I suppose, overtime pay is about \$182,300.00. Can the Minister explain to me what that is?

Mr. Orchard: The \$10,000 is for membership in the fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Mr. Cheema: No. I think we are on the wrong line here. Under the Salaries I just missed one point. That was qualification pay, that is \$182,300.00.

Mr. Orchard: Are you sure you do not have a misprint in your book?

Mr. Cheema: Okay, it is \$90,000, not \$182,000.00. What is happening there is—

Mr. Orchard: Oh, I am on the wrong page. I was just ahead of you there because you were just getting—oh, there we are. This is just interesting. Qualification pay has increased by \$10,000 and that is part of the reason for that increase of \$92,000 because it applies to what, nine more people. I do not know what the 2,300 is. It is a slippage factor, sort of like in the elevator where you deliver grain, it is "tookage" as compared to "dockage."

Mr. Chairman: On item 2.(a)(2)—pass.

(b) Communicable Disease Control: Controls and prevents the spread of communicable disease through surveillance and investigation, immunization, public education and treatment. (1) Salaries \$715,000—the Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I will just again go through my usual questions. How many positions are vacant again in the managerial, professional, administrative support level?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, in this division we have a full house, there are no vacancies.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health tell us about these two managerial positions, what are those positions, please?

Mr. Orchard: That is the director and the assistant director in the management positions, Dr. Margaret Fast, and Dr. Poffenroth.

Mr. Cheema: About the seven positions for the professional or technical support staff?

Mr. Orchard: Five in public health nursing, one in the food protection area, and one as a public health educator.

Mr. Cheema: Is the Minister ready to probably go to the specific questions now or can we proceed with our questions?

Mr. Orchard: Sure, by all means.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I will start with my questions on—

* (2150)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I should have done this and I blame my staff for not doing this ahead of time.

Mr. Cheema: They are doing very well.

Mr. Orchard: I do not know what you have done, but you sure have two friends out there. Let me pass out to my two honourable friends the staffing by appropriation and the vacancies. Sorry I did not do that to start with, as I say, staff erred in that case.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I think we have a disagreement on one of the major issues facing Manitoba. We have repeatedly disagreed with the Minister of Health on his approach to the whole AIDS issue. He has made some progress and very significant progress, but as during the Question Period I was saying the other day, the time is short, around within two minutes you have to put all the facts together and sometimes you have to, and you miss once, and there was a question raised repeatedly about the total AIDS campaign approach in Manitoba. Can the Minister of Health update the whole AIDS campaign so far?

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Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I think and I know my honourable friend will disagree with me, but then that is the role of Government and Opposition. I am very, very serious in this issue. I think that in the past year and a half that we have made some rather significant achievements in terms of our AIDS education program in the Province of Manitoba. I say that knowing that my honourable friend will per chance argue with me about specifics and direction and what we did not do that we should have done and those are legitimate arguments that my honourable friend, the Health Critic, both of them, and I can have. We can legitimately agree to disagree on whether enough is being done or whether the appropriate things are being done. I want to tell my honourable friend, and this is not something that I have said, but this is information that came out of Winnipeg this summer at the Canadian Public Health Association, or I guess it was this spring, in June.

The Canadian Public Health Association held their Canadian annual meeting in Winnipeg and I had the opportunity to speak to them at a luncheon event. It was at that time that our AIDS advertising campaign was in full swing. We received substantial accolades from the Canadian Public Health Association for the very direct and non-garbled message that we were putting out in our television and our radio ads and the directness of our pamphlet, our AIDS pamphlet, and the back-up material that we were using in terms of the AIDS campaign. Quite frankly, it was recognized as the most progressive advertising in Canada at that time.

This is why I say my honourable friend will no doubt choose to differ with me, because there was some substantial criticism by himself and by others as to the delay in the television advertising campaign.

I simply want to tell my honourable friend that the direct nature of the ad caused me to seek additional assurances that we were not going to get into an argument on the morals of the ad versus the very direct educational message that we were trying to put out. We made a number of changes to the ad. I suggested a couple of them myself in terms of the original make-up of the ad would have led to criticism by individuals. It left what I thought would be an open message that we could have been criticized on. If there is one thing that we wanted to assure in spending that kind of resource, that we did not have the educational message deflected by having the advertising campaign distracted on an ancillary issue.

The extra focus testing that we did—because our focus testing was primarily to an urban market and primarily to a younger age group, because we wanted to make sure with the target group primarily aged 16 to 25 that we were in fact delivering to them a message that they would listen to and they would gain some information from—was good on that group. The group identified with the two actors we had. They thought they were very down-to-earth individuals that you could find anywhere in your peer group of associates and friends. That part of it was all right.

What I was concerned about is that for the first time in television advertising, a Government was going to sponsor an ad wherein there was not only mention of

condoms but the visual presentation of them. That was the issue that I did not want to have distracted into an argument based on the morals of the ad versus the educational message.

We went back and did further focus testing of a wider age group and a more diverse background including people from rural areas. We had mothers, educators, Sunday school teachers as part of the focus group and we were very pleased in terms of the second round of focus group testing that they did not attach a moral message, they found the educational message to be very direct, that the advice we were providing was nondirectional. We said avoidance of sexual activity outside of marriage, if not that, sexual activity with one partner, and at all times using the best available protection which included condoms.

The focus testing said that message was coming through, and that gave us the confidence to move with the advertising campaign. It was delayed from six to eight weeks, but in the delay it ended up being carried at the time the Canadian public health conference was in Winnipeg, and we received some pretty substantial accolades for that advertising program and a number of requests across Canada for the ad.

Secondly, I want to share with my honourable friend another thing that was encouraging to me. Again, my honourable friend offered some criticism because of the delay in producing the AIDS pamphlet, and I accept that criticism, but again we wanted to try and deliver a pamphlet that was direct and had the presence to be picked up and read, hence the cover with the torn exposé on AIDS, if you will.

Now, when the Canadian study on Youth and Aids presented their report to Manitoba and to the media of Manitoba, Dr. Beasley, who headed up the study on behalf of the federal Government, was sitting in my outer office and he was thumbing through the new AIDS pamphlet. He came into the office carrying—and I simply share this with you because I think it demonstrates the effectiveness of doing things right, even if it does take an extra month or two. He said that is a very good pamphlet. He said you are very direct in your language. You use easy language. He said you have clearly identified the high-risk activities, and he said that is an excellent pamphlet.

I felt, you know, as you can well expect, somewhat gratified to receive that kind of advice from a professional who had just spent two years serving Canadian youth in terms of their attitudes towards AIDS and to try to establish some base line of understanding of what their needs in terms of information and education were. Here was the individual doing that survey in my outer office reading the new pamphlet that we created saying that is a very good pamphlet. That sort of makes up for many of the days when you ask yourself, well, are we really ever accomplishing anything in this behemoth department, and clearly I think in the AIDS campaign, we have two of the most visible successes nationally in terms of our pamphlet and the advertising campaign that we undertook.

We do not intend to stop there. We intend to continue with the war on AIDS provincially, with the assistance

of many experts in the field both within and without Manitoba, and indeed within the department. I know my honourable friend will want to debate that, but I wanted to lay those two things out tonight because both of those areas, I know my honourable friend was concerned with the delay in the pamphlet and with the advertising campaign. This is the first opportunity I have had to fully explain the reason behind those delays, and I accept my honourable friend's criticism as being very legitimate because he wanted information because of the urgency of the issue of AIDS as a public health issue, but that little bit of extra time I think gave us very, very high quality and probably very progressive in leading information to present to the public. I think the wait was worthwhile.

Mr. Chairman: The hour being 10 p.m., committee rise.

* (2000)

SUPPLY—URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Urban Affairs. We are on item 1.(a) Minister's Salary. Shall the item pass—the Honourable Minister for Fort Rouge.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Chairman, you keep calling me that.

I have enjoyed the Urban Affairs Estimates this year. I have enjoyed them because I think we have had a candid and frank exchange of views between Members of the Opposition and the Minister. We have covered quite a lot of territory in a relatively short period of time. We have talked about downtown revitalization. We have talked about urban sprawl. We have talked about tripartite arrangements between three levels of Government.

Let me compliment the Minister by saying he has proven himself, over these last number of days, as a politician who is prepared to listen to the, I think, objective criticisms offered by Members of the Opposition and even some positive suggestions as to how his department can be better run and how he, as Minister, can bring some more leadership to bear to the many important issues that face him.

We were encouraged by some of the things that he had to say. We were encouraged just earlier on today by his expression of commitment to renew the Core Area Initiative. He is a little fuzzy on the form that will take, but at least we now have it on the record that it is a high priority of this Government to continue supporting the revitalization of the core of Winnipeg, and we are encouraged by that.

We are also happy to know the Minister agrees with us that The Forks development project ought to be taken slowly, that it is a chance literally of a generation for our community, and that we ought not to move so swiftly that we will regret it some time later. We were encouraged to hear the Minister commit to maintaining the essential value and tradition of that land at the

forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, that he rejects the option of housing at least in the short and medium term, and we think that is wise. Unfortunately, the Urban Estimates also were spotted with some rather profound disappointments.

The first disappointment I think is that the Minister has chosen a scatter-gunned approach to overhauling The City of Winnipeg Act. He is allowing his vision and his Government's vision of where they wish to take the City of Winnipeg out in dribs and drabs. A little bit here, a little bit there, some more in 1990, and a little more in 1991, and so it goes. The problem with that approach, Mr. Chairman, is that it is impossible for us to evaluate the success of these reform measures in isolation from the total package.

So we are being asked to comment on and make amendments to legislative initiatives that do not have a context. We do not know where the Minister is taking us. We have in Bill 32 some sense of where he wants to go in relationship to the powers of the mayor and the way the mayor relates to Council, but that has no relationship at all as far as we can see, where he wants to take the whole planning process, the power of community committees. How will zoning applications be handled? How is he going to deal with the additional zone? We know through some legislation that he wants to replace it, but we do not know with what.

So the Minister's major failing, I think on the legislative side, has been his inability to show the people of Winnipeg where it is he wants to take us and where the leadership is going to come from in the Government. That is disappointing, because as we have seen through the results of the municipal elections just last week there is a powerful movement towards municipal reform among the electorate. I think the Minister should take his lead from what the people are saying, and that leadership should be shown in legislative initiatives taken by this Government, and as I say we are disappointed.

Also, I think it is very important that the Minister study and become more familiar with the changing face of the City of Winnipeg. As we said during the course of the Estimates between 1981 and 1986 during a period when the population of Winnipeg grew by something over 5 percent the Native population of our community rose over 70 percent, which has profound impact on the problems we will face down the road, because these Native people come from high levels of poverty, off the reserves, mostly in northern Manitoba.

* (2005)

They need to be exposed to opportunity, skills training and a chance to accommodate themselves to the urban environment. We have failed them, and we have failed them badly. When the Minister was questioned closely on the policy of his Government to train Native people and to put more resources towards the area of north Main Street in our downtown we were unable to pin him down to specific action.

He mouthed the platitudes but gave them no meaning or substance. We will be wanting to hear more from the Minister as we move towards the renewal of the

Core Area Initiative Project, which expires in just over a year's time, that this Government has some sense where it wants to go and there are very many social and economic problems, social and economic problems that face the people who live in the inner city. We are so fixated often as legislators to talk about buildings. It is sometimes referred to as the edifice complex, that we do not spend nearly enough time or energy on the people who have to live in that environment.

Speaking of the environment, we think the Minister has much to answer for to the people of Winnipeg on the administration of The City of Winnipeg Act and The Environment Act and the kind of application that we have not seen to date.

Winnipeg is a very special place in our province, Mr. Chairman, because it is uniquely a majority city within a province. That can not be said for any other city in Canada. If you just review metropolitan areas from coast to coast there is no other city in Canada that has more than 50 percent of its province's population and so dominates the provincial landscape the way Winnipeg does. Winnipeg has some natural advantages that we have to take advantage of as citizens of this community and as legislators who have something to say about the way the municipal Government of Winnipeg is organized.

The Minister has heard us talk for a while now on the appropriateness of placing the virology lab in downtown Winnipeg where it belongs. Finally, we now have the Leader of the New Democratic Party on the record supporting that site, and we are grateful for that support. We think he is on the right track and we will say so whenever we have the opportunity.

Here is a case where Winnipeg has the natural advantage of being a leader in health research in Canada. We have some of the finest experts in the field residing right here in Manitoba's capital city, and it makes sense to us to take advantage of any opportunities which are granted to us to capitalize on that natural strength. We want to make very sure that the provincial Government does its part to ensure that happens.

Winnipeg is also a major centre for the performing arts in Canada. We have more theatres, theatre companies, more ballet companies, more experimental artistic adventure in this city than of any city of comparable size in North America. It is something we should take a great deal of pride in.

We also need a recipe for economic development for Winnipeg and we have seen no blueprint. We need co-ordinated action. The problem with this Government's approach to Urban Affairs, and it is a problem that we have seen at the City of Winnipeg for too long now, is that somebody gets a hot idea and they chase the idea and before it has been implemented and before that idea has found fruition we are off and trying to plant yet another seed.

We saw that in the whole effort to revitalize downtown Winnipeg. First, there was the Core Area Initiative, then the North Portage Development, then The Forks Development Corporation, meanwhile the Exchange

District is developing, there is construction on Broadway Avenue. Our downtown of our city is spread out over a huge geographical area, and we have given the Minister what we think is a creative idea, a sensible idea, and an efficient one to co-ordinate and give direction to that revitalization effort through the one single Downtown Development Corporation.

* (2010)

Again, Mr. Chairman, just in conclusion I would like to thank the Minister's staff for their help. I would like to thank the Minister for an open mind that I think characterizes him apart from many of his other colleagues on that side of the House. We will continue to offer positive suggestions, and I know he will take them up when he agrees with them, that he will not allow good ideas to flounder because of their origins, that he is beyond that kind of partisan and parochial thinking, and we will continue to put pressure on the Minister to serve the citizens of Winnipeg with all of the strength and vision he can muster, and we for our part will provide a conscientious and responsible opposition. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Well, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) cannot wait to get at his Estimates, and I am sure the Members of this Chamber are waiting with bated breath as well, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to rise on the Minister's Estimates. I believe the Minister himself is an open, flexible and capable Member of the Government benches, and -(interjection)- if we ever thought we were going to deal with Ministers' wages in Estimates I would take out a bank loan if I was the Minister of Northern Affairs in terms of wages.

I have often thought that the person fundamentally responsible for ministerial assignments is the one that one should hold accountable, that is the Premier. We have always felt that this Minister is a flexible person. I noted years ago when he was somewhat skeptical of this core area program and its training programs and he returned from a European conference in Paris with a much better idea of the training programs and certainly had his eyes opened in terms of the capabilities of those programs. I note that the Minister has not cut back on the urban co-ordination branch, something I found rather curious with a Conservative Government.

I remember defending an amendment to defeat the whole Urban Co-ordination budget of the Urban Affairs, you know, cut off the left arm of the Department of Urban Affairs so to speak. The Conservatives all to a person ganged up against that area of Government, wanted to cut back many community based programs that were important in the Urban Affairs budget, programs now that the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) may or may not be aware of, is responsible for some core area funding. They moved to a person like sheep, voting against this thing because the former Deputy Mayor of the City of Winnipeg, and the Member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst), did not like any planning, did not like Urban Affairs, did not even believe we should have a Department of Urban Affairs.

You know, we talked about the ability of the Minister, and I am glad he is in this portfolio, because I am sure

he feels like Horatius at the bridge when he deals with his other colleagues—

An Honourable Member: That is the second time you have used that this week.

Mr. Doer: Yes, I know, and I feel very appropriately so on both those times.

I am sure the Minister feels in great difficulty in his solo act sometimes with the October group that sits on the front benches there, the gang out there in the front of the Government and their attitude toward the City of Winnipeg. I remember the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) when we were talking about property assessment in the City of Winnipeg ranting and raving against a differential mill rate, because he did not understand the City of Winnipeg. I think that rather typified the position of many Ministers in the Government, and I am sure it is a pretty lonely path to try to represent the citizens of Winnipeg in that Government and in that Cabinet.

When one looks at the bottom line you cannot look at Urban Affairs without looking at the City of Winnipeg. Let us look at what is happening in the City of Winnipeg, because those are the bottom line issues for the citizens of Winnipeg.

There is absolutely no economic vision by this Government for the City of Winnipeg, none. The building cranes that are in this city today, in downtown Winnipeg, are last remnants from previous building announcements that were made some year and a half ago. The Toronto-Dominion Bank complex and other projects in the North Portage were announced well before the election. There is absolutely no major building project at all and no economic development going on in the City of Winnipeg under this so-called pro-business Government. It is rather ironic, but there is nothing going on except the Union Centre, again something that was planned three years ago.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, the housing starts are down radically from before. There is no housing and development going on except in a few sporadic areas. The housing starts are way down. Tory times are tough times, and there are tough times all across the province.

The City of Winnipeg, last spring, had an unemployment rate that was close to St. John's, Newfoundland. We have gone from a position of having the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada to a rate that is seventh, or ninth, or tenth, or twelfth. Again in terms of urban vision, one knows that the Tories have no vision of an economic development strategy for the City of Winnipeg and the citizens of the City of Winnipeg. There is absolutely nothing and the statistics bear that out.

* (2015)

When we move from the economic sphere to the social sphere we find again flip-flop after flip-flop on the Government's policy on community-based social services. One day they are in favour of the community-based services. The next day they are cutting them back. The next day after that they are in favour of them

again. The next day they are cutting back preventative programs.

When you really look at it, Mr. Chairman, this Government, in terms of its social services policy, is not in favour of a community-based, volunteer-based social policy. One wonders what they would ever do, and thank goodness we will never find out, if they ever had a majority, because I suggest they would go back to the old ways of doing things, the old Garry Street social development policy, a downtown social worker service that was changed to move into the 1990s.

The Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) mentioned the Native development strategy, and there is no question that is an area long overdue. I do not know what co-ordination there is between the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) and the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). I know they have a committee, and I know they are working on stuff and recommendations, but I am not exactly sure what is in it, because I have not seen, in 18 months, one definitive result for what I would call any strategy.

The major issue in environment, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Urban Affairs I am sure is recommending that the province stop The Environment Act that was passed in the Legislature, being not enforced in the City of Winnipeg, the largest municipality.

The Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) looks at the White Paper that he is using, to some degree, as a blueprint for purposes of new legislation. He will note that we very clearly talked about the need for one environmental law. The Bill was passed in July of 1987, a Bill that was proclaimed on March 31, 1988.

We are over a year after the Bill was passed with this province allowing the largest municipality to break the law. Projects such as the Charleswood Bridge; projects such as the sewer treatment centres; projects such as snow in the rivers are being carried on contrary to any environmental impact study; contrary to any licensing provision, and we are breaking the law. A sweetheart deal between the city and the province is not an alternative for the city and the province keeping the law of this Chamber.

What contemptuous behaviour when you consider that this Legislature passes a law and this Government allows it to be broken. Do the laws mean anything? I think they do, and I cannot, therefore, appreciate at all, not this Minister's policy, but the Government's policy on enforcing The Environment Act, which is now an Act of this Legislature.

I had commented on Friday, Mr. Chairman, on the legislative package. We had great hopes for the Minister on the legislation, and this would be, I would suggest, my primary disagreement with this Minister in all the action he has taken in dealing with the City of Winnipeg. He promised us on November 1, 1988 that there would be planning in the next Session of the Legislature.

When we asked the question this year he came back with a different answer. He said, and I quote, oh, the former Government did not consult enough with the City and additional zones. The Minister knows—and I am surprised at his answer on that point, I guess it

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is good damage control—but the Minister knows that the Cherniack Report and the White Paper went to City Council. It was tabled at City Council and had a full meeting after it was tabled with a presentation from the city administration. The City made a decision on 79 recommendations in the report, and it gave us advice on every recommendation in the White Paper.

* (2020)

So not only did we consult with them, we got a position back on every recommendation in the Cherniack Report and every recommendation in the White Paper. Then we met at an official delegation meeting, and we went through every recommendation and argued them back and forth. In fact, we had a media conference after that where it was on the record where we agreed and disagreed and what we would be proceeding with.

So if that is not consultation, Mr. Chairman, I beg to differ. It is on the record. The minutes are there to support the position I took, and yes, the Cherniack Report and the White Paper went to the additional zones, and we met with every additional zone group.

In fact, if the Minister checks back prior to even his election West St. Paul had moved a motion to join the Selkirk planning districts long before there was even a change in Government. So let not any record show that there was not adequate consultation.

That was in the middle of a period of time when we were dealing with property assessment that had been neglected for 30 years and, unlike the Province of Ontario, had brought up the property assessment from where it was to 1975 and had a plan to bring it up to '85 where it belonged in terms of fair market value and a differential mill rate, which is a fairly creative way to go.

Mr. Chairman, a quality of life is also an issue in this city. We have to have a tremendous imagination in a city that has, what is best to be described, "four distinct climates," I guess you would put it in terms of our community and quality of life, whether it is recreation, whether it is cultural, whether it is environmental is very, very important.

We would add our words to other Members in the Chamber on The Forks. We were very pleased to have people like Jean Friesen and Alan Artibise as our provincial representatives on The Forks boards, because we believe we need planners—and planners with a bias of green rather than planners with a bias of asphalt—to be part of a slow and orderly development of The Forks project.

Our rivers have been commented on considerably, and—the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is so anxious to get at it. I know he has been studying his briefing books for hours so he can give us that recorded announcement that is going to be his answers in the Seniors Estimates. Hopefully that will not be the case this time. So there are so many areas of quality of life that are lacking from this Government in terms of its vision.

The Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) raised the virology lab again, a preoccupation of his—(interjection)—

well, yes, I did, and I did retract it because the word itself was not that becoming for me to call him, and I did retract it.

Mr. Chairman, let me make one thing clear. To use the site in Logan—the Point Douglas site—for purposes of comparison, really, really missed the mark, because we did negotiate cost-sharing agreements with the city. It was always within the \$100 million. We did not put money on top of the \$100 million, and it was always money inside a budget year.

I want to assure Members in this House that while there are many social issues that we would change in a budget year as priorities change and needs would develop, that we did that often, so it is not analogous, but we dealt with capital projects, and certainly the lab is a capital project. We would never, ever, ever alter a position from taking the money from within a capital budget that was agreed upon with the city in a budget year.

If you start putting money on the table for every capital project that comes along you are in big, big trouble with the City of Winnipeg, because there are endless projects that would end up in this Legislature as the group that would have to approve or disapprove them. Instead of the city taking responsibility for its own action through its own rate payer base so that the fundamental issue in the Cherniack Report of who is accountable would be dealt with the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) is recommending a process of unaccountability, nonresponsibility, a lack of any fiscal considerations. We would not put provincial money on top of the \$30 million, that is the figure.

* (2025)

We have three criteria for the virology lab, and we were the ones that brought the virology lab to Winnipeg. We have the old correspondence from Jake Epp so we do not need any lectures on this thing, but we think there are three criteria, and I would be very careful for the province to be flip flopping around on the virology lab as well. There are three criteria for that lab.

One is health care. The logic of a health care site adjacent to the health care community is obviously one criteria. A criteria we hear from doctors quite a bit. I am sure the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) hears that from doctors as well, but that is not the only criteria.

The second criteria, quite frankly, is the environmental impact. There is a different environmental impact in different locations of the city. I would suggest that Members of this Chamber not neglect that point.

A third consideration is obviously the cost. I think the cost thing is going to go all over the place. Therefore, I think the fact that the province has stuck to its guns may help it lower the cost. God knows what we are going to find in the end, but I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, we will consider the lab location with three criteria in mind not one, not what my friends the doctors tell me to do.

What they tell me to do in terms of where the lab is may make sense for them in terms of driving around the city from one site to another, but environmental

considerations and cost considerations are the other two, and I would not support any money in this capital year from the province. If it is to be negotiated in the next year's capital project within the \$100 million so be it, no problem.

Boy what a slippery slope we get onto. Everytime the city cannot fund a project we start lining up the money, because I can tell you there are literally \$500 million a year in capital projects that will end up back in this Legislature, because the city will pass everything on here and the rate payers and the taxpayers cannot support it. We are in favour of a site that makes sense, but we have three criteria for evaluating that site.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we have mentioned that the City of Winnipeg requires a broad economic, social, and recreational environmental vision. We believe this Government does not have that in totality, but we believe this Minister is a very capable person and is doing the best he can against the odds in the benches of the front and second row. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Shall item 1.(a) pass—the Honourable Minister.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): First of all, I would like to make a couple of comments and risk the chance of it passing—the salary allotment. I will risk that to get my comments on the record, and I know the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey) really wants to get on about as badly as I want to get finished with here.

Anyway first of all, I would like to maybe mention a couple comments brought forward by the two critics. We have had a good rapport and discussion of issues. I keep hearing the comments on this Minister, the lack of vision. Maybe I could mention several comments in regard to that, and I will not take too long.

* (2030)

I do not know what you call vision when you are dealing with The Forks, north of Portage, that comes part of your Ministerial role and the vision that was in place when I did become Minister. I have worked with The Forks and the North of Portage to try to resolve the problems that have come forward in regard to two major places that I have a partnership. We have the Government in the last 18 months. Urban Affairs did extend the Handi-Transit expansion problem that was before us when we became Government.

We did carry on, although it was an initiative by the former administration, the Prairie Theatre Exchange.

The Shoal Lake Agreement, no one seemed to have mentioned the protection of Winnipeg's water supply, that was negotiated by this Minister and his staff, after about 12 unsuccessful years in negotiating that particular contract.

We have been criticized -(interjection)- well, I might just mention the band-aid solution -(interjection)- well, and as the Member knows there is another band and, in any of my correspondence with my Cabinet, any dealings with the city, and at the administration level,

we have never excluded that band from our information that we have brought forward. Right on there for the record, there is another band, but, as the Member for Concordia knows, it was a band that we dealt with, Band No. 40. Unless we have got them in play, we would have never received any protection with the water supply.

We also have been criticized a little on the Riverfront Corporation. This Government and this Minister did start the initiative of trying to get some proposal and establishment from the other two levels of Government, dealing with the vocal points for community activities and dealing with the river corridors right through the Winnipeg region.

I would have liked to have heard from the Liberal side where their stand was on Headingley. For all these months we have not heard where Headingley was coming from, in regard to what they would have done, whether they agreed with having a referendum or agreeing with the strategy in place. I do know that the New Democratic Party or administration had agreed that we at least look at it, and it was under their administration that we look at it.

However, I was disappointed that we did not receive, from the Member across the way, the Headingley strategy, where they were coming from on it. We did bring in legislation in the previous Session in regard to Bill No. 40, dealing with the business tax and several issues to clean up legislation, which I had mentioned that would be the first.

I have been criticized about Bill No. 32; that it did not encompass all aspects that we would like to deal with in dealing with the City of Winnipeg. He has to remember that the legislation in place was to deal with the structure, I did say, and I am on record dealing with planning. However, the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) must realize that planning itself cannot be done in isolation and ignoring the regional committee area.

When I met with them after I made my comments they had said that they would like to review, they would like to give their comments. However, they were in an unfortunate position because they would have different people at the table.

Depending on how long this legislation goes for, I would still really like to hear their comments to bring in that legislation dealing with planning. I will commit to these two Members that if I am still Urban Affairs Minister a year from now when we go into Estimates, they will see a planning document. That is the major portion of dealing with the Bill.

We have to remember that when you are dealing with The City of Winnipeg Act you are dealing with 25 parts of an Act that goes back 19 years of legislation. So you do not just come in and revise the whole Act all at once. The Member for Concordia knows, he knows and I know, that it was discussed, but the planning stage of it was not ready to introduce to this Session.

The Member also mentions legislation. We did bring in legislation in regard to the Winnipeg ward boundaries. I suggested at the time that I felt that there should be 23 councillors. I was not supported by the NDP or the

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Liberal Parties on the reduction of council. Now if you go out in the streets you will find that maybe there might be word around that maybe 18 is the number, or things like that.

Also we have answered to comments made by Members, the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) had mentioned that there should be some type of river regulation. We as Government and I as Minister did bring forward, to the City of Winnipeg and the federal Government, on river regulation and a number of these changes will be implemented through The City of Winnipeg Act in the spring of 1990.

Also I must mention that we do have authorization, and we have to deal with the second urban capital projects on the 50-50 cost sharing and it is a major piece of negotiation going on between the Minister and the City of Winnipeg. As I must mention we are writing the major portion of The City of Winnipeg Act, whether it is on schedule with what the Opposition would like to see, I feel that if you are going to commit, you commit at a schedule that you can hold by.

We are conducting a comprehensive review of Plan Winnipeg. I have got a commitment from the city to do that over the next year and a half, to two years about the present development and to answer the concerns of the opposition of the people saying that there are problems with the plan.

Sure it is a plan that we have experienced over the last 10 years that has demonstrated requires a major update, we know that. It is a commitment that the City of Winnipeg knows they will have to make to this Government, it is a commitment the Minister will make. I feel that new initiatives can also be combined, including the downtown area, when you do this Plan Winnipeg. Initiatives can be dealt with dealing with the airport in this initiative. These types of things will have to come under the comprehensive review of Plan Winnipeg.

Without taking too much more time, the urban-Native strategy was mentioned. My staff has made a brief, and given what we would call our information to the Minister in charge and we will be taking a very active role in the upcoming months dealing with the Urban-Native Strategy.

I will not get into the idea of the environment section. I know the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) would love me to talk about the environment portion, but he has to remember that it was this Government, in the spring of this year, that jointly established a committee dealing with the City of Winnipeg. As he knows the committee is comprised of Tanner Elton and Rod McCrae.

The committee will report to the Urban Affairs Committee of Cabinet official delegation, and he does mention the Charleswood bridge. I did not hear him mentioning all the hearings that I heard were done over the Kildonan bridge but, however, I guess that was another era that we were dealing with.

I must agree with the Member for Concordia on one matter, and that is dealing with the lab. Dealing with the lab is very, very important. I guess my main concern as Urban Affairs Minister is that I do not want to be

the final appeal for every decision made by City Council, or not made by City Council.

I can understand, I was there for six years, of their want list that is out there and it scares me immensely of what they can come forward and ask for. You can see right now the contradictions in the statements that they made several weeks ago about \$30 million, and now they make them about \$5 million. These type of things scare me.

I feel that we do come forward with a commitment on the urban capital, we will now go into negotiations on the urban capital and that is the money that is there to use, so we do not get involved in the urban capital negotiations every year.

In closing I would like to express to the other two Members, and I know the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) realizes, that the year and a half of work, or the 18 months, and the initiatives we have taken have been done with a staff of 19, and I must compliment the staff at this time for their excellent work that they have done to commit. I would also at this time thank the other two Members for their contributions, and I look forward to our months ahead on other issues that will come forward. Thank you, again.

Mr. Chairman: Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary—pass.

Resolution No. 137: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$472,500 for Urban Affairs, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990—pass.

That concludes the Estimates for the Department of Urban Affairs. We will now deal with the Estimates of the Seniors Directorate.

* (2040)

SUPPLY—SENIORS DIRECTORATE

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): The Honourable Minister.

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): I just would like to first of all make a few opening comments and before doing so, from the notes that I have prepared, would just like to say how pleased I was to be able to take over the responsibility for the Seniors Directorate and pay tribute to my colleague, the Minister of Mines and Energy (Mr. Neufeld) for his most capable job in Seniors Directorate prior to my taking on that responsibility and acknowledge the work and effort that he and his staff have done in the beginning days of the Seniors Directorate.

I am pleased to introduce the 1989-1990 Estimates for the portfolio as Minister responsible for Seniors. I am proud to stand before you today and tell you that the impact of this ministry continues to grow. It was created just a year and a half ago as evidence of this Government's commitment to the belief that the seniors of this province deserve recognition for their lifetime contributions to the economic, social and cultural life

of our province. The activities of the Seniors portfolio are focused through the Seniors Directorate. It acts as a central point of contact with the Government for seniors and seniors' organizations.

It is my role as Minister to ensure a strong liaison between the seniors community and the Government so that the special concerns of seniors are represented as part of policy and program planning. I am honoured to be the Minister responsible for Seniors and be able to accept the challenge as presented in serving this important and growing segment of our population.

One of the initiatives currently being addressed is elder abuse. A Discussion Paper has been widely distributed and consultations are being held across Manitoba. The human tragedy of elder abuse must be stopped. We want to ensure an action plan which has been developed with the input of those directly affected, the seniors community, is being hurt. This Government is taking a positive approach to dealing with this complex problem and has resolved to develop and implement a plan which will serve the people it is intended to protect.

I was pleased to be able to announce implementation of the Seniors Information Line during September of 1989. Operating out of the Seniors Directorate this new service offers easy, direct access to information. It is especially important that the toll-free service is provided so that seniors everywhere in Manitoba can take advantage of the Seniors Information Line. The Directorate consults regularly with Government departments, organizations and agencies so to ensure representation of the seniors community.

The Seniors Directorate works with other levels of Government to conduct research and policy analysis on seniors issues. The Seniors Directorate promises to be an important resource to the Government and reflects our commitment to recognize the contribution of seniors to Manitoba.

Mr. Chairman, again let me reiterate what we are doing with the consultation process is not only to look at senior abuse, but also other concerns that seniors have throughout the province and that information dealing with the consultation process was, in fact, tabled on Friday so that Members of the Opposition could make further comments as it relates to the activities within the seniors and could do so during the Estimate process.

Mr. Chairman, with those comments I am prepared to pass the Estimates of the Seniors Directorate.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): I am very pleased to participate in the second Seniors Directorate Estimates since the Directorate was introduced by this Government a year ago. I guess I could begin with the comment that in some ways this Minister has one of the more difficult responsibilities of any Member of that Government because he does not know what his mandate is. He does not know what his mandate is because the Seniors Directorate is very ill defined without specific goals, with only the fuzziest of goals. It is very difficult to meet an objective if you do not know what those objectives are.

It is also a difficult responsibility for a Minister because it really crosses a great number of portfolios. The Minister responsible for Seniors has to be in touch with what is happening in the Ministry of Health certainly as we have learned over the last number of weeks, in touch with what is happening in the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Urban Affairs, and literally every department of Government has within its programs some sense of relationship with the seniors community of Manitoba. The Minister has to be on top of his responsibility and we will find out in short order, Mr. Chairperson, whether or not this Minister is.

There are a number of important issues but I would like to begin by stating what is no doubt obvious to many Members of this Chamber, that we are an aging society. Because of advances in health care and medicine, people are living longer than they ever lived before and because of the demographic realities of the baby boom generation which is now getting older, there is every reason to believe that in the next 30 or 40 years we are becoming an aging population with the numbers to support a society that we have never had before. This gives rise to special problems which are going to require innovative and creative solutions.

The two words that we do not hear nearly enough of when we address issues that are of particular concern to the elderly are "independence" and "dignity." Since I have had the honour and the privilege of being the Seniors Critic for our Party, I have had many opportunities to talk about issues that face elderly people in our society. That one message comes through loud and clear at every opportunity for debate and dialogue and that is that in our elderly years we want the opportunity to be independent because with independence comes dignity.

It is not easy for those of us who are a few years away from that reality of living to realize what it is like for people who can no longer care for themselves, who can no longer stand at a bus stop waiting for public transportation, who need help, who have to rely on relatives and often who have to rely on the health care system in order to function in their daily lives. We as legislators have a particular responsibility to remember always when we debate these issues that it is the independence and the dignity of people that ought to be at the centre of our concerns.

The Minister finally has given us a paper on elder abuse. We asked questions in the House for months and months until finally it arrived. It arrived, I think, if I am not mistaken, Mr. Chairperson, right on or a day before Seniors Day last June in this Legislature. The Minister thought it appropriate no doubt in front of visitors in the gallery to release his long awaited report, but the report, and we said at the time, better late than never, and we do not have any reason to apologize for that comment, is a very thin document.

It bears remarkable resemblance to research that was done on seniors issues years before. We will want to ask the Minister how much the paper on elder abuse cost, how much of it is innovative and creative, how much has been borrowed from papers which have been gathering dust on shelves in this building for a number of years, and now will be going into a consultative

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process around the province asking seniors and seniors' organizations what their response is to the paper on elder abuse. Contained within it are a whole series of promises and those promises are not contingent, at least when one reads it they do not appear to be contingent, upon the consultative process.

When we get into questioning we will want to know just exactly how much progress the Minister can report on a whole number of issues that were raised within the discussion paper on elder abuse and which we presume the Minister has had some to mull over in his mind and consider.

* (2050)

The issue of a shelter allowance has been raised in the last few weeks in this Legislature, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to remind the Minister that on the 14th of March, 1979, a resolution was passed in this Chamber by Mr. Axworthy, who I am able to say proudly was a Member of the Legislature from Fort Rouge, who established a program of shelter allowance or tax credit that would cover housing costs above the level of 25 percent of income. What have succeeding Governments done with that creative idea? There have been two increases since 1979 and nothing by this Government. That brings us to the whole question of consultation and how it works in the Government opposite when seniors issues are being discussed.

Now we were shocked and appalled to learn, just after this Minister was appointed Minister responsible for Seniors, that they had created a Cabinet system, a committee system, and one of the committees is the Human Services Committee of Cabinet and, lo and behold, we looked at its membership, Mr. Chairperson, and the Minister responsible for Seniors was left off. I do not know whether this was an oversight by the Premier, whether the Minister responsible for Seniors could not fit it into his busy schedule, or whether it was a deliberate snub, and I doubt that, because no one in this Chamber believes that this Minister and this Government is not concerned about the interests of seniors in Manitoba, but to leave off of a Cabinet committee responsible for Human Services, that very portion of our society which is growing, becoming more and more important, that is beginning to speak with a powerful voice in the corridors of power, to have its representative left off the Human Services Committee of Cabinet seemed to us awfully strange.

The federal Government's proposed good and services tax is going to have a profound effect on our senior's population. We will want to know to whom the Minister in this Government is speaking to on the effects of the GST. Has he prepared any studies to prepare his Government, and his directorate, on the effects of the GST? The issues of home care, of transportation for the elderly, of the pension clawback, are all issues that are important to us and issues that we will discuss with the Minister during the Estimate process.

We admit, right off the top, Mr. Chairperson, that his job is not an easy one. The resources that have been given to him by his Cabinet, some \$207,000 representing \$7,500 more than was spent last year, and

there are promises contained within the Elder Abuse Paper that will cost 10 times that and we are wanting to know where the resources are going to come from. So we are looking forward to a productive and stimulating exchange with the Minister responsible for Seniors, and I look forward to it. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Chairman, I would like to start off my comments by reading a brief excerpt from a document of about a year and a half ago, and it starts by saying, "By the year 2001 it is projected that one in five Manitobans will be 65 years of age and over. In 1981, 24,000 citizens were 80 years and over. By 2001 that number is expected to exceed 30,000." The reason I read that document into the record is twofold.

First of all, I think those are important statistics to be put on the record; secondly, it is the introduction to a campaign '88 document by the Progressive Conservative Party, which I am going to reference later in my comments. I make that point because when I do reference that document in my comments, and the promises that were made and are unfulfilled to date, and some of them even contradicted by the present Government, I want to make the point that they said they knew what they were talking about 18 months ago. At the time of the last election they had the answers, they had all the ways by which they were going to improve the quality of life for seniors in this province, and they put it in writing. That document provides a checklist, a report card, if you will, against which we can judge some of their progress and see if, in fact, they have lived up to their own expectations, not the expectations of the Opposition because, quite frankly, sometimes our expectations, in Opposition, as were theirs in Opposition, can be a bit more than any Government can fulfill. I think that is a legitimate role for Governments and Oppositions to play.

The Opposition has to provide a bit more, by way of request of new services than the Government can fulfill, in many instances, or it is not doing its job, and the people will ultimately judge whether or not the Government has fulfilled its own expectations as it states during campaigns, and the promises that it makes during the campaigns, or whether it has fulfilled the expectations of the clientele group which it serves and which, in this instance, will be those tens of thousands of seniors, or whether it meets the expectations of the general public when they go to vote.

I think that this Government has failed to meet the expectation, not only of the client group, not only of the Opposition but its own expectations as outlined in its propaganda during the last campaign. I say "propaganda," and I use that word advisedly because I think it was propaganda because it has been found to be lacking in any sort of sincerity or commitment or follow-through on the part of the Government. Therefore it must have been a document they used to try to convince people that they were going to do things that they really had no intention to do and that is indeed propaganda of the worst sort.

The Minister in his opening remarks indicated that the impact of the Seniors Directorate continues to grow.

Well, let us hope so, because the impact of the Seniors Directorate last year was absolutely nil. What little work they did do was mostly—I do not know if I could use the word, plagiarism of existing documents, but I think it probably fits the criteria more than anything else. If they take defence at the word plagiarism then perhaps it was borrowing of some well established ideas, thoughts and concepts which have been put in writing which they liberally copied in preparing the only paper of any substance that they brought forward.

There are a number of issues that we are going to address during this debate over the Seniors Estimates over the course of the next few days or weeks, as the case may be. One is with respect to housing, and I reference, Mr. Chairperson, the document which I referred to earlier which is a Progressive Conservative statement on seniors services which was part of campaign '88. There is a subheading in there called Housing Services for Seniors. It starts out by saying, the security and availability of quality affordable housing and rental accommodation is an important concern to Manitoba seniors. Well, I do not think anyone in this Chamber would disagree with that sort of general objective and statement. We are all in agreement that in fact it is that sort of a concern.

Then it goes on to say, numerous housing programs assisting seniors are available through the Department of Housing in the Manitoba Housing Renewal Corporation indicating that they will continue these programs on. They are available now and they are the types of programs that provide that security and availability of quality, affordable housing and rental accommodation.

The first program they list is the Critical Home Repair Program. Well, the Critical Home Repair Program has been eliminated by this Government, and what do they say about the program that they went on to eliminate not less than two years after they were elected? They say it provides assistance to low-income families and to seniors for critical home repairs. That is a program that they themselves have written off the books. When we called Critical Home Repair to ask them if that program still existed, the staff, right up to the Deputy Minister level, told us that it did no longer exist. So in fact, they identified as a most important housing program, at least they list it as the No. 1 program in their list of programs, and it is a program that they have eliminated.

* (2100)

The next program down the list is the Co-operative HomeStart, which provides grants and loans to non-profit housing co-ops, and the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) I think will indicate that he is aware of this as well and he has brought it to the attention of this House. They have cut back some of the ways in which the Cooperative HomeStart Program provides subsidies to low-income groups such as seniors groups which enabled them to establish housing co-ops in the past and they will now find it more difficult, if not impossible, to establish those housing co-ops under the new program guidelines.

So we see in the first two programs that they list in their own document they have significantly reduced or

cut back or eliminated, thereby, reducing the opportunity for secure and available quality, affordable housing and rental accommodations for seniors. That is the checklist which they have to answer to. That is the report card on which they will be judged and they have failed in that very first segment under Housing Services for Seniors.

The next section is rent control, and I do have to give them some credit for having followed through with the Rent Control Program and The Residential Tenancies Act. I think the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) has done a relatively good job in that area, although we have indicated that we believe there are some gaps in the legislation and some of those gaps do affect seniors. We also believe that there are some ways in which the drafting can be improved, but all in all we consider it a positive piece of work.

The next item on that report card is that Pharmacare, and what have we seen from this Government on Pharmacare? We have seen a Government that has increased the deductibles under Pharmacare for seniors three times and they have put those increases on an annual ongoing basis so that they will automatically increase every year, year after year after year, taking more money out of the pockets of seniors even although they said that they were committed to the continuance of Pharmacare to assist seniors and other Manitobans with medical prescription costs. They may in fact have half met that objective which they stated, but only half, and what they have done, is they have made certain that program will cost more for seniors as the years go by than it did in the past.

I think if they are going to be totally honest with the community they have to say yes, we are going to continue Pharmacare and we think that the only way that we can continue this program is to have it paid more by the recipient, that is you the seniors, and therefore we are going to increase your deductibles on a year-by-year basis, every year, based on the cost of living increases. It is going to take more money out of your pocket.

The Minister has yet, to my knowledge, stood in this House or anywhere else and indicated what his Government stand is on the clawback of seniors pensions as identified and called for in the last budget by the federal Conservative Party. I understand that there may be some reluctance on his part to come out and fight directly, an initiative which is put forward by his friends and his colleagues in Ottawa, but I think at the very least he could indicate to us where he stands on the clawback.

We have heard the Liberal position on the clawback. We do not agree with it, we do not agree with the Leader of the Liberal Party when she says that she believes that the clawback is appropriate under certain circumstances. At least she has had the courage to make her views known and to state how she feels about that particular subject. We do not know where the Government stands on that subject and we would like to hear the Minister speak to it during the course of these Estimates.

The same with the goods and service tax. We do know that some of the Ministers on the front bench

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support the goods and services tax more than others, and we do know that some are lukewarm to it. We know those that are worried about their own political futures are much more lukewarm to it than others because it is a terribly devastating political problem for them.

We do not know exactly what action they are going to take to join hands with the seniors and those across this province who are fighting the goods and services tax and the impact that it will have on many Manitobans but most crucially the impact it will have on low-income Manitobans, among which many seniors find themselves. The seniors themselves have said the clawback and the goods and services tax are discriminatory against seniors. They believe that to be the case, they have mounted campaigns against those particular erosions of their own income and we want to know where this Government stands with respect to both those issues.

On Handi-Transit, the Government came into power saying that it was going to improve the service yet what we have heard is criticism of their response to the needs out there with respect to Handi-Transit. They have said that they are going with the existing Handi-Transit and they said they are going to come up with programs that will provide greater access to the public transportation system for the handicapped and for seniors but we have seen very little of any substance in that area. I know that is an issue of particular concern to the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) and to other Members in this House who particularly live in the city, but it is also an issue to those who live in the rural and northern areas and we want to know what the Government is going to do to continue on the work that was done in the past which had accomplished a great deal but was not nearly enough.

There were many more needs to be met and we want to learn how they are going to live up to their promise which they have failed to do so far, again another black mark on their report card, another failing mark on their report card in the future. We are going to ask the Minister how he proposes to do that.

Going back to the costs of pharmaceuticals and the increases, not only have they increased the cost of pharmaceuticals to Manitobans and to seniors by increasing the deductible and ensuring that it increases on an annual basis, but they have also failed to stand up for senior Manitobans when they took on a court challenge against the Drug Patent Act, which is resulting in increases to their cost of pharmaceuticals which they require that exceed by far the inflation rate.

That is another erosion of income and the quality of life for seniors that is as a result of a Conservative Government in Ottawa taking a certain action and this Government here supporting that action or failing to fight that action in a comprehensive way. In this particular instance they actually did support, when they were in Opposition, the federal Conservative Government's initiatives with respect to the Drug Patent Act. They thought it was good legislation and perhaps that explains why they refused to intervene in a court case brought forward by seniors in this province with respect to trying to get that legislation repealed because

it is eroding their incomes, it is reducing their quality of life, it is costing them money, it is taking dollars out of their pocket, it is making their latter years far less pleasurable and enjoyable.

Perhaps from a political perspective they can justify the fact that they, as a Government, did not intervene. Perhaps the Attorney-General, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) from a political perspective can say we did not intervene with that because we do not believe that it really is an erosion of seniors incomes. We believe that the Society of Seniors has adequate staff and money to be able to take that fight on to themselves because we are not really opposed to it.

* (2110)

There is one Minister, one Minister in that Cabinet who has been given the responsibility to speak out on behalf of seniors and to protect the quality of life for seniors and that is the Minister responsible for the Seniors Directorate (Mr. Downey).

I know they have approached him directly and I know they have approached his Premier directly. I know they have approached his Cabinet directly to ask them for assistance and he has turned his back on them. He can phrase it any way he wants. He can call it what he will but the fact is he has turned his back upon a request by Manitoba seniors to help them fight what they believe to be a significant erosion of their income as a result of federal legislation which they believe to be unconstitutional, notwithstanding the fact that it is just plain wrong.

It is wrong-headed, it is the wrong way to go. It is not providing the benefits that the Conservatives said it would in the first instance, Conservatives at both the federal and the provincial level. It takes us in the wrong direction but it costs them more out of their pockets. It costs seniors more, it costs the handicapped more, it costs those who rely on prescription drugs on an ongoing basis more, and those are the most vulnerable in our society.

Those are the ones who cry out the most for protection and require the most protection and deserve the most protection, because if we have our health and if we have our strength and if we have a quality of life which avails us of that which we think is important to our lifestyle, we are indeed lucky. We are indeed very lucky. If we do not have those amenities to us, if we do not have those basic what I believe to be basic requirements for a quality life available to us, then we are vulnerable and we demand, beyond that, we deserve protection from those less vulnerable.

I think the Minister has responsibility to speak up for those seniors in Cabinet, and to speak up for those seniors in this Legislature, and to speak up for those seniors outside this Legislature when they make a request of them such as they did with respect to testing the constitutionality of the Drug Patent Act because that Act is in fact imposing hardship on them.

The document which I referenced earlier, the Services to Seniors Campaign '88 PC Manitoba document talks about health services for seniors. It said that the

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Progressive Conservative health policy announced April 12, 1988 addressed the needs to preserve universal Medicare while at the same time ensuring that no new user fees for medical services are imposed and that there is a halt to permanent bed closures pending a comprehensive review.

How do they rate against those promises? These was no halt to bed closures pending a comprehensive review. Beds did indeed close, notwithstanding what the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) had to say in this House because, quite frankly, those beds closed when we said they closed, and they are still closed with respect to many of the areas and there was at that time no comprehensive review. I am not certain that comprehensive review has been completed yet because we have waited for a long time for some concrete action, some comprehensive action from the Health Advisory Network and we have seen very, very little, if any at all.

So the fact is that they failed to meet that promise. They did close beds before there was a comprehensive review. That is something they told seniors directly they would not do. They have imposed new user fees, if you consider the home care fees to be new user fees. We do in fact consider the way in which that program is going now to be a program that will result in user fees, if not now, over the longer period of time.

I think if you talk to seniors, and I would ask the Minister if he has talked to seniors on this and to document it if he has, they will tell him that they consider those fees to be user fees. If they are user fees then they are again another campaign promise that this Government did not keep.

With respect to home care as well, we have seen the cutbacks in that area, and we expect to see more cutbacks unless this Government turns around the policy that has been put in place that more stringently requires services to be provided outside the home care system than has been the case in the past.

With regard to elder abuse, I know the Minister is going to hang his hat on what they have been able to do as a Government with respect to elder abuse, and I think that has to be put in the proper context. As the Liberal Critic indicated, it was some time ago that they brought out the consultation paper on elder abuse and that consultation paper which took some time to bring forward by the Government could have been prepared a lot quicker because it is basically the paper that was already there, that it was ready for circulation when they assumed Government.

It could have been put out not one year after the fact but a lot quicker than that and the Government did not do so, and in doing so they lost valuable time but that could have been forgiven had they put the consultation paper out, receive some feedback on it and then brought forward the elder abuse legislation, but they did not do that. No, there was silence for a very long period of time.

As the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) indicates, certain outside events seem to trigger a response on the part of the Government—Seniors Day coming up

and they produce an elder abuse paper; the Estimates for Seniors Health coming and they produce a consultation schedule that takes them throughout the province.

I am not going to argue long against consultation because I think it is an important part of the process of developing legislation, but I am going to suggest that we have seen on the part of this Government too much already consultation used as a replacement for action, consultation used as an excuse for not moving ahead, consultation used as a way to defer issues rather than address issues. So that is our concern with what they are doing now.

I guess we have to give them the benefit of the doubt, not because they deserve the benefit of the doubt, Mr. Chairperson, because I do not believe they do. I think they have proven that they do not deserve the benefit of the doubt, but we have to give them the benefit of the doubt because—and I think I speak for my Liberal friends with respect to this—we believe that elder abuse legislation is so important that we are going to bend over backwards to ensure that this Government does not weasel its way out of producing that legislation.

If they say they need a couple months of consultation in order to allow them to bring the legislation forward then we are prepared to watch that consultation unfold, but I think we can indicate as well that we will be in Session when that consultation is done. That legislation is at the stage now, the preparatory stage, where it could be brought forward relatively quickly if the Government has done any work at all on it. We expect to see that legislation before this Session of the House ends and that can be accommodated with the consultation as outlined by the Minister.

So do not let him think by setting up an elaborate consultation schedule that he is going to weasel out of having to produce legislation because that is not the case. We hope that consultation will produce better legislation, but we are going to work hard to make certain that it does produce legislation. So we do not want to be too critical to scare the Minister off with respect to that legislation, but we do want to serve notice that we expect that legislation to be brought forward. The seniors in this province and others have been subjected to too many false starts, too many unfulfilled expectations, too many broken promises by this Government to allow that to continue on, which brings us to the Seniors Directorate itself.

The Seniors Directorate last year probably was the most underspent department of all the departments in Government. The Seniors Directorate did very little last year of any substance, and as I indicated earlier, what it did do was to build upon, work and to borrow extensively from existing work to produce a paper. We see in the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, the 1988-1989 Estimates document which has presented to us a list of salaries and also other expenditures.

* (2120)

We would expect the Minister when he arises to answer questions, and when we get into the main debate

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to indicate exactly what positions are filled, who occupies those positions, what effort, if any, is being taken to fill positions that may not be filled and how persons were chosen for the positions that they now occupy in that particular directorate. Those are all legitimate questions that have been asked by that Minister and other Ministers in this House when they were in Opposition of the New Democratic Party Government of the Day. They are questions that we feel are legitimate questions, and we expect some answers from this Minister. We expect the Minister to be more forthright and more forthcoming in his answers during this debate than he is during Question Period.

We understand that he gets up and the adrenalin flows during the heat of the Question Period, and the give and take, and the cut and thrust, but we have a bit more leisurely pace now to reflect upon more global issues and to address them in greater detail.

So we will expect him—and I can ask the question directly now: if he will give us some indication of who fills what positions, how they were chosen, what process was utilized, what positions are vacant, and what process is being undertaken to fill those positions?

Having said that, Mr. Chairperson, I think it is important to get into the actual line-by-line discussion unless there are other Members who wish to speak on the general issue, and to start to hold this Minister accountable, not only for his own actions, but for the lack of action of his Government to date with respect to some very serious concerns, which during the course of that last election they acknowledged were serious concerns, but they seem to have forgotten, or at the very least neglected over the past number of years since they have been elected.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, the last questions by the Member of the New Democratic Party are probably the most legitimate as it deals with the Estimates per se, and I have no difficulty at all in being open, forthright, and take all the forthcoming and forthright, and taking all the time that is necessary to go through them thoroughly.

Let me introduce my Deputy Minister, who is really carrying on the administrative role. There is not a position within the Seniors Directorate for the Deputy; however, the administrative affairs of the Seniors Directorate flow through the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs. Let me as well introduce Kathy Yurkowski, who is detailed with the job of Secretary to the Seniors Directorate, who is listed here, and has been hired to carry out that responsibility.

As far as the details of hiring the particular individuals, the normal process of hiring has been carried out. The process of hiring is to put a person in the term position, and then go through the competition process. That is the process of which we will be hiring.—(interjection)—What?

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) says, "what an abuse." I do not see any abuse at all. When you put a person in a term —(interjection)— it will be posted for anyone to apply that wants to.—(interjection)— when we go through the process of hiring.

Mr. Chairman, everything is open, straightforward, and I am prepared to answer any questions. I just introduced the staff who is here. We have as well, will be filling, and have in fact been in the process of filling the policy analyst, and that same process will be carried out as well.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, I only had a—okay, I will give the floor to the Member for Fort Rouge.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Chairperson, my first question to the Minister is a very important one, and a very general one that has to do with the mandate of the Seniors Directorate. Last year when documents were filed, the objectives of the Seniors Directorate was, and I quote: "to address the needs of an aging population."

The mandate and the objectives of the Seniors Directorate in this year's Estimates is quite different. It is more as a central point of contact with Government. So the mandate of the Seniors Directorate seems to have changed dramatically from last year to this. I wonder if the Minister can explain why the change of direction and what it means?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, I do not see any drastic change of direction of any kind. It is probably more of an interpretation by the Liberal Critic. The reference made to addressing the needs of the aging population as it relates to an overall liaison, I do not see any particular change that would in fact be different from this year over last year and certainly see the amount of money has not changed drastically. I do see in the future, with some of the initiatives that will be carried out will in fact require additional funds. But it is a new exercise within Government and I think that rather than put in place an organization or a Government department that tries to be overbearing or try to impose on the seniors of this province something that they do not feel comfortable with, and it is a developmental process.

I would have to say, I think the Liberal Critic would be well advised to talk to some of the leadership within the different seniors organizations. Generally, the last several months have been somewhat complimentary and they have a clear feeling as to what we are doing with the directorate, and are in fact, through consultation, shaping the director to satisfy the needs of the majority of seniors.

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

Mr. Lamoureux: I just had a couple of brief questions that I felt would be necessary, to ask things as the Minister of Seniors (Mr. Downey) is in the Estimates process. My colleague from Fort Rouge had made reference to it and that is, of course, the Shelter Allowances for our seniors in the province, in which, Mr. Acting Chairman, the Liberal Party supports entirely. Actually if you go back to March of 1979, you will find that it was a Liberal resolution that was introduced to this Chamber discussing the concept of having a Shelter Allowance and the Government that followed, the Lyon Government is the one that actually brought in the

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program, but it was a Liberal idea. The Member from Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) has pointed out the idea that even though there was some neglect and so forth, the Minister, both of Housing, the Minister of Seniors still have to be responsible for the term that they have been in office and that has been some 18 months.

I think, what is most important first of all, Mr. Acting Chairman, is that we have to admit the cut. The Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) has been very reluctant to admitting the cut. I know, that the Minister of Seniors, being the responsible person that he is, reads or has read the Estimates or the SAFER portion of Estimates from last year and has also read the Order-in-Council, and if you take a look at the two lines you will in fact see that there is a cut and it is in black and white.

My question to the Minister responsible for Seniors, will he admit that, in fact, there is a cut in allotment from last year to this year's allotment?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairman, those questions would be more appropriately asked of the Minister responsible for the program.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am somewhat surprised. This is supposed to be the Minister responsible for Seniors, who is supposed to be looking after, or looking after the interests of the seniors of our province.

* (2130)

This is going to be having a major effect on the seniors monthly income and in many cases will be limiting their purchasing power. I would ask the Minister to comment, to put his comments on the record, in his feelings towards this Government's cutback of this program that is going to be affecting the seniors. After all, he is supposedly looking after the best interests of the seniors. If he is not looking after the best interests of the seniors maybe we should give the Seniors Ministry back to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld).

Out of frustration, I will concede that the Minister responsible for Seniors does not feel it is his responsibility to answer these questions. I find it very unfortunate, but I will give the floor back to, or better yet, Mr. Acting Chairman, maybe the Minister of Seniors can tell me why he refuses to answer these questions. Does he not believe that as the Minister representing the seniors interests that he should be answering these questions? Why will he not answer the questions?

Mr. Downey: Well, I appreciate, Mr. Acting Chairman, that the Member for Inkster falls far short of some of the previous Members for Inkster and their understanding of the process and the procedure of committee and where and when questions should be asked. Let me say to the Member, and I say that without getting into any detail, my colleague, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) will deal with that particular issue in a specific way—let me assure you that I have asked my colleague, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), to review the policy as it has been presented to the House and to the Member. I have asked for that review and I am quite confident that in specific detail that will be able to be responded to during the

Estimates. I would hope that it is able to be dealt with in a positive way.

Now, if the Member thinks that he is going to push and shove into an area that is not within the jurisdiction of the Seniors Directorate directly, then he is mistaken. I have no trouble standing here and talking about philosophical approaches and policy and urging and pushing, but I say, Mr. Acting Chairman, with the greatest of respect to the Member for Inkster, I have no difficulty in supporting him and his request of having this policy reviewed. I have asked for that to take place. The specific details of that, I would think, would be best, most appropriately answered by my colleague, the Minister who is responsible for Housing and the program.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the Minister for Seniors says that he has put in a request to have the funds reviewed and possibly restored. If the Minister can maybe then answer, when is he expecting some type of a response from the Minister of Housing? Is he in favour of having those funds restored in this budgetary allotment?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairman, what I had indicated is I had asked my colleague to review the policy and I would expect to have some response for the Member, as I have indicated, during the Estimate process of the Minister of Housing.

Mr. Carr: I would like to ask the Minister some questions on the Elder Abuse Paper. It says that the first step is to identify physical abuse when it occurs. Within the discussion paper the Minister said that the Seven Oaks Hospital in Winnipeg operates a pilot program in which all cases where older people came to the hospital with suspicious injuries were identified and followed up by the hospital's social work staff. The paper then goes on to say that that program will be extended to all hospitals in Manitoba. Then he goes on to explain what it involves. Can the Minister tell us what progress he can report on the extension of that pilot project to all hospitals in Manitoba?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairman, let me first of all say that our overall thrust in this particular area has been to deal with the entire province as it relates to the total paper that has been distributed. As far as specifics of that particular program are concerned, let me indicate clearly to the Member that there has been no further advancement of that particular program, as it is tied in with the total package, as I indicated earlier. As far as specific advancement of the program, let me be straightforward with the Member. We are working very closely with all the leadership of the different seniors groups and organizations. I am of the understanding they are quite comfortable with that and the speed at which we are proceeding. I say there has not been any advancement in that particular program as it was in place when we introduced the seniors paper.

Mr. Carr: What the Minister is saying is that the Seven Oaks Hospital pilot project has not yet been extended to all hospitals in Manitoba. How about the provision of training and orientation to clinicians? Has there been any movement in that regard?

Mr. Downey: I want the Member to be clear. I think it would be less than responsible if we were to advance, prior to having clear and full consultation and an understanding of where we want to go with the whole seniors abuse activity, the prevention and the work that we want to see done within the province. The Member can go through specific by specific and the answer will be the same. We are looking at the overall problem. We are looking at it with all the leadership within the seniors organizations. We are going out to try to find out from individuals, north, south, east and west and within the city, what they think of the seniors abuse paper and give us some ideas on the proposed direction that we plan or to assist us in the direction they feel we should go.

Mr. Acting Chairman, I have to say that I have had nothing but positive responses to the way in which it is being handled. I say that very seriously. Now the Member, I am sure for political purposes, may have found some criticism, and that is fine. I am quite open to hear his criticism. I would hope it would be somewhat objective criticism to assist with the direction that we want to go, but in a general sense we have planned to get a full and open consultation on the discussion paper, then plan to build the kind of legislation and take the kind of action that is needed to correct the problem.

The Member may say that he can identify specific areas where there is obvious and open abuse. Well, if that is the case, and I do not expect him to do it publicly, I would ask him to come forward with that specific problem. Until he does that, Mr. Acting Chairman, we are proceeding on the basis of trying to make sure we cover all the bases, and that is what we will continue to do.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Carr: In the discussion paper the Government, it seems to me, commits itself to the establishment of the central provincial registry of abused persons to which all cases of known or suspected elder abuse are reported. Has the Minister with his staff determined what is required to establish such a registry and when we should expect it to be implemented?

Mr. Downey: Again, Mr. Chairman, that is part of the process—finding out how best a registry can be established. You know the Liberal Members find it somewhat amusing. I do not know whether they are laughing at me or the process of asking the public—those people who have continually brought their concerns forward and we are now dealing with them—why there is something wrong with going through a consultative process for the establishment of a registry. All I can indicate is that it is part of the process that we are going through on the discussion paper.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Chairperson, in the discussion paper—and I think we should get something clear here just so that we read the discussion paper properly—within it the Minister clearly identifies a process step by step that will along with the process of consultation lead to a registry, lead to legislation, lead to enhanced programs

within the health care system. So the Minister has to be held accountable for the promises that he has made within this paper or at least to show some knowledge and understanding of the road that is required to get there. Now in step three, the Minister says in his paper that Manitoba will add extra positions to the Family Disputes Unit of the Department of Family Services to ensure that there are sufficient trained professionals available to respond to known and suspected cases of abuse. How many extra positions, and how will they be financed, through the Seniors Directorate or through the Department of Family Services?

* (2140)

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, again I say to the Honourable Member that I think it would be unfair to say today that we are going to put x number of positions in place. Yes, I would expect them to be handled through the Department of Family Services, but it would be unfair today to say that we need x number of positions until we have clearly identified the areas which we have to put people in place, how the registry will be handled, and again—I think from what I am finding out in jurisdictions throughout Canada—that there has been really very little work done in this whole area.

We are really on the leading edge as it comes to the seniors abuse situation. Yes, I know there is legislation in one or two other provinces and other mechanisms, but again, as I say, we are on the leading edge in the area of senior abuse. Now I just cannot stand here today and say there are going to be x number of people put in place. Let me assure you we are committed to cleaning up the elder abuse in the province. I am sure that my colleagues are not here to make false commitments to the seniors of Manitoba after the process is put in place clearly identify the number of needed people to carry out the job and the resources will be put there to carry out the work activity. As far as the registry is concerned, we are really starting without a lot of background information. Yes, I am sure there are some doctors and hospitals that have some of the information. There has been some work done but I cannot answer specifically the numbers of staff that would in fact have to be put in place to carry out that activity.

Mr. Carr: I am going to keep trying, Mr. Chairperson. The paper says that Manitoba will provide funding to the Age and Opportunity Bureau to develop a plan for a counselling service for older people. Is the Minister, in his consultation process, asking seniors of Manitoba whether or not there ought to be funding to the Age and Opportunity Bureau to develop this plan, or has he committed that there will be funds, even if today he cannot tell us how much?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, again, it is an area which there is some current work being done, not only within the province, but as a request for federal support in that particular area. All the groups are supportive of it. Until we clearly know what the resource commitment would be needed I cannot tell the Member tonight specifically in dollars and cents what it would be. I have no trouble, Mr. Chairman, in saying that as we develop

the program, and those areas that are now being handled, as it relates to elder abuse, and it could be more efficiently supported with some provincial resources, then I am quite prepared to add those resources, but it is in the current stage of discussion with the service deliverers.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Chairperson, I have been somewhat concerned, but not necessarily surprised at the vague generalities for answers that we have received from this Minister this evening, very much similar to that in Question Period, but I do have to give the Minister credit for one thing. He did come out with a clear statement in regard to the position of secretary of the Seniors Directorate and how that hiring occurred. I would ask the Minister, is the process that he described about the hiring, is that his Government's policy?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, what I would tell you is that the position was filled on a term basis and now will be advertised for permanent filling of that position.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Chairperson, would the Minister then indicate, is that his Government's policy in regard to how positions are filled, as he has just described it?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, what I have told the Member is how I have put in place the Seniors Directorate Secretary, that it is filled on a term position and is now advertised for open competition. That is what is in fact taking place. Mr. Chairman, let me help the Member as well. That is how I plan to carry out the filling of the research position. I believe there is work that has to be done. The Members of the Opposition cannot press to have work done, really get on with the job as they are suggesting should take place, and not have people to do it. Surely they are in tune enough with what goes on within Government to realize that. I would far sooner, Mr. Chairman, get on with the job of putting people in place in a term position, fill it, then advertise it in an open competition and get on with the job. If we were to wait and go through the process then I would have to take the criticism of not getting on with the job. I think the seniors deserve the service of Government of getting on with the job.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Chairperson, we still do not have an answer to that question, whether in fact it is Government policy, but maybe the Minister could indicate, this term position that was filled, was it a non-bulletined term position, or bulletined term position?

Mr. Downey: Non-bulletined, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Chairperson, could the Minister indicate to us what qualifications were asked for when they were bulletining, even with the non-bulletin, what specific qualifications were you asking for in this secretary position?

Mr. Downey: The job description will be the same as it is in the bulletined document that is put out—capability, competence, sensitivity to seniors, you know, a capable person who has a clear understanding of

the seniors community and being able to work with them. That, Mr. Chairman, all is part of the prerequisite of jobs like that. I think the Member herself would have some idea of the type of person that she would like to see as the Seniors Directorate.

Ms. Gray: I certainly would have an idea of the type of qualifications I would be looking for. I would never assume that I would have the same ideas as what the Minister responsible for the Seniors Directorate (Mr. Downey) would have, but I am assuming that, of course, given this position has been filled on a temporary basis, that a job description has been developed, and that in fact specific criteria have been indicated within that position description as to the qualifications, I am wondering if the Minister could be more specific and indicate whether specific minimum academic qualifications which are being asked for and was experienced in working in the area of seniors a part of that qualification.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, again I would suggest to the Member that I would expect that she would not have the same job qualifications. I do not know why she would not, but she is just making reference to the fact that she probably would not have.

I would think that one wants to make sure the individual is very understanding of people, experienced with people, probably some work within the social services system within Government, you know, to be able to work with people. After all, let us remember, there are probably no other groups in society and, the Liberal Critic indicated it clearly, they want to maintain their independence and dignity. It is true and one has to be very sensitive to the seniors who have developed and been a very major part of the direction of this country.

In a lot of cases, and I can probably look to the Chairman of Committee, who is certainly a wise counsel, I would hope, to the Liberal Caucus. If they do not listen to him on many issues, they should. Certainly the Chairman is an excellent man, and as I said, the Liberal Caucus should look to him for wise counsel on areas, not only with seniors, but in many other areas.

* (2150)

There is a sense of not wanting and a lot of times Government intrusion. One wants to be very careful, one has to be very sensitive that it is within the mandate of the person who has the job to do, that they are sensitive to the needs of people, and particularly to seniors who, to a large extent in some cases, do not want a lot of Government intrusion. They want to live their own lives independently of a lot of support.

So I say to the Member, I would ask if she has a particular addition to the job description, I would invite her to lay out the kind of job description that she feels would be important. I think that is important for this committee to entertain such recommendations. Maybe she is interested herself after her political career.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Chairperson, first of all, if we are talking about position descriptions, the one thing that we need

to know is what is the mandate of the Seniors Directorate? When you look at the objectives as outlined and compare it to objectives of other sections of other departments, we see a lot of overlap, unfortunately, and that we will be questioning later. Could the Minister indicate to us, he refers to this position as a secretary position, as opposed to a director, what is the difference between a secretary, and what might one consider as a director of a directorate, or are they synonyms?

Mr. Downey: It is the Executive Director position.

Ms. Gray: Given it is the Executive Director position, then one would certainly assume that when you are bulletining for a position of this nature, that in fact someone who has had considerable experience in working with seniors, or in the whole field of aging, would certainly, we would think, want to be a preferred criteria. Can the Minister indicate to us the particular individual who is now in this term position as secretary, what was the last position that she held?

Mr. Downey: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I can. It was within the Family Services Department, as Special Assistant to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson).

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate, there have been concerns expressed by Members of the Liberal Opposition in regard to the hiring policies of this particular Government.

One of the concerns that has been expressed is that this Government tends to take people of their choosing, who have had political affiliations, or in the case of this particular person who may be very competent but who in the eyes of the public is seen as a political appointment, that was her former job. The concern is that this Government is putting people into these positions on the term basis in the Civil Service Commission and the Manitoba Government Employees' Association, and most people with common sense will tell you that once you place a person in a term position, you do give that person somewhat of an advantage when, if ever, that position does go for bulletin.

Can the Minister indicate to us, is he not concerned that, in fact, by starting fresh with the new Seniors Directorate, that he is in fact shading and colouring the entire directorate by putting someone in a term position and not allowing individuals to even apply for this job in perhaps the term basis, but opening it up to the public, to the community, where there may be very many qualified individuals who would love the opportunity to be at the helm of what can be considered possibly a new direction, a new directorate? Is he not concerned of the perception he is leaving with the public and the people of Manitoba because of his hiring practices?

Mr. Downey: No, Mr. Chairman, I am not, and I maybe was a little unfair to the executive director to indicate that she had only worked as a special assistant to the Minister. It is my understanding that she has had previously worked with, either in the department and/or related agency within Government, so it is a little unfair for me to say specifically that it was just a special

position job, but the individual is very highly qualified, very capable, and has come from the social services' either department and/or agency within the Department of Family Services. So I hope the Member does not in her comments try to, in any way, say that the individual is politically affiliated. I think that would be less than fair. I think it would be irresponsible on her part. I think the work had to be done, the person was available, we are going through the advertising process, and very open on it. I think it is important that we get on with some of the work activities that had to be done. That is precisely how we carried out the activity.

Ms. Gray: Can the Minister indicate when he plans to bulletin the secretary position, and also when he plans to bulletin the position of policy analyst?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, I was not clear on the question. Would she repeat the question, please?

Ms. Gray: The question is twofold, can the Minister indicate when he plans to bulletin the position of secretary or executive director, and also when he plans to bulletin for the position of policy analyst?

Mr. Downey: So the Member is clear, the executive director position will be bulletined very shortly. There is a secretarial position that has been bulletined and filled. The position of analyst, research analyst, will be advertised at the same time as the executive director. The position of research analyst is filled on a term position at the current time.

Ms. Gray: Can the Minister indicate who is filling the position as research analyst?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, I am really pleased that the Members are interested in who is working in the Seniors Directorate. I am really pleased we have got the capable people we have in the short term till we get them filled on a permanent position. The individual is Leanne Kostuik who has filled that position on a term basis.

Ms. Gray: Can the Minister indicate what qualifications this individual has in regard to research and how it relates to seniors or aging?

Mr. Downey: Well, again, Mr. Chairman, I have to tell you the individual is there on a term basis to get on with some of the work. As you realize, we are going into a series of public meetings. We have to have people to carry out those responsibilities because I did not want to be criticized by the Opposition for not getting on with the job and, yes, the individual has research capabilities and experience working with seniors. I said before, the permanent position will be advertised and filled through that process.

Mr. Cowan: Can the Minister be more specific as to exactly when he intends to have the position of executive director bulletined? We have heard the Minister use a very general term, shortly. Obviously that means that they have taken some action towards the bulletining of that position. When exactly does he expect that bulletin to be out?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, my answer remains the same, soon.

Mr. Cowan: Can he indicate, soon within three months or soon within six months? Can he be just a bit more explicit because it is an important consideration as to whether or not people will perceive the Minister as having followed the correct procedures? From time to time it is necessary to appoint a term position and from time to time it is necessary to bulletin.

I would ask the Minister so that people can have some assurance that they are going to act in a responsible manner as to exactly when he expects that bulletin to be brought forward, and soon is not good enough. Is it within a month, is it within three months, is it within six months, what is the outside parameters with respect to -(inaudible)-

* (2200)

Mr. Downey: Let me first of all make it very clear to the Member, we are carrying out a very important exercise as was pressed for by the Liberal Opposition. I do not think I heard the same pressure come from the New Democratic Party, or the third Party in the House but there was pressure coming from the Opposition on the seniors abuse paper.

We have people in place that are currently carrying out that work activity, and that is important. I think the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) will agree, and it will be not fair to make a change in the middle of that kind of an exercise.

I would say that probably some time in the new year we would be putting in place the bulletining of the— Mr. Chairman, sometime following the exercise, there may be near the end of the exercise of the seniors abuse paper and the consultation, the process of putting in place the bulletin might take place during that period of time, that would be my target. The work activity is the important thing.

Mr. Cowan: Certainly work activity is important, but the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Leader of the Cabinet, the Leader of the Government, the Leader of the Party which that Member is a part of indicated during the last campaign that his Government was going to reduce the number of term positions, that his Government felt that the use of term positions in exactly the type of manner that the Minister is using them, was inappropriate.

As a matter of fact, just the other day, one of the Members of the front bench, and it perhaps was the Premier, I am not certain, but I do recall the general discussion. One of the Members of the front bench indicated that they were quite proud in the number of reductions of term positions that his Government had brought forward. Yet, we see this Minister working entirely contrary to the stated objectives of the First Minister. Either the First Minister did not really mean that promise when he made that promise, or this Minister disagrees with that promise and thinks that is the wrong approach and is acting contrary to the wishes of the First Minister, or both of them did not

mean the promise when the promise was made. Quite frankly, this is an important matter with respect to how this department is perceived within the civil service.

If this department is perceived as being a department of hand-picked employees that do not have to go through the regular process who can circumvent the regular mechanisms that are used for hiring people, and the civil service perceives this department as being a department of employees that are term employees in direct contradiction to what the First Minister said he wanted to accomplish when he was on the campaign trail, it is going to reduce the effectiveness of this department.

This department is almost entirely dependent upon other departments to make things happen within the system. It does not have a large staff component itself. It does not have a lot of activity that it undertakes itself. It is primarily a liaison and a co-ordination department. If the Minister undercuts the effectiveness of his own staff by having people appointed on term and then continued on in term for long periods of time when it has been suggested by even the Premier of this province that that is a wrong way to conduct hirings, then he is going to undercut the effectiveness of his department.

What is at stake here is not just a position or two. What is at stake here is the ability of the Seniors Directorate to accomplish its stated objectives within the Government's system and that is a directorate that is already weakened. It is weakened by the last year and half of inaction on the part of this Minister and the previous Minister. It is weakened by the fact that it is one of the least well-spent departments in the Government, that it has one of the highest returns of the money which was allocated to it, which means that that money was not being used to do research, to liaise, to develop position and policy on behalf of seniors. It was being squirrelled away for the Government's rainy day fund so that they could come up with a nice balance sheet at the end of the first year in Government. A balance sheet that reflected more of a desire to reduce the deficit and a desire to serve the needs of seniors, a balance sheet that very clearly indicated that seniors or at least the Seniors Directorate was not a priority with this Government.

As one of the ways in which you judge a Government is based on its ability to bring forward comprehensive programs policy, the Seniors Directorate did none of that during its first year. It is a department that is already weakened within the system and is going to be further weakened by this Minister's very political handling of the hiring. He may not do it for political reasons and he may not hire political people, but the process that he uses is a political process. The fact that the individual who may in fact be very competent in place is also at one point in her career most recently a special assistant which is considered to be a political position within the system further brings—i see the Liberal Labour Critic measuring the House Leader's chair.- (interjection)-

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. The hour being ten o'clock, committee rise and call in the Speaker.

The hour being ten o'clock' this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.