



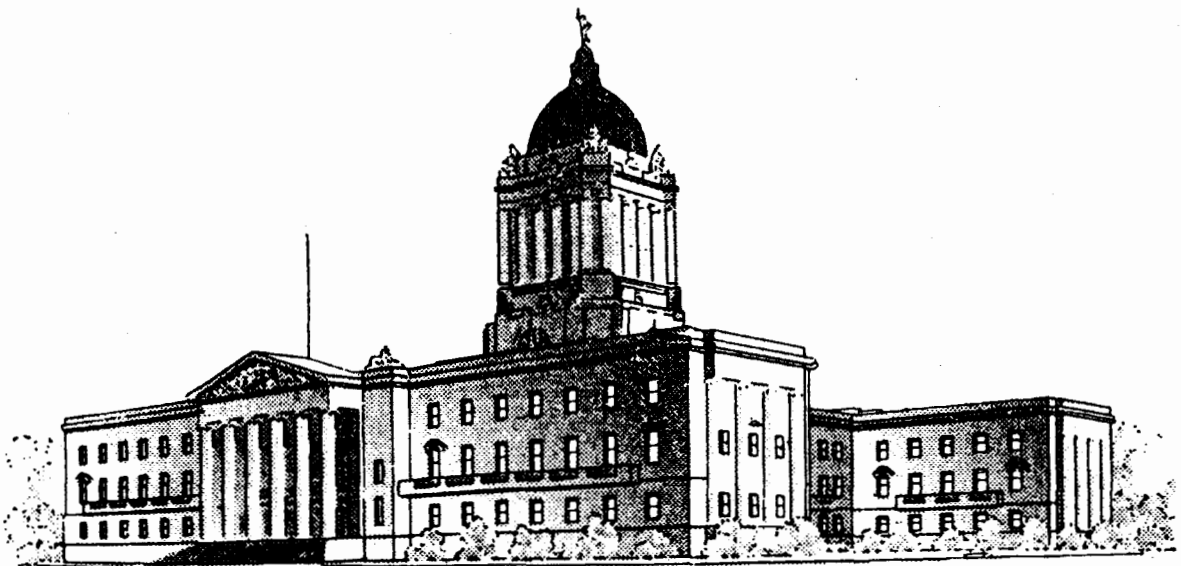
Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS  
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

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BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
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JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
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LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
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REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
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SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
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TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
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WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 9, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

### PRAYERS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

##### Res. 5—Save the Seine

**Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Riel (Mr. Newman), that

WHEREAS the Seine River has played an important role in the history of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Seine River has also been closely associated with the history of Manitoba's French-speaking community; and

WHEREAS the Seine River is also an important natural habitat for a diversity of Manitoba wildlife; and

WHEREAS the Seine River is now viewed by many as a recreational area for fishing, canoeing and walks along its many trails; and

WHEREAS this valuable natural resource has in the past suffered from neglect, from poor water management and increasing pollution; and

WHEREAS since 1990, the Save Our Seine committee has worked hard at protecting and developing this natural resource for all Manitobans to use.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship to consider designating the Seine River a Heritage site and thereby protect the Seine River as a valuable, historical and natural resource for all Manitobans.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Gaudry:** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise and make comments on this resolution.

The primary goal of Resolution 5 is to protect the Seine River from continued abuse, but another equally important purpose is to give the river the recognition it deserves from a historical perspective and also from an environmental point of view.

We must protect our Seine, not just so we may enjoy its beauty today but in the interests of future generations of Manitobans and in the interest of environmental protection. This resolution is also about recognizing and encouraging the work done by a dedicated group of volunteers who, as part of the organization known as our Save Our Seine River Environment Inc., rescued a river, and, in doing so, they bestowed upon Winnipeg the opportunity to enjoy natural wildlife, that is to enjoy a little piece of nature without even having to cross the Perimeter.

All of us owe this small group of volunteers a great debt of gratitude. They put a happy ending on what was at one time a very sad story. The purpose of this resolution is to ensure that the work this group has done cannot be undone in the future.

Winnipeg is a city of trees and rivers. Every summer, these trees and rivers turn Winnipeg into one of the most beautiful cities in North America. The importance of the rivers, however, goes even deeper. The rivers provide a lifeline to the past. They are what brought our ancestors to this spot, and they are at least part of the reason why Winnipeg grew from humble beginnings into a community of prosperity and prestige. Of our four rivers, the Red and the Assiniboine always get most of the attention. Behind these giant rivers the Seine toils in relative obscurity. It is a small and unassuming river that has only recently maintained a steady flow throughout the year. In low rainfall seasons, it often becomes dead or stagnant and has even been known to dry up in some spots. All of this does not paint a very romantic picture of the river. Still, there is something special about this river, something almost magical, but it has nothing to do with its physical attributes, which, as I have suggested, are modest at best. It has to do with the symbolism of hope and renewal associated with the movement to save this tiny piece of nature held hostage by the ravages of urban sprawl.

Today the Seine River is a jewel of nature trapped in a city of concrete and steel, but it was not always this way. In the not-so-distant past the river could easily have been described as a stinking, smelly embarrassment, a breeding ground for flies and an informal refuse dump. But all that changed a few years ago in the most wondrous and inspirational way. It is the story of this change that makes the river so special.

Madam Speaker, the story has transformed the river into much more than another example of nature's beauty and mystery. The river is now a symbol of rebirth and renewal, of rejuvenation and redemption. To understand what the river means to us and why we must support this resolution, we must first listen and learn from its tale. The Seine River reminds us of much of our history. Aboriginals, the voyageurs and freemen of the fur trade, the Métis, the French Canadians, to name but a few, all relied on the river. In this regard, the river has been described as a treasure trove of Manitoba history. Now, that may be a bit of an exaggeration, but the river certainly holds an important place in the human geography of our city.

The river's rich human history is recounted in a document by the Save our Seine organization. Here is a small quote from that report: To listen to the echoes of the Seine is to hear many people, many tongues. Listen closely and you will hear a Cree father teaching his son how to fish. Listen closely and you will hear the French songs of the voyageurs, les hivernants, as they defied the winter nights in their shacks along the Seine.

The Seine is the home of many beginnings, Madam Speaker. The first pioneer family of Canadian descent who settled in the west lived in a house on this river. And of course the father of our province, Louis Riel, was born near this unassuming little river. But there is also a dark history of abuse and neglect associated with this once-forgotten river. In the past, low water levels and lack of flow plagued the river. These problems were caused by pollution blockage and an excessive use of the river for irrigation purposes. Back then, garbage and refuse left by careless and thoughtless people threatened the natural wildlife which relied on the river's health. The river's ecosystem was under constant attack. Back then, travelling down the river was not much fun at all. The river was offensive to look at and smell, and it was all our fault. Who could be so uncaring that they would

dump their trash into a river? The river was clogged with shopping carts, old lumber, automotive parts, boxes, bottles, I mean, you name it, and it was there. What a sad commentary on humanity. The citizens of Winnipeg had turned their backs on valuable natural and cultural resources.

But something changed in early 1990. This change I think had something to do with the CN moving their rail yards from The Forks. That action led to the development of The Forks walkway and The Forks Market, and with that came a gradual realization by the people of Winnipeg of the enormous potential and, indeed, beauty of our rivers. Madam Speaker, in the 1990s, property owners along the Seine decided to do something about the deplorable condition that their river was in. Maybe it was because they were encouraged by the development of The Forks, or maybe the reason was more basic, that they were sick of the smell or maybe that they were just plain embarrassed.

\* (1010)

Whatever the reason, in 1990, something galvanized the property owners along the Seine into action. They decided to restore the river back to its natural beauty. They decided to save the Seine. The residents formed an organization which is now called Save Our Seine River Environment Inc., and it began to grow, and with its growth, through grants from the various levels of government, these volunteers began to improve the health of the river.

The first Seine River cleanup took place almost six years ago, October 1990. At first, progress was slow because of the enormous amount of garbage and debris which littered by the river, but in the past five and a half years much has been done and by many people. Even the Lieutenant Governor of this province has chipped in to help. It must be stressed that the Save Our Seine volunteers—I see some of them are here in the gallery this morning, and I am pleased to see them there—have done more than simply clean the river. For instance, the group was instrumental in stopping raw sewage from emptying into the river, and more recently they have begun the costly process of breaking up the huge concrete blocks just south of Marion Street which slow the flow of the river.

The Save Our Seine committee was also responsible for establishing regular testing of the Seine River. They

have planted trees and shrubs, installed birdhouses and nesting boxes for ducks, and there are many plans for the future including an interpretive nature corridor and canoe parks. Madam Speaker, because of their efforts, these volunteers have won numerous environmental awards, but more importantly, the river has almost been completely restored to its natural beauty.

It is a good thing that they did. There are many lives which depend on the river's health. Let us do a brief natural inventory. There are the white-tailed deer, fox, mink, muskrat, racoons, squirrels. The river is full of aquatic wildlife such as turtles and fish. As well, there are 101 species of birds which live in this rejuvenated environment. The river's most famous inhabitants, however, are its approximately 75 beavers. Like the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) mentioned a couple of years ago that every Manitoban had a beaver because we had a population of one million beavers in this province. Because of the actions of the Save Our Seine volunteers, the river is now viewed by many as a recreational area for fishing, canoeing, skiing and walks along its trails. The Seine River is a good example of the merits of maintaining urban wilderness. Walking along the river or canoeing on it, one could easily forget that they are in the middle of a modern industrial city. The beavers are still busy on this river, and every summer the fish come up the river to spawn, and turtles still find their place in the sun. The value of this natural beauty is impossible to measure, Madam Speaker.

In conclusion, I urge you all to support the resolution that I am sponsoring today so that we may ensure that the work done by Save Our Seine Inc. will be continued in the future. The Seine must remain a symbol of rejuvenation and rebirth, of renewal and hope for a better future, a symbol that individuals can make a difference in the fight to keep our planet green, a symbol that changes are possible. This resolution should serve to symbolize commitment of members to always support initiatives of the type begun by Save Our Seine River Environment Inc. Passing the resolution will hopefully encourage others to follow the lead of the Save Our Seine volunteers. They showed us all that together, through volunteer service, we can all do our bit to make our communities better places to live.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. David Newman (Riel):** Madam Speaker, the honourable member for St. Boniface asked me to second this potentially very important and beneficial resolution. To his great credit he also invited me to propose an amendment to it to make it more meaningful and useful. This was the recognition of the fact that the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) and myself and all honourable members on this side of the House have been strong and enthusiastic supporters of many heritage recognition and environmental protection initiatives related to the Seine River. We also have a wealth of knowledge about the needs, aspirations and desires of the proponents of these initiatives.

Knowing that pride in our Manitoba heritage and concern about environmental protection is shared by all honourable members regardless of party affiliation, it was thought that this resolution, amended in the manner I have already shared with you, and certainly the honourable member for St. Boniface and myself have agreed, could be supported unanimously. This would demonstrate that sometimes partisanship can be set aside in the public interest, led by all of us sitting as MLAs during this private members' time.

So far in my one year's experience as an MLA, I have not seen a great deal accomplished in this time allotted to us for this purpose. In fact, I have been less than proud so far of the way we have used this valuable time of this most honourable of democratic institutions. Perhaps approving this resolution unanimously, as amended, will be a new beginning, a re-emergence of thoughtful, sincere, constructive and yes, even witty, hopefully not at someone else's expense, debate with a purpose, a goal of achieving a resolution we can all agree to is a worthwhile objective.

I tell all of you the pride I felt and expressed to labour relations practitioners in other jurisdictions about the unanimous resolution of this Legislature creating the Labour-Management Review Committee some 30 years ago, a joint committee of union and management which has endured for those many years through various governments. Its lofty goals may never have been achieved, but it continues to serve as a useful forum promoting labour-management co-operation. This Seine River resolution, as amended, will be no less important. It is a celebration and recognition of our multicultural heritage as a province. It seeks to promote further co-

operation of Manitobans for the purpose of enhancing the Seine River ecosystem and securing its future as a known, and I emphasize known, valuable natural recreational and historical resource in a sustainable development fashion.

I do emphasize the word "known." How many of you have cross-country skied or walked the Seine in winter or hiked its trails or canoed its waters in warmer seasons? I have had the good fortune to do all of those things, even one time falling through the ice up to my waist when it was 30 below. I have done all of these things.

For a moment, shut your eyes and visualize stepping into a canoe, off busy streets like St. Anne's Road, Archibald, or Provencher, and paddling into a green and peaceful environment around one of the many bends and startle ducks or geese, who in turn cause you to jump with surprise when they take off in flight. Pause to watch a white-tailed deer and her fawn, a beaver building a lodge, a blue heron perched and then taking off with majesty and grace, right in downtown Winnipeg, beside manufacturing plants like ICO and Westeel, beside apartment blocks, golf courses, and private residences.

\* (1020)

This river and green space winding through the rural constituencies of LaVerendrye, the urban constituencies of Seine River, Riel, Niakwa, St. Vital, and St. Boniface, is an ecological treasure. One has a sense of intimacy with nature because the river is so narrow and the vegetation, the plant life, abound and overhang, almost like in an African jungle. The experience is entirely different than travelling the Red or Assiniboine, so much more removed from the banks with their abundant animal and plant life.

Add to this experience and setting the history, which has been described by the honourable member for St. Boniface so well, a history which is not well known, and you have a precious and unique treasure.

The heritage of this river includes the aboriginal populations of the past. It was a favoured place to fish and hunt. It is closely associated with a history of voyageurs and freemen of the fur trade, most notably Jean-Baptiste Lagimodiere, Canada's most celebrated voyageur, remembered for his six-month, 1,300-mile winter trek to Montreal during the winter of 1815.

The hundred-acre land grant right at the junction, the confluence of the Seine and Red rivers, was awarded by Lord Selkirk to Lagimodiere for his efforts. This first homestead of St. Boniface also became the home of the first Euro-Canadian woman to settle in western Canada in the person of his wife Marie-Anne Gaboury. They were the first Canadian couple to settle west of the Great Lakes and were responsible for the first children of Canadian descent born in the northwest, what is now Alberta and Saskatchewan as well.

With the arrival of Father Provencher in 1818, Marie-Anne Gaboury, in an afternoon baptism ceremony, became the godmother of some two hundred to three hundred children and adults living in or near the Red River settlement.

The first locomotive in western Canada, the Countess of Dufferin, was transported by barge from the United States and unloaded at this confluence of the Seine and Red rivers.

Louis Riel, the Father of Confederation, has a presence here. There is evidence that suggests that Manitoba's Father of Confederation was born October 22 or 23, 1844, at this very junction of the Seine and Red rivers, and his grandmother was that very same Marie-Anne Gaboury.

Quoting from one of the publications that have come from the Save Our Seine Environment Inc., it states: to understand the cradle in which Louis Riel was born, its times, its transitions, and its problems, is to arrive at a better understanding of the man. The troubles that had beset the early settlement, the role his grandparents had played, the tensions that were still very much present, all help in appreciating the rise of Louis Riel. His leadership of the Metis, the founding of the provisional government, and the joining of the new province of Manitoba into the Canadian Confederation was not some random incident, a haphazard accident that had somehow sprouted on the plains. The Seine reminds us of that noblest of Canadian traditions, the choice of conciliation, dialogue, and faith in the political process over conflict, confrontation, and unrest. Louis Riel chose, as others had before him, the difficult path of peace.

In recognition of this particular site, efforts have been made through Save Our Seine Environment Inc. and other supporters of the Seine to achieve national historic site

recognition in a submission to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, it was stated: In defiance of traditional practice, she, referring to Marie Anne Gaboury, accompanied her voyageur husband and became the first Euro-Canadian woman to settle in western Canada. A tolerant and generous woman, she adopted her husband's children from a previous marriage, à la façon du pays, and gained the respect and acceptance of local aboriginal women. She taught them catechism and they taught her Cree and Ojibway. Marie Anne became the doyenne of Canadians and Metis families in St. Boniface and grandmother of Louis Riel, founder of Manitoba.

The couple has been described as the ancestor to grandparents of one third of Metis Canadian families in western Canada. Many other peoples have been involved in this area of the Seine. The Des Meurons soldiers that settled on the banks of the Seine included Swiss, Germans, Austrians, Poles, Belgians, Hungarians and Alsatians. What a symbol of Canadian unity is the Seine. Not a constitution, not a railway line, but a living resource of common experience and emotion shared by many peoples over many years. As the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) said, it is a river of many tongues.

The Save Our Seine Environment Inc. also is described by the honourable member for St. Boniface. This organization has a lengthy history of contribution, bringing together different groups, individuals, disciplines, historians, scientists, youth. They are working towards the recognition of a Seine River interpretive trail between Provencher Boulevard and Marion Street. They are working at establishing a canoe route along the Seine that can be used all through the nonwinter seasons. Why an amendment?

The provincial Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship has no legislative power to make the heritage designation of the river as sought. This lies in federal jurisdiction. Also various other provincial departments are involved: Natural Resources, Environment, as well as, Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. The City of Winnipeg is involved through its community planning division. Rural municipalities are involved with respect to water levels. The federal government can designate heritage rivers and can designate historic sites pursuant to Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

Therefore, I move the following amendment, seconded by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar)—and I urge all honourable members to support it. It reads,

THAT Resolution 5 be amended by deleting all of the words after the word WHEREAS in the third line and replacing them with the following:

The Seine River is also an important natural habitat for diversity of Manitoba's wildlife; and

WHEREAS the Seine River is now viewed by many as a recreational area for fishing, canoeing, nature appreciation, skiing and walks along the trails; and

WHEREAS this valuable natural resource has in the past suffered from a lack of understanding and appreciation with the result that products foreign to this environment have accumulated and other practices have diminished the quality of the environment; and

WHEREAS water management practices would have to be reconsidered to enhance the Seine River; and

WHEREAS since 1990, Save Our Seine River Environment Inc. has worked hard to protect and enhance this resource for all Manitobans to enjoy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the appropriate provincial government departments and the members of the Legislative Assembly to work in co-operation with the appropriate municipal governments and the federal government to do what is reasonably desirable to protect the Seine River for ourselves and for future generations of Manitobans as a valuable natural recreational and historical resource.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Newman:** My understanding is, Madam Speaker, that that amendment is supported by both the mover of the original motion and by all honourable members here. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** As indicated previously to the House that normally I would be taking any amendments under advisement, but am I to understand that there is a willingness of the House to deal with the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

\* (1030)

**Madam Speaker:** Agreed. The amendment is accordingly in order.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Riel (Mr. Newman), seconded by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar),

THAT Resolution No. 5 be amended by deleting all of the words after the word WHEREAS in the third line and replacing them with the following:

“the Seine—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT Resolution No. 5 be amended by deleting all of the words after the word WHEREAS in the third line and replacing them with the following:*

*“the Seine River is also an important natural habitat for diversity of Manitoba's wildlife; and*

*WHEREAS the Seine River is now viewed by many as a recreational area for fishing, canoeing, nature appreciation, skiing and walks along the trails; and*

*WHEREAS this valuable natural resource has in the past suffered from a lack of understanding and appreciation with the result that products foreign to this environment have accumulated and other practices have diminished the quality of the environment; and*

*WHEREAS water management practices would have to be reconsidered to enhance the Seine River; and*

*WHEREAS since 1990, Save Our Seine River Environment Inc. has worked hard to protect and enhance this resource for all Manitobans to enjoy;*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the appropriate provincial government departments and the members of the Legislative Assembly to work in co-operation with the*

*appropriate municipal governments and the federal government to do what is reasonably desirable to protect the Seine River for ourselves and for future generations of Manitobans as a valuable natural recreational and historical resource.”*

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Madam Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to rise today to speak to the motion and to Resolution No. 5 and the amendment put forward by the member for Riel (Mr. Newman). I want to congratulate the member from St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) and the member for Riel for bringing forward this resolution and the amendment to deal with the very important issue in our province, and that, of course, is to preserve a natural habitat within the city of Winnipeg.

As stated, the Seine River is viewed by many individuals in our communities for its use for both fishing, canoeing, skiing and so on, and it really is a very natural resource. What we are seeing, unfortunately, more often than not in our society, in our world, is that these resources are being lost to neglect and to overdevelopment. So it is important for us on this side of the House to stand with the members opposite to support this resolution. It is rare, unfortunately, that we in this Chamber and in this private members' hour do pass resolutions such as this, or other ones, with unanimous consent, and that is unfortunate.

I just want to remind the members opposite that I brought forward a resolution, maybe three or four years ago, on cleaning up the Red River, which was very important to all of us in this province, I am sure, and particularly important to myself as a member representing Selkirk. At that time, the government and the members of the Liberal Party decided not to allow that resolution to come to a vote and in fact spoke the resolution out. So that was, I thought, an error on behalf of the members opposite. [interjection] The member for Inkster asks which resolution. It was a resolution I brought forward calling for the cleanup of the Red River, and I believe it was your former leader who stood up in the House here, and he would not allow that resolution to come to a vote. Perhaps that is why I could explain his political destiny, as it were. He was clearly not recognizing an important resolution, and he would not allow it to come to a vote.

Madam Speaker, we support the resolution. I am interested in some of the comments within the



amendment. It speaks about the water management practices having to be reconsidered to enhance the Seine River. I am interested in what practices will have to be reconsidered, and I am also interested when we can expect those changes because we do believe that there is a need out there to have a lot of these practices reviewed. This particular time of the year, all of us have seen the huge impact that Mother Nature and, in particular, our rivers can have on our environment. We have seen over the past number of weeks the flooding throughout this province. So while we view and we recognize that we must protect our environment, we also recognize that we have very little control at times to contain some of the powers of Mother Nature.

Madam Speaker, we do support working on this side of the House in a co-operative way to solve the problems facing Manitobans. We want to recognize, in particular, the actions that were mentioned by both the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) and the member for Riel (Mr. Newman), and those are the actions of our Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Yvon Dumont, who is taking on this project. Since taking on the cleanup of the Seine as one of his projects, and I understand, and I have had discussions with him on this, that he has worked along with members from the Save Our Seine. I want to recognize them here today. He has taken this on, and because of that he has used his stature in the province to bring media attention to this and to enhance the work done by all those involved.

Madam Speaker, I also must mention that it is was, I believe, the prior, prior, prior government under the leadership of Premier Pawley that started to work on the Save Our Seine. I think that is important that we recognize that as well.

Madam Speaker, we support the resolution, we on this side of the House, and it gives us great pleasure. I just want to speak on behalf of all my colleagues here today that we do support this resolution. We hope that future generations will look back at the discussion here today and the resolution brought forward by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), and that we took some action to protect something as vital to ourselves, as vital to our society here as a river, and that future generations will, I am sure, recognize this as an important resolution for our community.

Madam Speaker, I know that there are other members interested in speaking to this, so I just want to once again add our congratulations to the members and to the Save Our Seine committee and demonstrate our support for this resolution so that future generations can enjoy this natural gift. Thank you.

**Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital):** I would just like to thank all of the honourable members who have spoken so far. As the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) said, it is good to be working together for a change.

For me it is a real pleasure to be speaking on the Save Our Seine group. This is a group of very dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers whose No. 1 priority is to ensure that there is a proper flow and water quality of the Seine River. A number of years ago they identified that there was a problem with the Seine so they banded together, and virtually from the moment that I was elected, I have had the pleasure of working with this particular group. One of the reasons why I have enjoyed working with this group is that they have not just turned everything over to government. They have continued to be a very forceful group, a very dedicated group. They have continued to do the bulk of the work, to be the prime force behind the continuation of the strength of the Save Our Seine group.

As I say, Madam Speaker, it has been a pleasure to work with this group of volunteers because they just did not form themselves and then step back and say, you do it all. They have been in there right from the start, 100 percent.

As I said, Madam Speaker, I have been working with this group virtually from the moment I have been elected. I was elected in September 1990, and less than a month later I had arranged for a meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources the Honourable Harry Enns at that time, and that was the first meeting with various ministers of government here. It was at that meeting that we realized that, yes, there was a very definite place for the hands-on work of the Save Our Seine group, but there was also a very definite need to start to develop a master plan.

At that first meeting, we were able to bring about a grant to fund the work of a University of Manitoba Natural Resources Institute student, and his name was Morley Smith, to develop a management plan for

improving the water quality and quantity of the Seine. Each year following, we have been able to access some government money, either under the special conservation fund, through the Department of Environment, to make sure that what we were doing was always going to be done in a scientific and proper kind of way.

Along with working with government, the Save Our Seine group, as I said, never sat back and twiddled their thumbs. They were always out there actively promoting what the Seine was all about. More importantly, they were out there doing things, and they initiated, in 1990, an annual cleanup which has taken place every single year. I can remember that first year, it was a very small core of volunteers that was out.

Every single year, Madam Speaker, they have had an annual cleanup, and every single year there have been more and more people going out for the annual cleanup. In fact, the very first year there was just one site, now there are a number of sites with a core of volunteers going into each of the sites. As I say, this is a group of volunteers that works hard to publicize what the Seine is all about, publicizes what it is trying to do to ensure the preservation of the water quality and flow of the Seine.

\* (1040)

As I said, their initial function was really—I guess you could call it restoration, preservation and enhancement of the Seine. Along with that, there is another story with the Seine, besides the recreational aspects, besides the natural habitat that the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) has spoken about. After all, this is a little river that winds its way through the heart of the city and somehow or other has been left untouched. Regretfully there were boulders and cement boulders in the Seine, but the group has gotten rid of those. There is another aspect to the Seine besides the recreational and the natural habitat, and that is the historic factor. Being an historian, this is something that has always intrigued me, because we all know that there is a certain romance to history and this is a river that really has been forgotten and the history of the Seine has been forgotten.

So I would just like to put on the record, with thanks to J.P. Brunet who has been one of the prime movers of making sure that we have not forgotten the historical aspect of the Seine, and just let me tell you a wee bit of

the background. Let me tell you about some of the central characters of the Seine River. Names like Jean-Baptiste Lagimodiere and Marie-Anne Gaboury. These colleagues are the central players of the Seine River. To begin to understand the history of the Seine is to understand the life and the times of Lagimodiere, along with that is to also understand the decline of the fur trade, the rise of agriculture, the settlement of the Des Meurons veterans and the first peaceful attempts at colonization, the Catholic missions, the beginnings of St. Boniface, and, of course, the birthplace of Louis Riel. All of these events are directly related to this one voyageur and his wife and their children and grandchildren as their lives unfolded by the banks of the Seine.

Madam Speaker, this is all spelled out very clearly in a document called Seine River Trail, Suggestions for Historical Interpretation. Let me just reiterate, the Seine is the home of many beginnings, the first white woman to have settled in the West, the first pioneer family of Canadian descent in the West, the first children of Canadian descent born in the northwest, Alberta and Saskatchewan, the origins of French-Canadian settlement in the West, the origins of the French Metis in the West, the first homestead and the first permanent beginnings of St. Boniface, the first Catholic mission in the West, the first settled military presence in the West that assured the first attempts of colonization. As the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) pointed out, also the first echo of Manitoba's multicultural mosaic, the difficult transition from the fur trade to colonization and the first echos of a province being born, all of these were happening on the Seine, and, as I said earlier, the birthplace of Louis Riel; in fact, the first locomotive, the engine that changed a nation. These are but some of the echoes of beginnings that can be heard along the Seine. So you can see there are a multitude of opportunities for historical interpretation along the Seine.

In fact, Madam Speaker, where they were talking about canoeing along the Seine, walking along the Seine and the river, skiing along the Seine in the wintertime or the historical signpost that we can mark, the Seine, as I say, is a little piece of history that flows through St. Vital. Actually, I guess I should not be that constricting, it flows through St. Boniface, flows through many of our ridings, touches upon many of our lives, and it really is a very unique piece of our lives. I say unique in the sense that it is a natural oasis in the heart of an expanding

urban development. I think that we here in the Chamber, and I would like to think that we in St. Vital in particular, cherish both the natural and the historic heritage that is called the Seine River.

So, Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be supporting this resolution, the amended resolution. I am very pleased that all of us are going to be working together with various levels of government and will be continuing to work together with the Save Our Seine group.

Once more I just want to reiterate, this is a group of very dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who have committed thousands and thousands of hours, whether it is the hands-on kind of thing for the annual cleanup, whether it is supervision of the Green Team, and they have now supervised the Green Team operations for a couple of summers and I am positive that they have their application in already for Green Team 1996. This is a group of people who have been working hard for a good six years to preserve the natural habitat, to improve and increase the water flow and the water quality of the Seine and now are working on the historical nature of the Seine to make sure that this is a river, and the people who made history are not forgotten.

It is a pleasure to support the amended resolution, and again, it is a pleasure to support Save Our Seine Incorporated. Thank you.

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin):** I appreciate the opportunity to stand and make a few comments in terms of the resolution and the amendment that has been proposed this morning in the House.

As an avid canoeist and outdoors person who has tried my hand at survival on rivers in northern Manitoba and throughout rural Manitoba, I can understand why this House today has shown the kind of co-operation that we have in sometimes setting aside our partisanship and working together on a goal that is very much important to people in the city of Winnipeg, in particular the citizens that live in the southeast part of the city, the St. Vital and Riel and St. Boniface areas. Madam Speaker, I understand fully the importance of having a clean, protected waterway just a stone's throw from where we live.

Too often, I think, we get caught up in a definition of development that restricts us only to the very traditional form of development where you build humongous factories and you dump the effluent into rivers, where you take all the garbage that you have in your household or in your place of business and dump it into some river somewhere. I do not consider that development.

I think what we are proposing today fits into the model or the definition of development that I think will be prevalent in the latter part of this decade and into the new century. I think it represents a shift in the way people see development and see the way humans live and exist within our environment, and I think today we are making a very positive statement towards development. I think we are also understanding that part of development is the quality of life that we leave ourselves and base our decisions upon.

I want to compliment the mover and the seconder of the amendment and the resolution. In particular, I want to congratulate the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) for his historical perspective that he brought to this debate. As a student of history at university, I understand the importance of the people who at that time had developed this part of the world, their contribution to our society, and I want to remind all honourable members of the importance that waterways have played in the opening of the West. I know throughout rural Manitoba where I live many decisions were based, many decisions on locating communities were based on the availability of clean and protected water, and I think what we are doing is adding our voices to history and the continuance of Canadian history by understanding the importance of waterways and the importance of protecting the water that we have.

I do want to leave some time for other members to make statements today before our hour runs up. The last point that I want to make has to do with the fact that we here in this House have no magic wands, Madam Speaker. It is very important what we are doing in making a statement with this resolution, but we have to remember that just because we have made the statement in the House does not mean that the amount of garbage that is in the Seine River right now will somehow mysteriously vanish, will somehow leap out of the river and not be there in the way of the recreational and other uses that we have in the Seine River. It is going to take a lot of work to make sure that the Seine River is

protected. It is going to take commitment further than today from elected officials at all levels. It is going to take very much a commitment to protect this river, and I want to make sure that everybody understands that this is one step in the protection of the Seine River.

Having said that, I think that the folks involved with the Save Our Seine group have done an excellent job in raising the profile of the state of the Seine River and its use and its importance to us as a society. I would congratulate the Save Our Seine people and encourage them to continue with their very fine objective in regard to this matter.

\* (1050)

Madam Speaker, with that I would just conclude the remarks that I am making, and hopefully I have left time for others to put a few statements on the record as well. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye):** Madam Speaker, we have heard of the culture, the heritage, the history of the Seine River, and I am not going to go into it too much simply because everybody else has, but I would like to add a little history and a little heritage to the stories that we have heard.

It was back in about 1934, approximately, that my wife's family moved from Czechoslovakia to this country, and they settled on River Lot 23 at St. Anne right next to the Seine River. In fact, today, Madam Speaker, my wife Millie and I still own 22 acres that border on the Seine River. Some 26, 27 years ago, Millie and I moved from Winnipeg back to the homestead or the yard, if you will, of the farm that my in-laws owned, and over the years we have raised two boys and a girl, Wayne, Jeff and Bonnie, all of whom have enjoyed the Seine River. Now, during the first couple of years that we moved out there I noticed—because this was a time of I guess you would not say drought but close, where the Seine River in fact went down, there was very little water in it—you could see all these different things in it. I used my tractor and a chain to hook onto things like old cars and large branches or trees that had been thrown in. You could go into it—and many other things. There were rubber boots. There were all kinds of things. It just seemed that the Seine River was a bit of a garbage disposal unit.

At any rate, what I am saying here is that the area along my property, I did clean up at that time. My children have enjoyed the Seine River very, very much, and not just my children, but many other children from the town came out and spent a lot of time with our children, doing things like, for example, they would tie a long rope onto a tree and would swing across the Seine River. When they got a little tired of that, they would fall into it and go for a swim and come out and have some more fun. They did things like fishing in the Seine River, and they have pulled out, would you believe, 18- to 23-pound jacks out of that river, and this is as of last year and in past years.

We have seen beaver in the river, fox that follow it; the mink stick close to the river—many, many enjoyments and animal life that in fact my children have had the enjoyment of seeing and being around. We see canoers canoeing down the Seine River past our place now, something that, when we first moved out there, there were not too many of these things happening simply because the Seine River had become that kind of a thing that people could not really do it. But we also see now snowmobilers, skiers. My kids, during the time that they were growing up, would clear a piece of the Seine River and go skating. So there was much, much enjoyment.

The Seine River comes through an area that is just east of St. Anne that is called Lake Rivière, and many people will remember Lake Rivière, although it is closed now and they are building homes in kind of a park area there now. It was a very nice spot for people to go and enjoy the beach that was there.

The Seine River now is a very nice river, and the settlements of St. Anne, Dufresne, Lorette all have Save Our Seine groups as we see in the gallery today. I thank them, and I thank all those volunteers who have taken and given of their time to make a river beautiful once again.

I would like to speak for another 20 minutes or half an hour on this, Madam Speaker, but I want to give others the opportunity.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Madam Speaker, I certainly want this motion to come to a vote before time has expired, but I simply wanted to add a couple of words to what has already been said. Based on my past as a rural member and a rural

representative, I have been exceptionally pleased to see how the protection of the Seine has evolved where the local residents have taken a keen interest and have actually taken a hand in managing, improving and preserving the asset that they have right in their backyards. It has always been my view that this type of interaction, along with some support from public authorities, is the best way to maintain a watershed and an asset of this nature.

As the years go by, and we learn more and more about how to involve the different support groups in the community and interrelate that with policies of government and the directions that we want to take, the greater chance we have for success in maintaining and preserving the Seine and doing even better in the future with other watersheds, because there has always, in my view, been a bit of a difference, a gap that needs to be closed between how we have been able to set up watershed management organizations in the rural areas, but we, probably by omission more than anything else, have not taken an active enough role in doing the same thing with some of the streams, whether they are major or minor within our urban areas.

I would like to support this motion. I would like to also recognize the unanimity there is in the House today.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is the amendment to Resolution 5, moved by the honourable member for Riel (Mr. Newman), seconded by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). Is it the will of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Madam Speaker:** Agreed and so ordered.

Is it the will of the House to adopt Resolution No.5, as moved by the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), seconded by the honourable member for Riel (Mr. Newman), as amended?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Madam Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

What is the will of House? There is one minute remaining. Eleven o'clock?

**Some Honourable Members:** Eleven o'clock.

**Madam Speaker:** Pursuant to Rule 21, the House will now consider Private Members' Business.

\* (1100)

## DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

### Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

**Madam Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill 200 (The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews). Stand?

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Madam Speaker:** Agreed? [agreed]

### Bill 201—The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act

**Madam Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), Bill 201, The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act (Loi sur le jour de solidarité à l'égard des autochtones), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). Stand?

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Madam Speaker:** Agreed? [agreed]

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I believe that there is agreement to have this particular bill remain standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), but we certainly have no objection to having any member of this House who wants to speak on it during this time do so, as long as there is agreement that it will remain standing in the name of the member for St. Norbert.

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** I rise today in support of Bill 201, the Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act, brought forward by my honourable friend and colleague

the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), and I thank the honourable member for Rupertsland as well as the honourable member for the Pas (Mr. Lathlin) for their fast work, beginning with their efforts within the National Indian Brotherhood years ago to attempt to establish a national day of recognition honouring First Nations people, Metis and Inuit peoples.

Therefore, this bill is only the tip of the iceberg. It represents years of effort and is consistent with the view held by aboriginal people that when we do something we should be aware of the implications of our actions as far as seven generations into the future.

Therefore, I hope all members of this House will support Bill 201, The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act, so that we can be assured that those yet unborn, seven generations into the future, can say that today we acted with wisdom in establishing The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act.

As well, Madam Speaker, an Aboriginal Solidarity Day would be a fitting addition to the Aboriginal Veterans' Day, celebrated on November 8. On November 8, we honour a specific sector of the aboriginal population, veterans who played a key but, for many Canadians, a little-known role in fighting for Canada's freedom in both world wars and the Korean War.

The fact that June 21 was selected as the appropriate day for acknowledging the history, culture and contributions of aboriginal people is no accident. June 21 is the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. In many ancient cultures, it was a day of celebration. In the northern hemisphere, it signalled the advent of summer, the season of growth. Therefore, it symbolizes for us the growth, the power, the impact that aboriginal culture has on modern day Canada.

So it is not just a day honouring past contributions, it is also a day pointing to future greatness. This day would signal the fact that finally Canada has begun the long process of enabling aboriginal people to step into the sun. For when all is said and done, all nonaboriginal Canadians in their heart of hearts know that they owe a tremendous debt to the original people of this land.

The first European settlers to this land, the land my honourable colleague refers to by its ancient name as

Turtle Island, would not have survived had it not been for the compassion and generosity of the aboriginal people. I do not wish to chronicle the long saga of and tears visited on the original inhabitants of Turtle Island since the first contact with Europeans. Suffice it to say, Madam Speaker, that when the racist National Party of South Africa formed government in 1948, they sent their representatives here to Canada to learn first-hand how reserves operated and functioned.

The bandustan system, the apartheid system, was modelled on the Canadian reservation system. It is one of the lesser known and dark facts that Canada's reserves served as a blueprint for the apartheid system in South Africa, and the overt, state-sanctioned racism of apartheid South Africa was mirrored by the subtle racism faced by aboriginal people in Canada.

Apartheid is gone. State racism is gone, but subtle racism lingers everywhere. In combatting subtle racism, Madam Speaker, racism not always obvious, it is important to deal with powerful symbols that strengthen and celebrate the contributions and culture of the people affected by racism.

That is why Aboriginal Solidarity Day is so important to all of us. Certainly, woven into the Canadian fabric, one of the most original and colourful threads is that of Canada's aboriginal people. Creating such a day is not merely tokenism. Aboriginal people are on the move. Patience has worn thin. Young, capable leaders, together with elders, are charting new and powerful directions. Aboriginal society is growing. Aboriginal culture is flourishing.

Aboriginal people want and deserve the same political, economic and material realities enjoyed by other Canadians. In modern-day Canada, there is no longer room for pockets of poverty, unemployment, poor health, high suicide rates, substandard housing, low life expectancy.

In a first-world country, all citizens should work together to remove conditions that create third-world realities for many aboriginal people. As well, Madam Speaker, the creation of an Aboriginal Solidarity Day costs the taxpayers absolutely nothing. It is a much needed gesture of respect. As Phil Fontaine has pointed out numerous times, what aboriginal people want from

their fellow Canadians are two things, fairness and respect.

As younger aboriginal people show respect to their elders, so we should show respect to our elder culture, the aboriginal. The aboriginal people of Turtle Island, of North America, have given up most of their land to nonaboriginal people. I use given up in the euphemistic sense because we all know that most of the land was simply taken.

That gift or takeover, whatever you wish to call it, has become the basis of wealth for the nonaboriginal people, but apart from what we owe aboriginal people on just material terms alone, it pales in significance to what they have given us or are willing to share with us in the spiritual and cultural round.

Most Canadians, I believe, are still unaware of the tremendous positive potential inherent in the beliefs, the values, and spirituality of the original inhabitants of this land. Let me explain what I mean. I am very fortunate that I can go to an elder whenever I need advice or wisdom, whenever I want to anchor myself to something deeper, something more stable, a bigger reality. My elder says this, and I use her own words: Being Indian has very little to do with skin colour. It has to do with what you believe, how you relate to others, how you relate to the earth and all that is on it.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, when we are celebrating Aboriginal Solidarity Day, we are in the deepest sense celebrating not just the material achievements of aboriginal peoples of the past, nor just the increasingly major achievements that the growing aboriginal population will undoubtedly achieve in the future, but also we are celebrating the world vision, the spiritual reality, that emerges from our aboriginal people.

I will talk about only two of many elements comprising this world vision, the sense of family and the sense of mother earth. First of all, many aboriginal people still live in an extended family, not just a nuclear family. Therefore there is a wide supportive network for any given individual. Roles are clearly defined. Everyone has value. Elders are not just shoved aside, as they are in the dominant white society. Elders are valued. They speak experience. They speak wisdom. They resolve conflicts. They guard the stories and the values and the traditions of the people.

In many aboriginal traditions, adolescents are expected to go through an initiation rite into an adult rite, a vision quest, and this vision quest gives direction and guidance to that person's life. This makes sense. It is much more sane than, you know, this older tradition is much more sane than the one we seem to have for our own adolescence, which seems to be merely a period of pimples and rebellion.

Secondly, aboriginal people have lived on this continent for at least 20,000 years without polluting this continent or destroying it. We have much to learn from their "touch the earth lightly" philosophy. It is high time nonaboriginals shared the vision with aboriginal people regarding the sanctity of Mother Earth. We have much to learn from aboriginal people when it comes to stewardship of the natural world. Some buzzwords current in the modern world are sustainable development, recycling, clean environment and so on. Aboriginal people have not just talked respect for Mother Nature; they have actually practised it and are still practising it. It is the ancient wisdom of the aboriginal people, the wisdom of working with Mother Earth and not against her, that could be our salvation in the increasingly industrialized global village.

\* (1110)

The aboriginal people have lived on Turtle Island, this continent, for at least 20,000 years without harming the land, the trees, the air, the water, the animals, the birds or the fish. The colonizers have been here less than 500 years, and all aspects of Mother Nature have been placed under severe stress, all in the name of progress. But we can still step back from the brink. That is why the values held by aboriginal people, why their spirituality is of such critical importance for all of us. It is not just a question of a polite, respectful thing to do, but it is a question of our very survival. It is perhaps ironic that the people who were once pushed to the margins of our society, a people who even today have not yet been given their full place in the sun, have precisely those tools, those values, that spirituality that could ensure for all our people our mutual survival, our mutual growth and harmony.

Therefore, I urge all honourable members to support Bill 201, The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act. The creation of this special day is long overdue. I thank my colleague the honourable member for Rupertsland for

introducing this important bill, and I look forward to all-party support for this bill. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

### **Res. 6—Immigration Policy Changes**

**Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway):** Madam Speaker,

WHEREAS Canadians from all cultures have been able to live together in harmony and mutual respect; and

WHEREAS immigration has a net economic and social benefit for our society by providing labour and investment, purchasing goods and services, attending our universities and stimulating job creation; and

WHEREAS family reunification is a vital component of immigration policy, because family supports allow new Canadians to settle more quickly into the community and because in many cultures there is a strong reliance and emphasis on the extended family; and

WHEREAS immigration to Manitoba has steadily declined over the last four years and now reflects only 1.8 percent of Canada's immigration instead of the 4 percent of Canada's total immigration to which Manitoba is entitled; and

WHEREAS in the 1993 federal election the Liberal Party promised to maintain a fair immigration policy, including immigration levels set at 1 percent of Canada's population annually; and

WHEREAS the Liberal Party has also promised "a system that balances a strong enforcement and fairness and humanitarian and family values"; and

WHEREAS changes to Canada's immigration policy have been announced which will see the numbers of independent immigrants increased while family reunification is curtailed through changes in categories of immigrants, making immigration levels well below the 1 percent of population target; and

WHEREAS family reunification is also threatened by strict new requirements on language; and

WHEREAS this culturally insensitive policy will leave many new Canadians with no option to sponsor their close relatives and reunite their families;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the federal government to consider keeping its promises on immigration, especially as they apply to family reunification; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the federal and provincial governments to consider making reunification a top priority in their ongoing negotiations on immigration objectives in Manitoba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the federal government to enter into an immigration agreement with the provincial government which is comparable to agreements in other provinces; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly direct the Clerk of the Assembly to send a copy of this resolution to the federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and to all Manitoba members of Parliament.

### **Motion presented.**

**Mr. Santos:** Madam Speaker, I believe that these immigration changes in the federal legislation are definitely monetarily based, definable discouragement for poor people to become immigrants to Canada and to this province. It appears that there is another hidden and systemic attack on the poor, decisively destructive of the principle of equality of opportunity for all. Equality of opportunity is perhaps the centrepiece in the crowning jewel of the law that we inherited from the United Kingdom into this country, Canada.

The principle of equality of opportunity is a fair and equal chance among people of unequal talents and abilities to better themselves in circumstances without artificial restraints. In this situation, constraints are tied to having or not having money in order to be able to immigrate to Canada and to this province of Manitoba, thus giving the wealthy class more opportunity and the poorer class little or no opportunity to come to this country.

To base Canada's immigration policy selection on economic and material grounds, which are unequal in the population rather than on the inherent human qualities



and potentials as human beings inherent in themselves as creatures of God, is an artificial definition of what is a desirable immigrant, because it is based on absence of presence of wealth, not on our collective sense of justice as fairness which is displayed in our adherence to the rule of law in our protection of basic human rights, in our protection against discrimination and constitutionally prohibitive ground.

I mentioned the crown jewels because the crown, although it is antiquated and politically impotent, still has the functional usefulness in this society because it is a rallying ground for the unity of the people, not only within Canada but also among the Commonwealth of Nations. Discrimination on the basis of not having or having money is of course not a constitutionally prohibited ground; it is not one of the grounds that is prohibited by the equality clause in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Yet it is generally known that poor prospective immigrants to Canada can come only from the poor, nonwhite developing countries, such as the Philippines, the Caribbeans and Africa, whereas the relatively well-off, the relatively wealthy immigrants, come from the white industrialized rich countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia and Europe.

So given the undeniable fact of the place of origin of poor, nonwhite immigrants as contrasted with the place of origin of relatively well-off predominantly white prospective immigrants, it becomes crystal clear, if anybody would like to analyze the situation, that the federal Government of Canada which currently is under the ruling Liberal Party, Canada is reverting to some shameful historical past of discriminatory policy that had happened in this country.

If you remember back in 1923, we had an immigration policy excluding Chinese descent people from coming to this country, and it was official policy supported by the majority of the people at the time. Not only is this a racist policy, it was also a sexist policy. Why did I say it is sexist? Because they exclude only those Chinese people of Chinese descent only on the side of the mother. If their origin is on their mother's side, they are excluded; if their origin is on their father's side, they can come in. So it is not only racist; it was also sexist, but it was official.

**An Honourable Member:** What year was that?

\* (1120)

**Mr. Santos:** 1923. In some basic sense, fairness means playing by the rules, rules that are reasonably stable so that everyone knows what the rules are and everyone knows how to make decisions to protect their interests under the existing rules. So the people can gear their actions, they make their decisions according to the rules, and that is fair and just for all, because one can prepare and understand the rules and their implications on one's affairs and they can make decisions accordingly. So any stable set of rules of immigration would be good for this country, but if the rules are constantly changing, frequently changing, not only in minor detail but also in basic fundamentals, then fairness is destroyed. People can no longer count on the same rule before, when they make their decisions to immigrate here, because now they want a sign fee to sponsor their relatives and they could not because of lack of money.

Let me show you an example of the difficulty of changing rules. In taxation, every year the taxation rule changes. You can make decisions this year and yet next year find out that they are no longer good for you, and that is not fair for the citizen at all. Every year Canadians can no longer enjoy the fruits of their economic and commercial decisions. They are caught off balance when taxation rules are announced, with an altered set of rules that militate against their respective interests.

Similarly if immigration rules and immigration regulations are radically changing most of the time, even established families in Canada who wish to help their relatives and their kinfolk to reunite with themselves could no longer do so. For escalating costs of immigration fees and charges which poor families could not anticipate and did not anticipate, family reunification is no longer accessible except for the well-to-do, the wealthy, the economic elite in this country. This is no longer accessible by the hard-working middle class and the hard-working poor of this country. For example, the \$500 immigration application fee and the \$975 immigration landing fee, how can you save that amount of money if you have a job and you are laid off, you even lost your mortgage? You cannot even feed your family here. How can you ever, ever sponsor a relative when the rate of exchange, let us say, is one to 20—one dollar for the foreign currency of 20 units of currency in the foreign country.

Surely, this will close the door and leave many poorer Canadians already settled here, already citizens of this province and this country, no longer able to sponsor close relatives, even husbands and wives and spouses, and be reunited with their family because of this policy. Therefore, the party in government in Ottawa, in the federal government, is injuring, not only injuring, they are oppressing the newly established Canadian citizens who are unable to raise enough money to sponsor their close relatives to come into Canada. They have forgotten that at one time their ancestors were immigrants. They have forgotten, Madam Speaker, where they came from. Let me conclude by saying that the now-established ruling elite in Canada, whose descendants were at one time immigrants themselves, have forgotten where they came from. They have forgotten that once they were either children or grandchildren of immigrants to Canada who, in the immortal words of Emma Lazarus, came here tired and poor, huddled masses yearning to be free, refuse of tennish shore, homeless, tempest-tossed, yet welcome by the lamp beside the golden door.

In the olden days of Israel, as the Lord God commanded Moses, you shall neither mistreat nor oppress the strangers among you, for you were a stranger in the land of Egypt. Therefore, love the stranger, for you were a stranger in Egypt. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship):** I am pleased to be able to have an opportunity to speak on this resolution, and I think within the house today there would be probably substantive agreement on the resolution. With a few minor changes which, I think, are acceptable to honourable members, we could probably pass this resolution today, and I commend the member from Broadway for bringing it forward. Some of the parts of his contribution I do not endorse, but I think the basic parts of the resolution would get some of our support.

Madam Speaker, immigration is very important to Manitoba, and we have specific economic sectors, such as the garment industry, which require an influx of skilled workers, and these needs are not being met under the current policy and legislation. In addition to that, certain changes that have taken place at the federal level with the introduction of the right-of-landing fee create a rather insurmountable financial barrier for many immigrants, and we do have concerns that federal policy on

immigration seems to be set with the thought of solving some problems in southern Ontario. As I have said before, it is important that the federal government set national policy based on all of Canada and not simply because there are some difficulties in certain areas of the country.

So some of the recent policies are creating a rather substantial barrier. Manitoba in particular has had tremendous benefits from immigration in past decades. Particularly Manitoba has welcomed the family reunification class and the ability for family members in Manitoba to bring assisted relatives to our province, and the regulations that have been put in place have been quite a detriment to the numbers of immigrants Manitoba is receiving.

In the early '90s Manitoba was a recipient of nearly 6,000 immigrants and, in the last number of years, even though the economy of this province is improving, the unemployment rate is declining, our numbers are declining because of some barriers that the federal government has put in in terms of the cost of applying for immigration, the right-of-landing fee, the cost for medical exams and a number of other things.

Manitoba is currently negotiating an immigration agreement with Ottawa. Unfortunately there are a number of barriers that have prevented us from concluding that agreement. Certainly the changes in the ministers at the federal level has caused a delay. Subsequent changes in the agreement that had virtually been struck a few weeks ago have created some problems in our accepting that particular agreement.

Madam Speaker, I would like to move some amendments. The WHEREASes that have presented in the original resolution are acceptable, and I would like to add four additional WHEREASes.

The first being

WHEREAS immigration has been the cornerstone of the growth and prosperity of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Manitoba must have a reasonable level of immigration to maintain growth; and

WHEREAS current federal immigration policy, including right-of-landing fees, can be a detriment to immigration growth in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Manitoba is currently negotiating an immigration agreement with the federal government which will give us more flexibility in meeting our immigration demands.

And by deleting the second and third "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED" clauses and adding an additional clause to follow the last "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED" as follows:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship in their efforts to negotiate an immigration agreement with the federal government.

\* (1130)

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. As previously indicated to this House that I generally take amendments to resolutions under advisement, is it my understanding that there is unanimous support of the House to deal with this amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Madam Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed and so ordered. The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that Resolution 6 be amended as follows with the insertion of four additional WHEREAS clauses and that the second and third BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clauses be deleted and a final BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clause be added.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to be able to put some words on the record with respect to immigration. Immigration is in fact a very important aspect of Manitoba. How we grow as a society will ultimately be determined through all sorts of different factors. Some factors are more important than others, no doubt, and immigration has to

rank as one of the most important factors in terms of the future of the province of Manitoba.

You know, immigration, in particular, has been an issue for me over the last eight years. I deal a lot with immigrants in terms of trying to assist in the best way I can to facilitate family sponsors and so forth to be able to be reunited with their families. Any opportunity that I am provided to be able to put a few words on the record with respect to immigration matters, I am always pleased to do that.

I understand that there is a will from the Chamber to have the amended resolution go through, with the idea of having, actually, a vote on the resolution, once I am done, or if there are other members that want to be able to speak. So having said that, Madam Speaker, I wanted to address a couple of the issues, in particular, that the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) has put on the record.

You know, I do take great exception to individuals or political parties that will try to flare up a debate for political reasons using the word "racism." I take it very, very seriously in terms of when individuals use it. I know that the member for Broadway is very careful when he speaks inside the Chamber, but I am concerned in terms of the use of the words "head tax" and trying to imply that the federal government is imposing a head tax, when we know full well that it is not a head tax, Madam Speaker.

The member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) makes reference to the fee as preventing spouses from being able to come to Canada when, in fact, Madam Speaker, it has never in the last couple of years been brought to my attention where a spouse has been prevented from coming to Canada as a result of a fee. So, to a certain degree, there is a certain amount of rhetoric that is used in this whole debate, and a lot of that rhetoric is driven from the New Democratic Party in an attempt to try to come across as more sincere and more genuine towards the immigrants.

You know, I am a bit disappointed in that approach in the sense that the NDP were in a government situation in the province of Manitoba. The NDP did have an opportunity to appeal in a more sincere fashion to our immigrant population, such as credentials and

recognition of their credentials. In fact, the member for Broadway himself was an MLA when the NDP were in government, Madam Speaker, when the issues facing immigrants today in terms of racism, in terms of credentials and recognition of those credentials—the government of the day did absolutely nothing to resolve those problems.

Madam Speaker, they even went further where they tried to manipulate and politicize different groups that were out there. The Conservatives were quite critical at the time of some of the work that they were doing in order to try to prevent some of the political manipulation that has been done under the New Democratic Party while it was in government.

Since it has been in opposition, Madam Speaker, I have had opportunity to participate in numerous different workshops dealing with immigration matters. I like to believe I keep myself fully aware of the different immigration discussions that are going on in terms of the province and the federal government, and what is important for the province of Manitoba is to achieve that bilateral immigration agreement.

I do know that there was little if any headway whatsoever under the Brian Mulroney government in Ottawa, and since Mr. Chretien and the current government have been there, there has been a sincere attempt to achieve a bilateral immigration agreement. In fact, Madam Speaker, for the first time, provinces have and will be using the provincial nominee class. Manitoba is one of the biggest benefactors from the provincial nominee class.

This is a federal initiative that was brought in from which Manitoba is benefiting. Yes, Madam Speaker, there are areas in which the federal government has to be more open-minded in terms of that you cannot apply the same immigration policies—or expect that the same immigration policies are going to be fair to all regions of the country. The landing fee of \$975 will have a negative impact. There is no doubt about that. It will have a negative impact on immigration across the country, and when it was announced, the provincial Liberal Party opposed it then and nothing has changed.

But there are other issues in which we feel that we have to contribute as provincial legislators. The biggest single

most important issue is the bilateral agreement, and I think that on the surface we should actually applaud the federal government in areas such as the provincial nominee classification, something in which the New Democratic Party while they were in government, even outside of government, did not lobby for. It was only since the Chretien government that this provincial government has lobbied for, and it is something which the federal government has acted upon. Let us take advantage of the general good will that has been expressed both from the current minister here in the Province of Manitoba and the federal government in terms of trying to achieve that bilateral agreement, and we as a provincial party will do what we can to facilitate and see that bilateral agreement achieved, because we believe ultimately that is what is important to the province of Manitoba.

What we would also like to see is the whole issue of the landing fee addressed. We ultimately believe that, if you were to get rid of the fee and get rid of the processing fee, it is obviously going to allow for more people to be able to apply to come to Canada. The more people that apply to come to Canada, the better it is that we are going to have in terms of selection and ability to be able to bring more people to the province of Manitoba ultimately. But Manitoba is very unique. The most successful immigration policy that we have had in the province of Manitoba has been under family reunification. It is because of family reunification in most part that we have been able to at least sustain some level of immigration to the province of Manitoba, and this is an area in which we believe that the bilateral agreement should have some sort of a concentrated effort on.

\* (1140)

Equally, we disagree with the government and the New Democrats who say and fundamentally argue that what we are entitled to is a certain percentage of the number of immigrants coming to Canada. I would disagree with that. I believe that Manitoba should be looking internally and saying, what is the optimum number of immigrants that we can sustain in any given year? That number is the number which we should be advocating for, not necessarily a percentage of the overall number of immigrants that come to Canada.

What we need to do is, we have got to become more aggressive in the type of immigrant that we want. Family

reunification has to be a No. 1 priority. Areas in which our economy can benefit, such as the garment industry, and other, in particular manufacturing, aspects, of our economy where there is a higher demand and we are not able to meet that demand—wherever we can benefit economically, I think, has to be explored. That would be our second priority, and then you could list off from—of course, there is a refugee obligation that the province should be prepared to accept, as all provinces should be accepting.

The province of Manitoba has benefited tremendously. I would ultimately argue we have the most to gain if we can open our doors even wider. But part of the problem, and when members talk about, well, the \$975 landing fee being a roadblock, I will tell you, as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) likes to refer to it as the head tax, that racist approach dealing with this particular policy, which the member for Thompson and New Democrats can continue in their bid to try to manipulate the voting process in the province of Manitoba. But I will tell you what is more of a roadblock, quite frankly, and that is if you have to go through the lines and try to get through the applications and the interviews abroad. If you want to be able to open up the process, allow for more immigration counsellors in the embassies, allow for more interviews, try to speed up some of the backlog that is out there.

If the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) was really wanting to address this issue, what he should be doing, Madam Speaker, is start to lobby where there are the backlogs to try to alleviate that backlog to allow the numbers to increase. As Manitobans, what we should be doing is becoming more proactive in terms of trying to put out the positives of the province of Manitoba.

In today's technology, Madam Speaker, what does it cost to get a RAM disk, if you like, for a computer, talking about the benefits of our multicultural society and making it available overseas, putting it on a three and a half inch disk or putting it on a five and a half inch disk, that if the will was there and the drive was there from the province of Manitoba, there is no reason why we could not be attracting more immigrants to the province of Manitoba.

Ontario and B.C. have been very successful at doing that, Madam Speaker. Manitoba has, in my opinion and

in the provincial Liberal Party's opinion, the greatest potential in terms of being able to attract, because we are indeed a very multicultural society in many, many different ways.

We are much more tolerant, I would argue, Madam Speaker, than other provinces that are out there. I feel, in many cases, much closer, in many ways, to the Filipino community than I do to my own ethnic community. The tolerance is there. People want you to participate, people want you to get involved, and we should be sharing those multicultural values and heritage.

What we should be promoting is the need to retain the heritages of homelands and expanding that across the province of Manitoba, Madam Speaker. Whether it is having the barbecued pork or the perogies from the Ukrainian tradition or heritage, we as a society benefit tremendously by having this, and what we should be doing, I would ultimately argue, is look at ways in which we can ensure that Manitoba is going to be able to get our number of immigrants up. The only way we are going to do that is to become much more aggressive on getting those immigrants that are coming to Canada coming to the province of Manitoba. The best way that we can do that is look at where we have been successful at getting immigrants from abroad to come to the province of Manitoba.

**An Honourable Member:** Where have you been successful?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Well, Madam Speaker, where we have been most successful is in countries like the Phillipines, countries like India, countries like the West Indies. These are areas in which maybe what we should do is have more of a promotion and so forth, maybe start lobbying to get more immigrants from that area, start promoting this, so that, in fact, those immigrants who are coming to Canada are going to make Manitoba our first choice. That is what we need to do in order to get more immigrants coming to the province of Manitoba.

In dealing with the landing fee, as I said, the party has taken a position. The provincial Liberal Party has taken a position on that. For the New Democrats, they want to try to make this a huge issue, and there is nothing wrong with that, Madam Speaker. Make it a huge issue. It is a huge issue, but do not try and say that it is racist.

There are many other issues that are out there that have much more racial overtones. I know the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) wants to stand up and call it a head tax and say that it is a racist policy. The member for Thompson does not know what he is about to speak, and that is predicting it, and, Madam Speaker, I would suggest to you that if this Chamber wanted to become more aggressive and get more immigrants to the province of Manitoba, then let us take a united front and do just that, and let us stop some of the rhetoric and get more immigrants to the province of Manitoba because as a society we will benefit tremendously.

The more immigrants that we get to the province of Manitoba, my best guess is that we could probably consume, in any given year, depending on the classification, somewhere around ten thousand to twelve thousand immigrants in any given year.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I see that my time has run out. I appreciate the opportunity, and I would welcome any other opportunity to continue debate on this very important issue.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Thompson, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to both the Speaker's Gallery and the public gallery, where we have with us this morning the Minister of Internal Trade for China, accompanied by 17 delegates from China, under the direction of Mr. Chen. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this morning.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, as much I have just been criticized by the member for Inkster for what he thinks I am about to say, what I am actually going to do is ask if there might be willingness not to see the clock at twelve o'clock so we can put this matter to a vote, the same spirit we had earlier with the Seine River motion. Would there be leave?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave of the House not to see the clock at twelve?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** No? No, leave has been denied.

\* (1150)

**Mr. Ashton:** Madam Speaker, can I then ask if there might be leave to have this motion considered at our next Private Members' Business, which is next Thursday? So perhaps we can then allow it to go to a vote.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to have this matter dealt with as the first order of business in private members' hour next Thursday?

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Lamoureux:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, there are a number of resolutions that are coming forward dealing with health and so forth, and those too are important resolutions. If the member wants to have a vote, then he should just sit down, and we can call for the question and allow the resolution to pass.

**Madam Speaker:** Is that the will of the House then? Is the House ready for the question?

\* \* \*

**Mr. Ashton:** In fact I am glad that the member for Inkster is now saying that we will put this matter to a vote. I want to urge all members to support this resolution. Immigration built this province. We have some very negative things happening from the federal government particularly, and I call it a head tax. It is a head tax. I know families in my own community are affected by this. I know families who are affected by what I consider some questionable practices by Immigration. Madam Speaker, it is important we speak out, because this province has been hit the hardest by what is happening in terms of family reunification, and all members of this House should be speaking in favour of this resolution. I know the Conservatives are already inside. I ask the Liberals to join with us, and let us send a clear message to the federal government today by passing this resolution.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** No?

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** Madam Speaker, it is very important for me to speak to this resolution because, in my constituency of The Maples, it has been the benefactor of immigration. I recently spoke at Maples Collegiate in regard to a unity conference that the students of Maples Collegiate had, and I cannot recall the figures off the top of my head, but, looking at the last two times Census Canada did census in The Maples, there was a dramatic increase in the population of The Maples. As a result of that dramatic increase, it has made a major effect on the commerce, the construction and generally the style of living in The Maples. There is no doubt that immigration has benefited my constituency. So this is a very important issue, and that is why I consider it very important that I have the opportunity and speak to this resolution.

One of the reasons why I chose, when I was married, to live in The Maples—my wife was from outside the city. I lived in East Kildonan. When we were getting married, we had to decide where we would buy a house. One of the factors that made us choose The Maples was the high percentage of immigrants, because we know that along with immigration comes a strong work ethic. We wanted our children to have the benefit of living amongst people who had that strong work ethic. The other part of it is that we wanted our children to live in a community where people from all communities live, from all different ethnic origins. That diversity that is an energy coming from the different cultures, bringing the best, makes Maples a wonderful constituency, as it makes the entire province a wonderful place to live.

Before I go on, I should speak for a few minutes about that unity conference that I mentioned at Maples Collegiate. This was something that the students of Maples Collegiate initiated. Last year at their leadership conference, they identified as the lack, not the lack, but they were dissatisfied with the amount of racial harmony within their own school, within their community. It was said that living next door to someone from another country, sitting in a classroom in a chair next to someone, does not make you a stronger community unless you are sharing your joys, you are sharing your pains, you are working together.

What was happening in the Maples, quite often, is we were developing ethnic solitudes. For example, if I went to the cafeteria at Maples Collegiate and I walked in at lunch hour, I would see all the Portuguese kids sitting in one corner, all the Filipino kids sitting at another table, all the Hindu kids sitting at another table. That was so sad to see, because in the same community, if you go into a Grade 1 class, or you go to an elementary school and see recess, you will see the kids, no matter what ethnic background, all playing together. If you ask them to identify one of their friends, they will identify them either as the one wearing the red shoes or the blue shirt. The last thing they would think of identifying someone was because of their ethnic origin because it just does not occur to them.

But something happens between Grade 1 and by the time they reach high school; they become ethnic solitudes. Even though we have the benefit of all the ethnic cultures in our community, too often we end up in solitudes. For example, if I belong to the Ukrainian professional group, then I go to a church that practises religion in Ukrainian, and then I send my daughter to the Ukrainian community, I do not get the benefit of living amongst so many different cultures and everything that they have to offer.

Sometimes our multicultural policy in Canada, it has been very beneficial, but that is one of the negative effects of it in that at times it has promoted ethnic solitudes. And that is one of the reasons why I got into politics in the first place, because I wanted to show leadership and to show that in my position as an MLA, that whether it was my staff, whether it was my volunteers, whether it was the projects I do, it would address all communities.

When I first started the Maples Youth Justice Committee, one of the first things I did was I went to the then-MLA Gulzar Cheema and I went to the M.P. Dr. Rey Pagtakhan. I said I wanted a committee that was representative of the community, not only of different ages, different economic groups, but of different ethnic origins. If you look at the original 12 members of the Maples Youth Justice Committee, you will see that it truly reflects the make-up of our community.

That is why this resolution that addresses immigration is so important, because I had the benefit of living in the constituency of Dr. Rey Pagtakhan, the federal Liberal

M.P., who has been a person whose integrity, whose dedication to service has been recognized by many, and a person who—immigration cases have been a large part of his constituency work and is one concern that he consistently addresses. Dr. Pagtakhan and myself, along with other members from this Legislature, have continued to lobby for an immigration policy that is beneficial to Manitoba, and just as the member from St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), earlier in this year when there were some federal funding reductions in the area of St. Boniface College, worked with his federal counterparts, not trying to embarrass them by putting a resolution forward whose the main purpose was to try to embarrass the government—no. Just as when there was a riot at Headingley, I worked with other people to make sure that the lives were in safety. In the same way, all members of this Legislature should work with the federal government.

Is the true purpose of this resolution to effect change, or is it to embarrass? Before, when the Minister of Immigration, the Honourable Sergio Marchi—yes, we had many phone calls about it—I did put many of my concerns and our provincial party's concerns, both to his staff and to himself, about the federal immigration policies.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for The Maples will have four minutes remaining.

\* (1200)

The hour being 12 p.m., this House is recessed and will reconvene at 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed at 12 p.m.*

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#### After Recess

*The House resumed at 1:30 p.m.*

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

##### Home Care Services

**Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jean Zander, Edith Christison,

Elsie Kneeshaw and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** I beg to present the petition of Loretta Marucci, Kathy Edwards, Heather MacArthur and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plans to privatize home care services.

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Christine Morrison, John Schillinger, Signy Scutter and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

#### Home Care Services

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

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Madam Speaker:** The Clerk will read.

**Mr. Clerk (William Remnant):** The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and



THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and*

*THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and*

*THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and*

*THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and*

*THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and*

*THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.*

\* (1335)

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and*

*THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and*

*THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and*

*THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and*

*THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and*

*THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.*

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and*

*THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and*

*THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and*

*THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and*

*THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and*

*THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.*

#### **PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

##### **Committee of Supply**

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson of Committees):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

##### **Census 1996**

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** I have a statement for the House.

Madam Speaker, as Minister responsible for the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, I would like to inform the House that Statistics Canada will be conducting the 1996 Census of Population on Tuesday, May 14. Census questionnaires are being distributed to all Manitoba households between May 6 and May 10. The Census of Agriculture will also be conducted on May 14.

Federal and provincial governments use the latest Census figures as a basis for calculating the distribution of transfer payments to provincial and municipal governments. These funds are applied towards health care, education, social services and other provincial and municipal services.

I would strongly urge all Manitobans to take a few moments to fill out their Census form. Each person missed means money lost. Each Manitoba resident not counted in the forthcoming Census process could cost the province approximately \$30,000 in lost federal government transfer payments over the next five years. By completing the Census form, each of us can help ensure that Manitoba gets its fair share of federal dollars for programs we need.

I would stress that all information obtained through the Census is kept confidential under the terms of the federal statistics act and may be used only for the production of statistics. No individual information will be released. The upcoming Census is important as we face more dramatic change than ever before. It will provide us with facts about numbers, distribution activities and the situation of our society. This information will provide guidance over the next five to seven years to governments, business, nonprofit organizations and individuals.

The Manitoba Bureau of Statistics has been coordinating the government's support of Statistics Canada's public awareness efforts through various activities. This is including the placing of posters in government and Crown corporation buildings and inclusion of Count Yourself In reminder notices in various government mailings to Manitobans. The Manitoba government will also launch a radio message campaign to further encourage full participation in the Census. This media campaign will commence across Manitoba this weekend.

On May 14, Manitobans can make an investment in the future. A few minutes of time is all that is required. Returns on this modest investment will be high so I would strongly urge, Madam Speaker, all Manitobans to please, Count Yourself In.

\* (1340)

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to add the support of members of this side of the House to the minister's statement in support of the Census which takes place this year. I am particularly happy this year that the Census is including a new section on unpaid work which will give Canadians and Manitobans a much better sense of the contribution of unpaid work to our economy. I am also very pleased that more than 49 other languages have now been able to be accessed through the Census questionnaire. The questionnaire is translated into 49 different languages. There is also a Braille help line which I think is a very useful addition this year.

Modern nations need very much to know about themselves in an accurate and comprehensive manner and Canada's bureau of statistics, as Manitoba's Bureau of Statistics, has long provided high quality information for planning economic, social, educational, health and other public policy and private policy initiatives. So we are very pleased to support the statement by the minister and to urge all Manitobans to take the few minutes necessary to fill in their Census form and to ensure that Manitoba as a province gets the full benefit and recognition of our numbers and our needs. Thank you.

### **Business Regulations Review**

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services):** Madam Speaker, when the people of Manitoba spoke on April 25, 1995, and this government received its third mandate, one of the chief concerns raised by both business and individuals was the over-regulation of business. The nine-member Advisory Panel on Business Regulations, in the report issued in July of 1994, spoke loud and clear about the difficulties that business has been facing with respect to over-regulation and excessive paper burden.

The panel found that small businesses in Manitoba commit up to four hours of valuable time per week to

comply with government paperwork requirements. These concerns were echoed once again by the Working for Value rural task force this spring. Members of our government met with rural Manitobans through a series of public forums, and the reform of regulations consistently ranked near the top as a way of freeing up the dynamic forces necessary to drive our economy well into the next century.

Since our government is firmly committed to the creation of a dynamic and vibrant small business sector while at the same time maintaining essential protection of the public, the regulatory review committee was formed to address the concerns raised by the panel. The committee consists of four members, those being myself, the Honourable Jim Ernst, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs; Shirley Render, MLA for St. Vital; and Merv Tweed, MLA for Turtle Mountain, all of whom are experienced in the realm of business regulation.

This government has listened to the people of Manitoba and has made the review and reform of business regulations a top priority on its agenda of job creation and business-innovation support. It was one of the many election promises fulfilled within less than one year from the beginning of our re-election.

The zero-based review of regulations was an eight-month-long mammoth undertaking involving the review of 560 base regulations. During the course of the review, close to 11,000 pages of regulatory material were examined by the committee that required some 60 hours of hearings.

The findings of the review are significant. Of the 560 base regulations reviewed, 133, or nearly a quarter of the total regulation base, were identified for repeal or streamlining. Of the 297 regulatory forms reviewed, 78 forms have been identified for outright elimination or consolidation with other forms. One hundred and eight forms have been identified for streamlining or deregulation, and a further 111 forms have been earmarked for electronic filing and/or conversion. These 297 forms cover well over 1,000 pages of classic red tape which will be dealt with by this government, thereby reducing administrative delays and costs, and saving taxpayers through the elimination of government bureaucracy and waste.

In addition, the review was successful in uncovering a number of areas where there was duplication and overlap between federal, provincial and municipal governments that should be either harmonized, unilaterally withdrawn or marketed out. The regulatory review committee will continue its forward momentum into the future, and changes are expected that will further reduce the regulatory burden on business and individuals as well as trimming government waste and red tape. We have already seen a 74 percent reduction in new base business regulations as a result of the committee's screening process.

Today's announcement of the streamlining of close to one-third of the province's regulations and forms solidifies our government's commitment to working hand in hand with small business to make the Manitoba climate for business growth second to none, thereby increasing jobs and prosperity for all Manitobans.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his statement. I would also like to point out that this statement comes at a time when, after every year in office, this government has actually added regulations, not decreased regulations.

We heard this government and other governments across the country, Conservative governments, talk about decreased regulation on business for 10, 15 years now, and in fact, the trend is in the opposite direction. So I applaud the government in its efforts to do something about regulation, but I think that time will tell whether in fact there are any results out of what their stated intentions are.

\* (1345)

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, I wish to table with the House Supplementary Information for Legislative Review regarding the Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Agriculture.

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the Department of Family Services Departmental Estimates.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have this afternoon thirteen Grades 9 and 10 students from the Community Bible Fellowship School under the direction of Mr. Ken Geddert. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

And, we have 25 first-year journalism students from Red River Community College under the direction of Donald Benham.

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

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Home Care Program Privatization—Public Hearings

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, yesterday I asked the Premier to spend some time listening to the excellent presentations that Manitobans were making in our committee room in the Legislature on the home care system here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, yesterday I had the opportunity to receive and read the brief from the Mennonite Central Committee. Jake Letkemann presented to the committee and he said in his brief, and I quote: Documents produced at the request of the government do not recommend privatization or contracting out of home care.

Heed the council, act quickly to deal fairly with the human dynamics of this home care situation.

I would like to ask the Premier today, will he spend some time listening to Manitobans who feel very strongly about preserving their home care system and feel very strongly opposed to the profit and privatization agenda of the Filmon government?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that I spend most of my time listening to people, meeting with groups of people, representatives of major organizations province-wide and beyond, and, indeed, even today have done that

in meeting with significant groups of people this morning.

The fact of the matter is that I try and be subject to the input of people from all different backgrounds and all different walks of life, and the one thing that is consistent about home care is that people want to ensure that the services will always be provided there for their needs. They do not want to be subject to the arbitrary withdrawal of services such as they are faced with today and will continue to be faced with unless we ensure that we no longer have a monopoly single-provider system of bureaucracy for their needs. Their needs have to be provided for when they need them, as they need, how they need them, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and that is exactly what we will be doing by the introduction of competition and flexibility within the system.

**Mr. Doer:** Again, I am disappointed that the Premier would not take the time to attend the committee hearings that are being held in the Legislature, the committee hearings that are having tremendous and excellent presentations from Manitobans from all walks of life about their home care system. Just like Dr. Evelyn Shapiro has stated before that the government's plan will cost more money and provide less quality of service, Dr. Sharon Macdonald, a former employee of the Department of Health, now a professor at the University of Manitoba school of medicine said that the process of health care reform has not been followed by the current redirection of home care by this government.

She further goes on to say, having evaluated at length the government's plans, that the system they are putting in place would not provide for the care and quality of citizens and asks the government— and in fact states, it is time to return to the foundations and examine the issues thoroughly in home care.

I would like to ask the Premier today, would he take the time to listen to Manitobans? In fact, Dr. Evelyn Shapiro will be there this afternoon, I believe. Will he take the time, as we have, to listen to Manitobans presenting their opinions on home care so that he cannot only listen to some Manitobans but hear all Manitobans about privatization and profit in home care, Madam Speaker?

\* (1350)

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, the one thing that characterizes our commitment to home care is that it is a greater commitment than that that has been given by any government in Canada and any government previously in this province.

When we took office in 1988, the home care expenditures were about \$38 million. Today, they will be \$93 million in this coming fiscal year. That is the kind of commitment that we have continued to give year after year, increases both in the nature of the service, in the breadth and scope of the service and in the number of people being serviced, Madam Speaker. No government in Canada has made as great a commitment or is as thoroughly committed to meeting the real needs of those who depend upon home care, and that is what we will continue to do with the changes that we are bringing to home care.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, yesterday at the committee meetings, Michael Rosner, on behalf of the Manitoba League for Persons with Disabilities, presented a brief which I had the opportunity to listen to. In that brief he stated that in the past home orderly services were delivered by a private company and people with disabilities experienced many problems and, of course, in 1982 and '83, the Department of Health took over those private services because they were not meeting the needs of disabled people in our province.

Will the Premier listen to Michael Rosner and all the other Manitobans who are presenting their opinions, their experience on past private experiments, past private companies that have been in operation here in Manitoba? Will he just go down the hallway and listen to the people who are speaking out on behalf of the clients of this province who are saying no to profit, no to privatization, and yes to a stable made-in-Manitoba home care system, Madam Speaker?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, I recognize that the members opposite have an ideological, philosophical approach to this that is absolutely hidebound. We had—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable First Minister, to continue his response.

**Mr. Filmon:** Under previous NDP administrations, the delivery of a bureaucratically run system would not meet the needs of the disabled in our province, Madam Speaker. We went to a self-managed system, opposed by members opposite because the disabled people wanted to have control in administration and management decisions over their own home care.

We believe that there is need for flexibility. We believe that there is need for competition and alternatives so that people can always be assured of the service, cannot be arbitrarily dealt with and have it removed from them by the current bureaucratic monopoly system. That is why we are making changes that are positive and better for all those who depend upon home care for their services.

#### **We Care Home Health Services Employee Incentives**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, one of the real problems in the home care privatization scheme of the government is the government thinks making profit on the backs of the sick is a good thing in this country.

Is the Minister of Health or the Premier (Mr. Filmon) aware of what their favourite firm, We Care, is doing with some of the tax dollars we are giving them right now. Is the minister or the Premier aware that We Care is offering prizes like a colour TV or a shopping spree at Polo Park or a free dinner at a restaurant or a movie to their workers? To do what? If they complete their work assignments. Is this any way to operate a health care system by giving people colour TVs to complete their work assignments?

\* (1355)

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** I simply have to agree with the First Minister this afternoon, who has brought to our attention that we cannot be left at the mercy of a monopoly which would allow for all of our clients to be left in the lurch at a time when the union supported by the New Democrats wants to abandon the clients of the system.

I think the honourable member has referred to a private company. That private company and other ones, their

employees at least are at work providing services to clients.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Does the Premier or the minister not understand that profit in this kind of competition where they give workers frequent-worker points is a waste of tax dollars and represents everything that the U.S. system stands for and everything that our Canadian-built medicare system does not stand for and was not meant to stand for?

**Mr. McCrae:** This is not 50 years ago; we cannot continue to live in the past as honourable members want to do. What we are going to see in our home care system is more and more demand for services. We think that where competition is allowed to be part of that system, the services will equal the demand and meet the demand and provide the kind of quality that we need for many years to come.

We have built a good home care system. Honourable members opposite think it is good enough. Good enough is not good enough; we want excellence in this province.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Speaker, I will table the We Care frequent-worker contest where they give out a colour TV, et cetera, so the minister can look at it.

My question is to the Premier.

Does the Premier not recognize that in our nonprofit public system there is no place for this kind of competition, this kind of contest and this kind of profit making when these valuable tax dollars ought to go to care for sick citizens, not for colour TVs and shopping sprees?

**Mr. McCrae:** The honourable member and his friends in the union movement have acknowledged that their only reason for being in this fight is an ideological difference. Rather than take the word of the honourable member for Kildonan, I would prefer to take the word of somebody like Lesley Larsen, executive director of the Canadian Home Care Association, who says: In Manitoba, I think government should be involved in setting the policies for care and who should get what service and the funding levels. It also has to monitor the service to ensure quality of care. Then it does not matter who provides the service.

### Manitoba Telephone System Cable Assets

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, this government has systematically looted the Manitoba Telephone System, forcing it to stop selling equipment, forcing it to sell its cable system for less than its value, forcing it into agreements with Faneuil for smart card and for Yellow Pages for its database and for telemarketing. They are selling a company they have already looted.

Will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) tell the House, what was the strategic value of Manitoba Telephone System's cable assets, and did Manitoba Telephone System sell the cable assets for the strategic value?

\* (1400)

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act):** Madam Speaker, in the process of evaluating whether the cable assets should stay under the control of MTS, we looked across the country, and in every province across this country the provider of service owned the distribution system. Only in Manitoba did the telephone company own the distribution system.

Madam Speaker, the system was old; we had it evaluated. It was evaluated at \$7.5 million and the sale price was \$11.5 million. I call that a profit of \$4 million.

**Mr. Sale:** I would like to table a document entitled, MTS Cable Television Networks Business: Valuation and Commentary.

Madam Speaker, will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) confirm that MTS's own people stated that the sale of the cable assets opened MTS to potential revenue losses exceeding \$300 million?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Speaker, as usual, the member is wrong.

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, will the minister tell the House, what was the strategic value of the Manitoba Telephone System's estimate of the cable assets? Will he simply provide that number?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Speaker, the member is fully aware if he reads Hansard, listens to answers: \$7.5

million, and the upgrade needed for the system, in excess of \$100 million. That is for the private sector to do in the delivery of services.

In addition to the upgrade of the cable system, if he pays attention, there are licences being given today to deliver cable television by satellite through the air—very expensive and not for the taxpayers of Manitoba to get involved in that kind of risk. That is for the private sector in doing business with their consumers.

### Winnipeg Airports Authority Area Planning Strategy

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** My question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Last night at the annual public meeting of the Winnipeg Airports Authority, the chairperson of the board stated, one of the essential components of the development is the designation of an airport area planning district. At this time, 4,100 acres of land in the city of Winnipeg and in the R.M. of Rosser have been redesignated by the province for industrial use. As well, what is really needed, the chairperson was stating, is in total 6,300 acres in the immediate vicinity, with a total of 15,000 acres of land identified for long-term planning.

Will the minister tell us if his department is working with the other partners of the Winnipeg Airports Authority to establish an airport area planning district?

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** The answer is yes, Madam Speaker.

### Land Use Conflict

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** Can the minister indicate if he raised the issue of a conflict, a land use conflict, given the fact that the airport opposed the location of the BFI landfill site in the R.M. of Rosser when the cabinet approved the site?

**Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development):** I can tell my honourable friend that the people from the planning branch of my department, along with the City of Winnipeg, the people with WINNPORT, involved with WINNPORT, and the consultants from the Stanley group have been working together to ensure that

the proper plans are put in place, and that the land is owned in the appropriate fashion, so that indeed Manitobans and Winnipeggers can take advantage of the potential that is there for a transportation centre in North America that is going to be first class and is going to meet the needs not only of Manitobans but indeed other customers in the world.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** I would ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) and the Minister of Rural Development to explain why they have given up, they have compromised the long-term economic interests of this province as well as the immediate interests of the taxpayers of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Derkach:** Madam Speaker, I do not quite understand the question because the City of Winnipeg, the people who are involved with WINNPORT, the Department of Rural Development, the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism are all working in co-operation to establish the site at the Winnipeg International Airport and the surrounding area as a facility that will deal with transportation, that will provide the kinds of services to Manitobans that we require and also become a transportation hub for North America, which I think we are so well suited to become.

Madam Speaker, nobody is abandoning anyone. As a matter of fact, there is a good co-operative spirit that is involved in working together to make this become a reality. We certainly do not need the New Democrats opposite trying to spoil this project as well.

#### **Manitoba Telephone System Faneuil-Status Report**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, we have learned that Manitoba Telephone System is owed in excess of \$1 million by the Tory creature known as Faneuil. Faneuil is behind in its payments for long-distance tolls and MTS is aggressively hounding them to pay up. Manitoba taxpayers lent Faneuil \$17 million to attract the company to set up shop in Manitoba and now we have learned that they cannot even afford to pay their phone bill.

My question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) is, can he us tell how, if his friends at Faneuil are having trouble paying their phone bill, will they be able to make good on the \$17 million that they owe Manitoba taxpayers?

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act):** Madam Speaker, I want to surprise the member opposite by telling him that the Manitoba Telephone System is in competition like every telephone company in this country. CRTC, when they introduced the concept of competition, said that the telephone companies would only be able to hold 70 percent of their revenue base.

Because Faneuil is doing telemarketing for the Manitoba Telephone System, MTS has the highest customer retention rate of any telephone company in Canada. Their retention rate is 96 percent for the home customer and 86 percent for the business customer. It is the highest rate in Canada because of an aggressive telemarketing industry that is present here in Manitoba, plus Faneuil has other customers they are doing business for and supplying well in excess of 200 jobs in this province in a telemarketing industry of over 3,000 jobs. They are in the process of paying their bills like every other person who does business with MTS.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, Faneuil has been negligent in paying its phone bill of approximately \$1 million. The question is, what assurances, if you like—can the minister tell us what will happen if Faneuil goes out of business with the \$17 million that we have lent the company?

**Mr. Findlay:** I think that was a very hypothetical question, a very derogatory question to a company that has developed here, is creating jobs here, employs as I said in excess of 200 people. A definite agreement of payment is in place between the two entities and that is being fulfilled.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I would ask if the Premier would be prepared to produce the letter that MTS sent to Faneuil demanding payment of the delinquent phone bill, or will in fact Faneuil be disconnected?

**Mr. Findlay:** Well, I am really shocked at the member opposite. I thought he was in favour of having jobs created in Manitoba instead of shucking them off. That is his idea of getting even with something and somebody, to shuck off over 200 people from their jobs.

Any business relationship between MTS and Faneuil or MTS and any other entity should remain between



them. The member should be actually congratulating the employees and the companies that are in this province for creating the jobs and doing the business and making this a better place to live. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

\* (1410)

### **Labatt Brewery Plant Closure**

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Madam Speaker, today is another sad day for Manitoba. A few moments ago we heard the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister) tell us that the business climate in Manitoba was second to none. Yet, today, after 42 years of operation, Labatt stops production, throwing 121 employees out of work. The plant is a state-of-the-art, highly efficient facility and made a \$14-million profit in 1995. The equipment from the plant is being transferred to Alberta and B.C. showing, obviously, that there is no overcapacity in the system.

I want to ask the Minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Tourism, can the minister explain any efforts that his department might have made to prevent yet another profitable company from leaving or abandoning Manitoba?

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member because it is a very serious issue which this government takes serious—the opposition may not—but we do.

We have, for some time, been working very hard as a government to make sure that the tax base in this province is competitive, that it is in fact the lowest in Canada. I believe we are the second lowest in all of Canada. We have put a lot of initiatives in place which would in fact encourage the development of business and I have to say we have seen some tremendous successes in the overall business front. It is unfortunate—and I say very unfortunate—that a company such as Labatt has made their decision, a corporate decision which we have no control over. We regret it but that is the situation as it is.

**Mr. Reid:** Madam Speaker, the minister says he has no power.

I want to ask him then, if the minister knows the term, did he consider using the eminent domain in an effort to save the plant and the jobs for Manitoba as has been utilized by other government jurisdictions in North America? Why did he not use the eminent domain to protect those jobs in the industry for the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Downey:** Madam Speaker, the member should be well aware of the fact that under a former NDP government we lost Canada Packers with 800 jobs, Swift Canadian with a similar number of jobs, so there are certain things that governments cannot do. I am sure that all alternatives were looked at as it related to how to maintain that operation here. We have also put in place what is known as the Crocus Fund, which is a fund developed for employee purchase of businesses. All of those tools, I am sure, were looked at as it was part of this whole situation.

**Mr. Reid:** My final supplementary to the same minister: Can the minister explain why he let another profitable Manitoba company leave a scorched-earth legacy behind in this province, instead of taking steps to assist the employees to assume responsibility for that plant's operation, thereby saving the jobs for Manitoba people?

**Mr. Downey:** Madam Speaker, I believe this government has carried out a very responsible mandate. I just indicated we put in place the Crocus Fund, very much supported by this government, which, by the way, has a majority of its members on the board made up of the Manitoba labour movement. We cannot mandate; we cannot dictate that that kind of a purchase take place, as we could not dictate whether or not Labatt would in fact sell to anyone. There are limited powers which governments have.

### **Home Care Program Privatization—Moratorium**

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Health on Tuesday of this week said, we have given comfort to faith-based organizations that have made such a significant contribution throughout the history of our province about their goals, their missions and their ethics. Those are the kinds of things we will stand by as we proceed with the reforms in health care.

In view of the minister's commitment, would the minister listen to the United Church, who presented a brief to the home care proceedings yesterday in this building and who recommended that the minister immediately halt plans to privatize home care? Will he listen to this important faith community of Manitoba and follow their advice?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** I will check to see if the United Church is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding we have with the Interfaith Council but, on the other hand, the United Church has made its views known, its official views known with respect, I suggest, to the philosophical issue again. If it is a question of patient care, I can agree 100 percent with the United Church or anybody else who wants to put forward a representation in favour of improvement of services for the clients of our home care system, making those services sustainable for years and years to come. I agree wholeheartedly, and that is why we will continue to go forward with the kinds of initiatives that will have the effect of allowing us to continue to bring quality services to clients for many years to come.

**Mr. Martindale:** Will the Minister of Health listen to members of the Oblate Justice and Peace Committee who fear that the proposed privatization of home care is one more example of shepherds feeding on their own sheep, or perhaps in this case, of shepherds delivering their sheep to the wolves? Will the Minister of Health listen to the Oblates and cancel their government plan to privatize home care?

**Mr. McCrae:** This question has been asked and answered dozens and dozens of times in this place, both in the Question Period and during the some 40, 45 hours of examination of the Estimates of expenditure for my department. The honourable member is not ashamed at all that for him this is a philosophical issue. For me it is an issue of making sure those services get delivered and get delivered well for all of the clients who are going to be part of this system for many years to come.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Speaker, this is also a theological issue and I would like to ask the Minister of Health if he will listen to John Robson from St. Ignatius parish who, in a meeting with the MLA for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) on home care, reflected that it was clear

to us that the Catholic Church would not condone workers' wages being traded off for profits. It was equally clear to us that the Catholic Church would not support the ravaging of services to the most vulnerable in our society. Will the minister listen to the ethical reflections of the Catholic bishops who said that the rights of workers are more important than the maximization of profits?

**Mr. McCrae:** I think if the honourable member is going to align himself with all of these different denominations he is creating quite a trap for himself, because he cannot pick and choose which ideology he wants to support on any given day. If you are going to refer to a particular denomination, then you have to agree with all of the policy positions put forward. But anybody who wants to consult the honourable member for River Heights is consulting a sensitive and compassionate individual who has demonstrated repeatedly his commitment to the health system and to health services for his fellow citizens.

### **Home Care Program Privatization—Rural Hearings**

**Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake):** Madam Speaker, given that the privatization of the Home Care program will affect many home care workers who live in rural areas and especially decrease the purchasing power to the local business communities in these rural areas and, most importantly, negatively affect the delivery to clients of home care services at a rural level, will the Minister of Health listen to the many rural towns and municipalities like Selkirk, Beausejour, Brokenhead and others who have passed resolutions calling for public hearings on this very important issue? I will table the resolutions.

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, the past over three weeks have been difficult for those home care workers who have been on the job serving clients. They have had to work extra hard, serve extra clients, work under circumstances they do not have to put up with on a daily basis. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my thanks to all those people in Manitoba who have helped the clients of the home care system throughout this difficult period. That includes people working for private organizations, people working for the government, people volunteering their time. They did not have to. Some were providing services because

they felt that was the right thing to do because the clients needed those services. I refer also to people who volunteered their help in this particular time from all parts of society. I am extremely grateful to all of those people, and on behalf of all of the clients of home care, I say thank you.

### Privatization—Public Hearings

**Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake):** Madam Speaker, of course, the Minister of Health did not answer the question. If the minister is not willing to answer the question and not willing to listen to rural communities which have suggested that this province hold public hearings, will the minister then do the right thing and walk down the hall and hear what doctors, health care professionals, home care clients, private citizens across this province have to say about his system?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, about 10 years ago the NDP paid a lot of money for a study conducted by the Price Waterhouse consulting firm. That firm put forward a report which outlined many, many areas where improvements were necessary in the Home Care program. Today, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says the policy of his party is to go back to what we had in the first place, i.e., before Price Waterhouse, and that is not good enough for the clients of our system. It is shocking and appalling that New Democrats would stand in their place daily and call for a system that they know is dangerous to clients.

\* (1420)

### Home Care Program Privatization

**Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne):** Madam Speaker, Jubilee Avenue in the Osborne constituency has over 70 signs voicing commitment to home care, and on my street—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Osborne, to pose a question.

**Ms. McGifford:** My point is, Jubilee is a weather vane. On my street, again, in Osborne only two houses do not

have a sign and one of those is being built. Citizens in my constituency—and Osborne is home to large numbers of seniors who are proud of and pleased with home care—want to retain this dependable and respectful service. On behalf of my constituents—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Osborne that she was recognized to pose a question.

The honourable member for Osborne, to pose her question now.

**Ms. McGifford:** With all due respect, Madam Speaker, I presented one complex compound sentence as my preamble—one sentence.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Ms. McGifford:** On behalf of my constituents, some of whom are home care clients, I want to ask the minister why, despite overwhelming public support from citizens of every political stripe for home care, his government slugs on with this plan to privatize home care?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, the honourable member and her colleagues choose to put this issue in a political and philosophical—put it into that kind of an environment. That is not the choice of honourable members on this side. We have a job to do, and that job is indeed to support home care.

As far as all these signs go, they say, I support home care. We have moved support for home care from \$38 million to over \$90 million in the space of eight years. I ask you, who supports home care?

### Privatization—Moratorium

**Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne):** Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Premier if he will listen to the voices of seniors, people living with disabilities, people living with HIV-AIDS, home care workers, other health care professionals, ordinary Manitobans and, of course, plain, ordinary Osborne constituents and make a promise today to call a one-year moratorium on the plan to privatize

home care and allow public consultations on the future of home care in Manitoba.

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, we are listening to all of those people whom the member opposite referred to. That is why we are moving to ensure that never again will they be able to be held hostage by one group of individuals of the power to withdraw their services and leave all those vulnerable people who need the service without the service. That is why we must make the change.

### **Home Care Program Privatization—Public Hearings**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, when home care clients, when concerned families, when many people in this province are trying to send a message to the government, this government says they are political, they are ideological. They blame everybody but themselves for the situation we are faced with, which is because of their privatization policy, we are faced with this very difficult situation.

I would like to ask the Premier one very simple question before he leaves for Israel for the following 10 days. I would like to ask the Premier, will he listen to people—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I referenced—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson, to quickly pose his question.

**Mr. Ashton:** I did not say there was anything wrong with this; I just pointed to something that has been announced publicly.

I want to appeal to the Premier. Will he listen, not just say it in the House, but will he listen to people, either at the public hearings or perhaps meet with the family of a client of home care in Thompson who recently went through a very difficult situation having to have her

second leg amputated, who has pleaded with me to ask the Premier personally whether he will get involved and help resolve this issue by stopping the privatization of home care? That is what she asked me to ask the Premier. I want an answer, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, this is the irony of it all. There is no proposal to privatize the home care in Thompson. What is affecting their service there is the withdrawal of service by a monopoly provider, by people supported by the member for Thompson who are willing to withdraw services from the most vulnerable in society to try and make an ideological point. That is shameful. That is shocking, and that is what needs to be stopped.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for Oral Questions has expired.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. This is not a time for debate. The honourable member for Turtle Mountain was recognized to make a Member's Statement.

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **Mother's Day**

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge some very special people in the wonderful world of Canada and our fine province of Manitoba. We set aside days to recognize a variety of causes, people and events, and rightfully so, but I want to speak to a segment of society that is not restricted by boundaries, by religious, political or societal intentions. I am of course referring to mothers and Mother's Day coming this Sunday.

With the new rules, I was hoping to do this closer to the day, but I would like to recognize a few of the people in my life that have served me: one is my mother, Elva Tweed, and one is my Aunt Nancy and the other person is my wife. She always says she is not my mother, but she is the mother to my children and a fine example for all young Manitobans.

I think that we could probably have agreement from everywhere in the House and outside of the House as far

as the importance of this valuable day to recognize people that give so much to society and who ask for so little in return.

I wish to acknowledge our mothers on Sunday and today, and I wish that we could acknowledge them every day for their importance. I wish to celebrate those individuals who bring life into this world, and I wish to celebrate what mothers have done for us and what they continue to do.

Living at the end of the 18th Century, Hannah More penned these words which I think actually describe the spirit of motherhood. She wrote: Love gives, then worries that it has done too little.

Happy Mother's Day. Thank you.

\* (1430)

### **YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards Mother's Day**

**Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne):** Madam Speaker, last night the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) and I attended the 20th annual YM-YWCA awards dinner, where this year six Women of Distinction were named and honoured.

I was personally delighted that Muriel Smith, the former MLA for Osborne, herself a previous winner of the Women of Distinction title and a model and mentor for dozens of women, including me, facilitated these ceremonies. Muriel Smith reminded us of something all women know, that, and I quote: We women are not guests on this planet; we are here to stay.

The 25 nominees for the Women of Distinction Award are living embodiments of this statement's truth. The variety and daring of their accomplishments, their compassion and creativity, their pioneering spirits and courage do them proud and act as inspirations to the younger generations of Manitoba women.

It gives me great pleasure to name the six winners, starting with Hygiea Dela Cruz, a young woman just beginning her career, who is the winner of the Gerrie Hammond Memorial Award of Promise. The others are

Diane Dwarka, who is a multicultural information specialist; Yvonne Lafreniere, who has dedicated herself to the Manitoba Special Olympics; Anne Jorowski, the founder of Share Christmas; the Women Business Owners of Manitoba, founded by five Manitoba women; and Virginia Hasselfield, a former principal and communications professional. I add that these brief descriptions do not do justice to the accomplishments of these women.

I am sure that all members of the House join me in congratulating the winners of this year's YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards and thanking these women for their gifts to our communities.

I also join the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) in wishing all mothers a happy Mother's Day on Sunday.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to join the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) and the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) in acknowledging a very important date that is going to be coming up over the weekend. That is, of course, to congratulate, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, all of those mothers who have contributed.

Who could actually say anything negative? You know, this is something that is very much appreciated from all sides of the House in terms of the efforts that mothers have to go through, year in, year out, no matter what generation they might be from, but they do ultimately contribute, first and foremost, to society and the way in which society is going to ultimately evolve.

Also, Madam Speaker, to comment on last night, 1996 Women of Distinction Awards were presented to five Winnipeg women in recognition of their achievements and contribution to our city. The YWCA of Winnipeg was the first to recognize and honour women who have made significant contributions to their community.

On behalf of our caucus, I would like to take this opportunity to ask this Chamber to join me and my colleagues in paying special tribute to Virginia Hasselfield, along with Diane Dwarka and Anne Jorowski, Yvonne Lafreniere and Hygiea Dela Cruz for winning the 1996 YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards. These are efforts that have been recognized, and

it is something in which we take great privilege in being able to extend our congratulations to the efforts of these wonderful individuals. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Transport for the Handicapped Altona**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Madam Speaker, it was with a great deal of pleasure and privilege that I attended this morning the ribbon-cutting of an event in the town of Altona. The event was the purchase and putting on the road of a caravan or a van for the mobility-disabled people in the town of Altona.

The organizations and individuals in this town a year ago started a fundraising event, and there were some 20-odd organizations that contributed \$68,000 to the purchase of a van that will allow people who were not able to gain access to transportation out of their homes—either people who were provided with home care or people who were institutionalized in personal care homes and the like—to now have access to transportation to their churches, to community functions and other organizations.

I want to thank the Department of Rural Development for co-sponsoring the purchase of this vehicle that will give the kind of services that are required in a town which takes a great deal of pride in its senior citizens and provides for those senior citizens through programs such as home care and the transportation through this kind of initiative. Thank you very kindly.

### **Labatt Brewery Plant Closure**

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to condemn this government's failure in securing the continued operation of the Labatt brewing plant. This failure on the part of the Filmon government has led to the loss of employment for 132 workers, not to mention bringing an end to a century of brewing tradition, beginning almost 120 years ago in Winnipeg. The Labatt plant in Winnipeg was hailed as one of the cheapest brewing operations in western Canada.

The workers in this plant consistently exceeded the production quotas; they set records. They landed beer more cheaply than any other of Labatt's western

operations. This was an efficient and profitable plant, and yet Labatt decided to close the Winnipeg plant, not because of overcapacity, but because of corporate greed. They are adding a third shift to Edmonton. They are spending over \$12 million on Edmonton. They are moving all the good equipment out of this plant to other plants in western Canada and eastern Canada.

This was neither an inefficient nor a losing operation, Madam Speaker. This is naked corporate greed at work. The parent company, Labatt's Canada, had a profit of \$280 million in the last year, and yet they closed this plant in a market where they had 70 percent market share. This is a shame, simply a shame. The Filmon government accepted this closure. They rolled over and allowed Labatt to make such a decision, which will have a disastrous effect on this province. So the plant closed its doors.

Our party does not accept this fate. We tried to develop alternatives in an attempt to save the jobs. We believe there is a market for such a brewery in Manitoba. The Filmon government must realize they are the government of the province, and in this role they cannot only stand up for the rich and the powerful, they have to stand up for workers, too. It is time the Filmon government woke up and started to defend working people of Manitoba.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **House Business**

\* (1440)

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I have a couple of items of House business. On the Estimates order for tomorrow, we will start with the Department of the Environment and the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, and assuming that those Estimates finish tomorrow, we will then follow that with the Department of Family Services. That will continue for the balance of tomorrow. Monday, we will again resume the Department of Education in the committee rooms.

Madam Speaker, for the 16th of May, that is next Thursday, a week today, I believe there is a willingness of the House to waive private members' time.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to waive private members' time next Thursday, May 16?

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Madam Speaker:** Leave. Leave has been granted.

**Mr. Ernst:** I believe, Madam Speaker, there is also a willingness of the House to sit from 9 a.m. until 12 noon on Thursday, the 16th, in Committee of Supply.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there agreement to sit next Thursday, May 16, from 9 to 12 noon in Committee of Supply? [agreed]

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Speaker, I also believe there is a willingness of the House to sit in three committees of the Committee of Supply on Thursday, May 16.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there agreement to sit in Committee of Supply in three sections on Thursday, May 16? [agreed]

**Mr. Ernst:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The order of Estimates for those committees will be announced later next week.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

**Motion agreed to,** and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, with the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) in the Chair for the Department of Environment, and the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Health.

\* (1450)

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

#### ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section

of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Environment.

Does the honourable Minister of Environment have an opening statement?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Chairman, I have a considerable amount of information here. I will try and make it brief and to the point. I am not trying to abuse the critic's opportunity for questions, but there have been a number of things that have been initiated and are being carried out in the department over the most recent year. I think it would be worthwhile to reference them, and then we will get directly to the questions of the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

Simply, I suppose I should state that the mission of the department is to ensure a high quality of environment for present and future generations, and I want to start the discussion by saying that I am very appreciative of the work that the department has been doing. The employees within the department have very often been going beyond day-to-day responsibilities and have truly made a commitment towards the responsibility that they see with the environmental affairs, and I am more than pleased to have an opportunity to publicly put on the record appreciation for a job well done.

There are a number of strategies that we have been working on. The harmonization at the national level through CCME is one that has taken a lot of time, building partnerships with local governments, focusing on regional solutions, development of innovative approaches to enforcement, alternative approaches to what would be known as a command and control regulation, place greater reliance on targets, objectives and standards rather than prescribing specific technologies, extending our resources through involvement of others through delegation and empowerment, using financial instruments and licences and orders to ensure that clients respect compliance and practise environmental stewardship, strive to provide quality service to all department clients. This is something that I suppose might be—a few years ago it would have been novel to have used those terms, but I believe it is very important today in terms of delivery of regulations that the public indeed feels that they are a client and that they are being appropriately served.

There has been an undertaking of the continuous improvement initiative. The department's vision is to deliver the highest quality of service and achieve the best value for the dollars that are being spent. This focuses on satisfying the needs of identified clients as well as fulfilling the mission that I mentioned earlier.

Significant achievements I would like to point to for the most recent year, the department was recently the 1996 recipient of the Manitoba Quality Network striving for excellence award, and I would like to again add my compliments for the work that the department has done to position themselves to receive that award. There has been a significant increase in the number of departmental employees who participated in continuous improvement activities during the past year. Communication activities were carried out including continuous improvement newsletter and conducting an employee perception check. A program to recognize achievements was initiated, and awards were presented to staff for accomplishments in a number of areas including temporary food handling permits, water quality, monitoring, accounts processing, technical achievements and communications.

Provincial environment employee recognition program was introduced for staff to recognize the service and achievements. Initiatives with key stakeholder groups to address issues in the areas of environmental assessment and scrap processing, auto wrecking were undertaken, and significant accomplishments have been realized. Staff are involved in government-wide service and management improvement initiative. A quality service video, soon to be released, will include the department's water quality unit. Similar initiatives are contemplated for the coming year along with a number of additional initiatives, a follow-up with respect to a Manitoba Quality Network feedback report, follow-up on employee and client surveys. Co-location has taken some significant amount of effort from the department.

The program is that the Manitoba Department of Environment and the Department of Environment Canada, as located in the province, will co-locate. The respective government service departments and the Council of Ministers of the Environment will also be part of that co-location and will continue to implement plans to effect this, each entity, however, being responsible for its respective operations.

The principles that we are looking at in this co-location—and it will be, I believe, the first in Canada—will be to establish a one-stop common environment centre to support the provision of federal and provincial environment services and put a real face on federal-provincial environmental harmonization. As I said earlier, there has been a lot of effort spread over a number of years to try and bring harmonization to federal-provincial enforcement of environmental regulations. I believe this is another step forward. If we continue to press on this front, we should eventually achieve some of the goals that were laid out. Of course, there is also expected cost savings to both organizations by sharing certain services and facilities.

Three parties to the initiative, Manitoba Environment, Environment Canada and CCME secretariat have selected the VIA station as the preferred site for the co-location of the Winnipeg operations. Various joint facility services have been agreed to, including laboratory, library, emergency response and reception facilities and board room facilities. Program integration will occur. This is expected to occur in areas such as emergency response, administrative and financial services, ambient monitoring and SOE reporting.

A contaminated sites remediation act which I expect to table in the House shortly and will be on the Order Paper will deal with the issue of contaminated sites in the province and revitalize the investment in property, in my opinion. We have completed the preparation of the act and I guess I will just leave my comments there. I will make further comments in the House when the act is introduced.

The department will be actively reviewing and amending many of its regulations to ensure we conform with the criteria under the regulatory review committee and I suppose today is an appropriate time given that that committee had a public function today at dinnertime. We want to take this opportunity to ensure that obsolete regulations are discarded, that efficiencies are made where they are compatible with health and environmental safety. Amendments will be made through a process that involves all interested parties.

At the same time, however, when we are looking at reducing and eliminating and modernizing regulations, we do have the responsibility to continue in the areas that



need regulation at this time in our history. There will be new regulations to go with The Contaminated Sites Regulation Act, a special waste regulation for oil where we believe we will be able to put an oil collection and disposal system in place that will require some regulation. The onsite sewage disposal system regulation and proposed regulation under The Environment Act will revitalize—oh, pardon me, replace, a little hard to revitalize—the private sewage disposal regulation systems and privies regulation. I think there is a need for an update. The member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) is probably all too familiar with some of the problems of private sewage disposal in Red River Valley clays.

There is a need for an updated and modernized swimming pool and water recreational facilities regulation to recognize some of the situations that have occurred and changes, frankly, in technology, whirlpools, wave pools and those sorts of entertainment and recreational facilities.

**Environmental accident reporting regulation:** This regulation will be under The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act and will be revised to bring it up to speed in the upcoming fiscal year. We will continue to monitor water quality at Shoal Lake, and we are working with Ontario and the City of Winnipeg to assure that any proposed developments go through stringent review, with participation of Manitobans being a high priority.

**The harmonization fund:** We have, in many respects, been the lead jurisdiction in terms of discussion at the national level along with Alberta and certainly involvement with several other provinces. I would also reference that this is one of those situations where we seem to have significant harmony between all of the provinces, including Quebec, but we have been unable to persuade the federal authorities to view harmonization of regulatory matters and the environmental process in the same way that the provinces do.

**The Canadian Environmental Protection Act review:** We have been working with the federal government to ensure that an effective process is in place for control of toxic substances. In this regard, we are also taking an active role. But, again, we are concerned about the interaction between CEPA and the harmonization initiative that has been ongoing for some time.

The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act will see some amendments in this session, to designate special wastes and draft regulations respecting their handling and disposal. As I referred to earlier, that would include used oil licensing process for hazardous waste disposal facilities and remove the mandatory requirement for public hearings for even the smallest of storage areas and clarify that licences granted under this act are transferable with the director's approval.

**Administrative monetary penalties:** The idea of using monetary penalties as a mechanism for dealing with environmental offences and the administration of environmental licences, frankly, and writing of licences. The method is used in various forms in the United States and in Alberta and is being contemplated under the renewed CEPA. It has been found to be advantageous, both to the regulator and the regulated. Perhaps I should rephrase that. What I am referring to here specifically is whereby fines can be directly levied by staff without the necessity of court action using administrative monetary penalties. I was referring to further monetary tools that we may be able to use as a requirement of licensing to provide additional ongoing monetary protection for certain licensed operations.

We are still part of the overall government thrust regarding the sustainable development act, and you will be hearing more about that in the not-too-distant future.

**Emergency response:** The department continues to function in responding to numerous environmental emergencies. During the past fiscal year, the department received 461 calls through the emergency system involving 301 accidents. The department will continue to dedicate required resources in this area.

\* (1500)

**Pollution prevention:** Program promoting the shift to Manitoba's approach to environmental protection from control and remediation to prevention and promote the application of practices that avoid the creation of waste and pollutants at source. Pollution prevention is a general concept and not just a new idea. In the past, we relied on the assimilative capacity to absorb waste and pollutants at what appeared to be no apparent cost. We have since learned that there is, indeed, a substantial price to pay in cleaning up contaminated sites or

controlling and properly managing the waste and pollutants that we create.

The preference that some might have had prevention on ethical grounds has been matched by economic environmental concerns. Challenges emerge from this realization as how to collectively shift from being a society that attempts to manage pollutants and waste after they have been created to one that does not create them in the first place and, if I might add, the department has had a very successful process over the last two and a half years or so whereby an environment officer can show up at the doors of a company and say, I am here from government and I want to help you, and actually mean it and do it in a nonconfrontational and without-bias situation. The fact is it takes a little while for that type of approach to begin to be accepted, but I think we can point to a number of successes and perhaps the member may want to discuss those later on.

The Innovation Fund is also being used in ways to support projects and we have invested about \$6 million in waste reduction and prevention efforts over this period. Infrastructure development, recycling efforts and regional recycling efforts in general have received about half of that, education and awareness about \$1.5, some small amount of \$100,000 into supporting some work on composting, regional waste management. If the member may recall, there was a considerable amount of money spent to encourage regional waste approaches across the province. About \$700,000 went towards that concept and some market development for recyclables received about a half a million dollars. Each of these projects continue to contribute to the waste reduction solution by helping to reduce waste and providing new information. The major challenge that we have faced in moving forward towards the waste reduction goal is to initiate activities that are sustainable in times of fiscal restraint and, frankly, getting the buy-in from the public that is needed to support the activities.

The '96 WRAP strategy: Themes will build on existing stewardship programs, establish new waste minimization initiatives and reduce waste at source.

Specific objectives that I would like to touch on, and I will do it in a highlight fashion in order to save time—we want full municipal participation in the multiproduct stewardship program. We believe that high participation

rates, high waste aversion rates and high rates of value-added processing will be objectives that we will continue to see activity on, monitoring and reporting on progress, broadening the scope of stewardship responsibility and broadening the stewardship participation if the situation warrants it, and extending multimaterial programs to the industrial, commercial and institutional section.

I will touch briefly on the tire program. We believe that we have now successfully closed the loop and tire recycling in the province. About \$200,000 has gone out of the program to support municipalities in assistance with their collection that they run at their landfill sites. Four million has been paid to processors that manufacture products from the discarded tires or send them to energy recovery. About 50 percent are now being recovered and the balance is being used for energy recovery and, of course, we wish to continue to reduce the numbers going to energy recovery, because that would be the lower level of our priority listing.

The multimaterial stewardship board was established a year ago. Ten members representing the stakeholders, including UMM, the urban municipalities, City of Winnipeg recycling, consumer and retail grocery interests, beverage and newspaper publishing sectors, and the committee has been chaired by the Deputy Minister of Environment.

The tonnage of MPSP recyclable materials collected in '95 doubled to about 12,000 tonnes over the tonnages reported in 1994. I will only state, without putting all the detail to it, that, of course, fluctuation in recyclable material values makes this a very interesting and sometimes scary area to be able to administer and predict. Services are now available at 85 percent of households. Municipalities registered are now up to 123 with about 370,000 households registered, active recycling programs 102, curbside 42, depots 60, recycling systems planned that we know of amount to 10 and recycling support payments that would be paid out will amount to about \$1.5 million as of March this year. There undoubtedly will be additional anticipated payments.

\* (1510)

A number of areas I could spend, I suppose, further time on, but I touched on the used oil initiative. Perhaps the member would like to ask some questions about that

in the next hour or so. Capital region waste management strategy, I am sure that he will want to discuss that in some respect. The fact is that we have spent a lot of energy over the last few years putting together the capital regions, getting the municipalities and the City of Winnipeg talking to each other, but we have not taken the step to put in place a mandated top-down planning process that would require regional co-operation and, of course, that has led to some interesting debate to which my critics may well want to involve themselves in.

I want to confirm that the Environmental Youth Corps will continue again in '96-97. It maximizes, I believe, local involvement and volunteer participation of youth. I would have to indicate that the one aspect of this that is unique and I think has been successful, is that it literally speaks to the fact that there should be some volunteer involvement in the communities by our youth and by our citizens in managing what occurs. This program has labelled and encouraged the voluntary involvement of youth, and that is not child labour or free labour we are talking about. We are talking also about developing an attitude and responsibility for how people view their own communities.

I can remember one or two communities that applied in this area and when they found out it was only going to support a limited amount of capital and some supervisory wages, they said, well, that is no good to us, we want salaried positions for our young people. I would have to say that there are also situations out there—and I believe the fact that over 5,000 young people became involved in this—that it is, in fact, now becoming more and more of an understanding and an unwritten agreement between the community and its residents that it really does not hurt to have some of that volunteer commitment on behalf of the youth.

I look to the years that thousands of youth have put in the Manitoba 4-H program, as an example, and a number of others, the Boy Scouts, Guides and all those programs that also pulled together the energy and enthusiasm on a volunteer basis to accomplish good things for the community. I see the Youth Corps as being supplementary and helpful to those organizations in what they are attempting to achieve.

Mr. Chairman, I could put another 15 minutes worth on the record here, but I will attempt not to abuse my critic's time and let him pick the agenda.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** We thank the Minister of Environment for those comments. Does the official opposition critic, the honourable member for Selkirk, have any opening comments?

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the minister for his opening comments. I understand and appreciate the important job that he fills here in our society and that, of course, is ensuring the protection of our environment. I just want to refer to a headline from the Saturday, April 20, 1996, edition of the Winnipeg Free Press; it is entitled, Earth is gasping for life UN warns. The UN raised a report that states that our planet is experiencing an unprecedented mass extinction of life everywhere from the water we drink to the air that we breath. So this is an important task that he has to perform here in our province.

There are a number of issues that I will be raising. I know that some of my colleagues as well will like to take the opportunity to put some concerns that they may have on the record and raise issues with the minister regarding a number of different areas. I would like to, if we could today, talk a bit about the proposed sustainable development act. The minister referenced that in his opening comments.

He also mentioned the waste management issue here in the province that will lead us into the recent granting of a licence to BFI to operate a landfill site in the R.M. of Rosser. General waste management issues within the capital region are also of a concern to me and will be addressed as we proceed along today. We will be questioning the minister as to how far his department has gone along in terms of reaching a 50 percent reduction in waste, based on 1988 levels, by the year 2000. He did not reference the used oil.

I attended, along with the minister, the waste reduction 1996 conference that was held in Portage just recently. I want to ask him some questions on that.

I think one of the most important environmental issues facing Manitobans is water, both the quality of our water and the quantity of our water, and I want to follow up on that. It may be ironic at this time when there are huge areas of our province that are under water, but there are also areas of our province that are facing shortages of

water, in particular, ground water, and that is an issue that I want to follow up on.

I was disappointed that the World Wildlife Federation recently awarded a grade of D-minus to the government in terms of its Endangered Spaces Campaign and its commitment to protecting 12 percent of our province, and we will be questioning the government's action in that area.

I want to, as well, raise issues related to some of the changes that have been made to the Selkirk & District Planning Board plan, in particular, the decision of the planning board to move from four-acre to two-acre lots, which would allow an additional 3,000 new building permits to be issued in an area between the City of Winnipeg and Lockport on both sides of the Red River and the concerns that I have regarding that.

The Municipal Board is conducting hearings this week, and I was there for most of the hearings. I did, unfortunately, miss the presentation by the Department of Environment, so I am sure the minister will fill us in to that.

After all those issues are raised, I would once again, if I could, go to the State of the Environment Report as I did last session and highlight a number of areas in there and question a number of the findings in that report.

With those few comments, I would thank the Chair for giving me the time to make opening statements, and if we could just get into questioning, please.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** We thank the official opposition critic for those remarks.

Under the Manitoba practice, debate of the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of the department. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of this item and now proceed with consideration of the next line.

Before we do that, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table, and we ask that the minister introduce his staff present.

**Mr. Cummings:** Norm Brandson, Deputy Minister of Environment; Carl Orcutt, responsible for—I know what

he is responsible for, but what is his official title?—ADM of Operations; and Wolf Boehm, who acts in the function of a controller, administrator of Finance; and Dick Stephens, who works in the legislative and regulatory section of the department to keep all of the regulatory requirements and innovative legislative goodies in line. Go ahead, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** We thank the minister. We will now proceed to 1.(b)(1) Executive Support, Salaries and Employee Benefits, \$332,900, on page 48 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

**Mr. Dewar:** What I think we will do, if the minister agrees, is we will raise all of our questions under this particular item, and then when we are concluded, we will go line by line and pass all the rest of the Estimates.

Mr. Minister, in your opening comments you referred to the sustainable development act, and I understand that it was the original—the plan of the government to table the act this session. Could he provide to us today an update of that, as to that act, please?

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Before the minister answers, I would just like to note that it is the will of the committee to ask their questions in line 1.(b)(1), and then we will pass all the other sections after that. Agreed? [agreed]

\* (1520)

**Mr. Cummings:** If I indicated that I would be tabling the act per se, I did not mean to mislead anybody.

What our plans are is to bring forward for further consultation a white paper on the act, and the timing of that will be sooner than later but not within the next few days. We are hoping to have a white paper prepared within the confines of the session, but if we do not have everything completed by then, we will then make it a public document as soon as possible and go to public discussion on it.

**Mr. Dewar:** You will be releasing the white paper this session?

**Mr. Cummings:** I think probably what the member is concerned about is, are we going to have something that

is going to be in the session, that is going to be debated, and going to the understanding between the parties, in terms of introducing and passing legislation. It is not that—I am obviously not going to fall within that framework, and we are not going to take extraordinary measures to circumvent that. We will simply—if the white paper does not make it by the time the House rises—we will get it prepared or released as soon as we can this summer.

The white paper will have options. We will be putting together a committee that will do direct work on the paper and consultation, in the broadest meaning of the word, before we would go back to preparing something for the Legislature. But our commitment is, as it has always been, that we will work towards the implementation of this type of legislation. Given that it is the first of its kind, as far as we know, in the world, we are approaching it carefully, and we do not want to create any unnecessary fears or concerns out there either.

**Mr. Dewar:** As the minister is aware, there have been some concerns raised by the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, for example, where the concern is that a superboard will be contained in the act. Is that to be the case?

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, I guess it would be a little unwise of me to put together a lot of responses that would basically give you or anybody else the make-up of the bill until we had put together the white paper, but there has certainly been a fair bit of public consultation that would indicate reasons to ask that question. So I want to respond to it to put aside concerns that have been raised when that question is elevated to the front of the public's concern. What we are talking about is a situation where it would be much easier for those who wish to pursue a development to interface with government and get answers. That will require some kind of administrative body to do that. If I could be so bold and observe that the member has a clipping or two in front of him, and I know that some of the comments that have been put in the paper were quite misleading or at least tended to create the worst possible picture of what might occur.

The fact is that by policy today we try to make it as user friendly as possible for somebody approaching government, but that is my administrative policy, that departments attempt to make the interface with

government expedient and reasonable and at that same time making sure that they have exercised their due diligence in providing answers or asking questions or putting them into correct processes.

So I acknowledge that it will require some administrative structure. I get a little uneasy when people refer to it as a super board and think that we are going to usurp everybody's power here and there and everywhere. What it is meant to do is to provide a more co-ordinated response to the public when they want to interface or get approvals or licensing done. It is not just something that affects the Department of Environment.

**Mr. Dewar:** Is the minister contemplating within this new act to abolish the current Clean Environment Commission?

**Mr. Cummings:** I see the member has the paper in front of him that says, well, that ain't necessarily so. I guess he already knows the answer, but I am not trying to deceive him or anybody else. We certainly are looking at reviewing how boards and commissions would function under this act and whether there are some combined responsibilities, and I say that in a positive way. No matter what the name is, the work is still going to have to be done, and it will be done with the same amount of diligence that it is today. The act, I can assure you, will not interfere with the responsibility of government to do due diligence or if it does, I am sure we will be told during the consultation process.

**Mr. Dewar:** I attended a public meeting at the Winnipeg Library, I think it was in March or maybe February. The title of the meeting was legislating sustainable development and Mr. Sopuck was there. The question was asked of the crowd how many individuals were given an opportunity to make presentations to the government regarding this, any changes, and very few raised their hands. What level of consultation are you planning to have in terms of this act, public consultation?

**Mr. Cummings:** Something along the line of The Contaminated Sites Remediation Act, where I think we consulted until the public was getting tired of us, frankly, but what it means is that we will need to have a—I think there is an implication in that question. I can recall now the meeting you are talking about. I was not there, but there is an implication that somehow the concept, as it is

being talked about today, was dreamed up in some dark room after Christmas. That is not what happened.

There has, in fact, been workbooks and published materials that have gone out with feedback questionnaires. I would be the first to acknowledge that is not the best and the most capable way of getting the total amount of input that you want from the public, but it is one way. The principles and the concepts were tested by that process, and I make no apologies for the fact that it has taken a fair bit of time to move from that step to where we are now, where we are conceptualizing how you would put this information into an act.

Remember that there is a requirement to satisfy Leg Counsel, that it is a workable act, and that it does not contravene existing legislation or, if it does, there has to be consequential amendments. There is, I would say, half a dozen controversial aspects to it that will have a number of options that will need to be consulted and explained and revised, and can certainly anticipate a fair bit of public input and consultation on where it will go, or when we go to the public, where the public will want to take it.

\* (1530)

**Mr. Dewar:** Mr. Chairman, will the minister be allowing or supporting intervenor funding for different groups that are interested in making a presentation on the act itself?

**Mr. Cummings:** Probably not.

**Mr. Dewar:** That is clearly regrettable because there is, as the minister is aware, a great concern out there and expertise that exists in our province, and individuals, unfortunately, do not have the resources that the minister and the government have in order to put forward ideas and criticisms and so on. So I hope the minister would reconsider that.

Is part of the new sustainable development act to prepare every four years for a State of the Environment Report?

**Mr. Cummings:** I am certain that there are a number of options that one of them might be for, but I think the member is trying to push water up hill if he is suggesting

that we have hard and fast recommendations on this bill that will have those types of consequences. We certainly need to discuss in the consultation process what is an appropriate time period for a state of the environment reporting or sustainable development reporting.

There are two things—and I will be the first to acknowledge that there are two or three things—that impact on this. One quite simply is the availability of staff and dollars; the other is to be able to have a decent evaluation of the trends. We are on a two-year schedule right now, but there are lots of examples of where four years or five years would be normal. We know that every two years for a detailed report we find ourselves stumbling over each other on it because we have not quite finished the two-year report and we are already doing the next two years, so there is nothing magical about two years, nor is there anything tragic about the idea that we might consider four years.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I wanted to ask the minister whether there were any untendered contracts in his department in the last 12-month period or since the last series of Estimates, untendered. Perhaps he could tell us how many tendered contracts there are as well.

**Mr. Cummings:** We will check, but I do not think so. There is one, as an example—the member might wonder why I would give an answer—there is one contract that we probably had a small one for reviewing the library, bringing in a consultant from B.C. to help catalogue, due to some expertise in environmental libraries, who had a specialty in categorizing the type of library that we keep. I think it was about \$12,000. I know that one by memory.

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, I accept that the minister will get back to us with this information on the tendered and the untendered contracts over the last year. I would just like to ask him what the time frame will be on this because in many cases we have examples where we have asked ministers questions six months, eight months ago, and we are still waiting for responses. I am not suggesting that this minister would operate such as the Attorney-General has done in the past and other ministers, but I just want him to assure us that he would give us a time frame as to when—for example, the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister) provided for me within a reasonable time last year pretty much everything that I asked for, in some

cases, more. He did this a month or two after the Estimates, but nevertheless he provided the information.

**Mr. Cummings:** I am sure I can provide the information within a month easily enough, probably sooner.

**Mr. Maloway:** I would like to ask the minister about the regulations that are in force for the transportation of gasoline products from—

**Mr. Cummings:** If he could defer that line of questioning until the one member of staff comes back, he will probably get you the answers more efficiently on transportation of dangerous goods. If you will just give us five minutes until Carl comes back.

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, I would like to ask the minister then whether this particular person will be able to answer questions about other regulations in the gasoline business. I am not interested in just the distribution alone. I am interested in the requirements, the rules that govern the actual selling of a product, gasoline out of a tanker truck, and I do not know for sure whether this person can answer all of these questions. I gather he is just dealing with the transportation portion of it.

**Mr. Cummings:** The Department of Environment does not manage the actual sale and wholesale aspects of it. We manage the regulatory aspects related to environmental protection, but we may be able to give you the majority of the answers to your questions.

**Mr. Maloway:** In that case, then, perhaps the member for Radisson could ask a couple of questions while we are waiting for this person.

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** I want to ask the minister if he will indulge me to ask some questions. I am not sure what line this would fit into, but I am wanting to ask the minister first of all to just explain what the current procedure is for siting a hazardous waste facility in the province.

\* (1540)

**Mr. Cummings:** I want to make sure that I answer the question correctly. I think you are asking in a general

sense, but there is probably a very specific aspect to it. Under The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act, there would have to be an application made with specific information which would then be advertised for public comment, and then at that stage there is a decision point as to which direction the licensing process might take—hearings, or whether it would be done through—oh, pardon me, the same process as would fall under The Environment Act as well. So public hearing would be mandatory. [interjection] The reason I am double-checking this, are you talking about a disposal facility? A handling facility is not handled the same way.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I am referring to a hazardous waste disposal facility, and maybe the minister could clarify the definition of that as it pertains to legislation, and clarify specifically what that would entail in terms of the kind of containment facility that it would be.

**Mr. Cummings:** Containment would have a number of criteria that would dictate what that might be. I guess that is the thing that in fact some applicants find frustrating about the process; that is, it is specific as much as it is general, in terms of the requirements: containment of what, and what level of volatility, the conditions of the area and where the application is being made as well. For example, different locations might have much different results, frankly. That would be maybe the extreme rather than the norm, but that could happen. What would be a sensitive area as opposed to what would be a low-risk area might end up with different requirements.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I will just clarify that for the minister, because currently I think the legislation suggests that any facility that is going to treat, store or dispose of hazardous waste is defined as a hazardous waste disposal facility, and what I am asking is, what is currently the process for siting that kind of facility in the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Cummings:** I will take it directly from what the staff is indicating. The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act references essentially the environmental licensing process under The Environment Act. Public hearings are mandatory. The licence would dictate specific containment requirements depending on the development and the location conditions.

If the member is thinking about a specific site, if it is a site that we have talked about recently, I do not mind discussing her concerns if she would like to ask direct questions about a site.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I appreciate that but what I am wanting to focus on right now is the process for siting any type of hazardous waste, storage or disposal. I just want to clarify; I am understanding the minister is saying that currently there is a requirement for public hearings and for a Clean Environment Commission hearing on the siting of any hazardous waste disposal facility in the province. That is correct?

**Mr. Cummings:** It has been pointed out to me that there is a difference between licensing approval and site approval for operations. Is that where some of the confusion arises? I am sorry, I partly missed your question when I was getting that information.

There should be a simple answer to this. I did not mean to make it complicated, but the process for a site as opposed to the operation licence might be the difference.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I am interested in both the siting and licensing. I would think that it would have to be sited prior to being licensed, so I am asking for the minister to explain both of these procedures, for either the siting of the hazardous waste disposal facility for treatment, storage or disposal and then also for the licensing of said facility.

(Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

**Mr. Cummings:** The approval process is under the act. To use an example, the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corporation went through a siting process which looked at its various options.

They may be asked to describe how they choose a site, and that is a siting process. The approval of what happens in the licence once the site is chosen, as I guess as I described earlier, the licence would dictate specific containment requirements depending on the nature of the development and the location and the conditions. The proponent has to make an application and justify it in response to questions that the department puts to it.

When a proponent puts forward a site, if it is deemed acceptable, it could be licensed as a site. That does not

mean they can do anything on it until we have provided them with the specific licence for operations on a site, and that is what I referred to earlier about the location, the soil types and then what is potentially considered to be handled on that site. If the thought is that it is a process that somebody could easily slip through, it is not, but it is very much an interactive process, I guess, with the department in terms of determining what their responsibilities would be to meet the standards that the department would impose on it. Those standards are spelled out in The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act, and the process is more referenced than The Environment Act.

\* (1550)

**Ms. Cerilli:** Just let me see if I am understanding this correctly. Is the minister saying that The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act deals with licensing operation and the siting is dealt with under The Environment Act? Is that correct? Perhaps, if that is not correct, the minister could clarify and direct me to where in the Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act it speaks to siting of hazardous waste disposal facilities.

**Mr. Cummings:** I think, just the way the question is asked, trying to respond to it, there is not a specific process laid out in The Environment Act, but processes of that act can be directed by the department to be used. The conditions are as a result that would be imposed, however, on any operation as a result of what is laid out in The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act. For example, a major facility such as the Hazardous Waste Corp., the process that was imposed upon it was quite significant, but not every applicant is going to be expected, nor would anybody of reasonable mind expect them, to respond in the same way to an application.

The smaller, less complicated operations, and depending on where they want to locate, could follow a much more simplified process. Remember that The Environment Act is also driven largely, the process is driven largely or very often driven largely, by the amount of public interest expressed. When advertisement is made and concerns are raised, if those concerns are deemed to be legitimate and there is a decision point there, if those concerns are deemed to be legitimate or significant or cannot be answered appropriately by the



proponent, then further public hearings will be directed. If the question is how extensive those hearings would be, the question as you described it earlier is that there would in fact be a hearing, but that hearing would not necessarily take the form of the one that the Hazardous Waste Corp. went through. That was a two-year process.

**Ms. Cerilli:** So am I right in saying that there would be a two-stage procedure though for siting a hazardous waste disposal facility, first of all, to locate the site, and there would be a process which would include public hearings, and there would have to be a process to license that facility to operate under The Dangerous Goods Handling Act? Is that correct?

**Mr. Cummings:** That could vary according to the conditions that we talked about earlier. The type of facility and whether or not their siting would be an issue, where it is being located—I mean, unless you are out in the middle of nowhere, one of the first things that comes to mind is concerns of people adjacent to it in the planning process. This is very much interrelated with that aspect. Then there comes the soil conditions, the type of facility, what it might be doing.

Maybe the problem we are having in reaching a mutual understanding in this is the definition of disposal as well.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I was considering the definition as outlined in The Dangerous Goods Handling Act for a hazardous waste disposal facility where it says, treats, stores, or disposes of hazardous waste; treats, stores, or disposes of hazardous waste as part of a process for recycling. I am wanting to ask the minister if he can tell the committee how many sites in Manitoba are licensed for hazardous waste disposal, are licensed as a hazardous waste disposal facility in a manner that is approved by the department.

**Mr. Cummings:** About a dozen. Based on the full range, I mean, one that is described to me at the low end of the range would not be very big.

**Ms. Cerilli:** The minister said earlier that the licensing of the hazardous waste disposal facility would require a public hearing, and I am wondering if there are any plans to change that in Manitoba.

**Mr. Cummings:** Yes, there is an issue around size and type significance of a facility, and there is also an issue

around transference of licences, where there is an issue of whether or not a hearing process is required a second time. That is only logical, but when I said earlier about the size and type of the facilities, or the small ones at the low end, I mean, you are talking about a garden centre as opposed to the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corp. There does need to be some discretion whether or not there is a hearing. That is why I laughed when I heard the question.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Can the minister explain why there would be a rationale to move away from having public hearings and Clean Environment Commission hearings on the siting of the hazardous waste disposal facility? Given what the minister has just said about size and extent, if there could be some commitment that any changes in this area would specify that certain types of contaminated materials, certain dangerous and hazardous wastes, certain more significant disposal facilities would still require public hearings and the Clean Environment Commission review, if we would not sort of change legislation and weaken legislation for provisions of public hearings for all hazardous waste disposal facilities if we are only trying to change the process for those that are of less consequence.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, I would not share the member's concern. I mean, even the process today, I suppose, might point out where we would be talking about regulatory reform. There is, I think, a rationale to look at size and what it means in terms of process.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Some are insignificant operations, but all applications are public advertised, and that means that even a small concern would turn a very small application into a large, massive public hearing process in front of the Clean Environment Commission. I do not think that is necessarily a reasonable response to what variety of applications we are talking about.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I would think that the legislation speaking to this would define small, and I want to ask the minister if 10,000 tonnes of contaminated soil is small.

I am going to refer now specifically to the Domtar site, and I want to ask for the minister's assurance that there would be a Clean Environment Commission hearing and

public hearing on the siting of hazardous waste disposal related to the Domtar site in Transcona.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Chairman, I guess I was pretty sure this was where the member was heading with the question, and I guess she is entitled to her skepticism about whether or not 10,000 tonnes or 20,000 tonnes or 30,000 tonnes of stored material is considered small. I mean, I am not into playing word games about small.

Obviously, that is not a small amount, and I am not into playing games with the people adjacent to the Transcona site. I mean, this will be done by the book if anything of that nature should be brought forward.

\* (1600)

I guess the reason I can say that with some safety, frankly, is that it has just been pointed out to me that we have put Domtar on notice that we want the materials classified as hazardous, at the high end of the scale, to be removed from the site. I know that the member has some significant concerns about discussion that is being driven by Domtar about why do we not just leave it onsite and capsule it.

There is no reason that they cannot talk about it, but it is certainly not a position that we have accepted, and we have directed that the hazardous material be removed. However, the member knows, as well as I do, that over a period of 10 years we have found out how negotiations of this nature have a way of to-ing and fro-ing, and there is also an awful lot of who has the best new widget out there in terms of how they might deal with this stuff with bioremediation onsite or bioremediation offsite. We have reached the point where we are not interested in much more experimentation. If somebody brings forward a proposal to deal with this, there, hopefully, will be some kind of a guarantee attached to it, and give us some security as to what will happen. We really are concerned about getting this through within a reasonable period of time, or we are going to miss another year's season of operation.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I appreciate what the minister has just said about the department requiring them for offsite disposal of the highly contaminated soil, they being Domtar, and I am wondering if that is going to be put into a work order, or if the current proposal that has been submitted is going to simply be sent back and asked to be revamped

with the directive that it should include offsite disposal of that highly impacted soil. I do not want to take up too much more time at this. I was willing to have these concerns addressed in responses to the letters I have sent. I appreciate that we have also had some conversations on this issue, but then I noticed that there was legislation on our tables in the House today, and I am concerned that the legislation is going to change the approval process for siting or licensing a hazardous waste disposal facility. It specifically is eliminating the section that says, there shall be a Clean Environment Commission hearing and there shall be public hearings. I would like some explanation of why we are headed in that direction, and if it is not imperative in this time of increasing concern and awareness of a number of contaminated sites that we would have a strong requirement for public information and the public participation that occurs through Clean Environment Commission hearings.

I have asked also for a definition of the proposed Domtar site if there was going to be onsite containment cell there, if it would qualify then as a hazardous waste disposal site. It seems to me that it would. It would be a long-term disposal facility on an area that is still zoned residential land, and I am concerned that this would invoke this legislation that has been tabled in the House today. I am looking for the minister's assurance that is not the case. He has already said that there will be a directive for offsite storage and treatment or disposal, and I am again wanting to get some confirmation on that, if that is going to be coming in the term of a work order, or if Domtar is simply going to be sent back its most recent proposal, which, as I understand it, still includes onsite risk management. So I am hoping that the minister can answer those questions.

**Mr. Cummings:** I will answer the direct question, but there is also a part of the question earlier that I want to deal with. The Domtar proposal that was brought forward is being reviewed by the technical committee, but one thing that I have attempted to do and will continue to do is that this is in the hands of the department. The director involved, I am not going to allow myself to publicly second-guess him through Hansard while he is trying to have some technical review of what is in front of him. I want him to be able to review all of the information freely and provide his best technical advice on what should be done, but the letter has already gone to Domtar about the removal.

So, yes, you might logically ask, why are they coming back with another proposal for onsite management? But onsite remediation is different than onsite storage, and I have not personally seen the present proposal, but I guess we will be hearing about it once the technical advisory committee has reviewed it, and if it is nothing more than a rehash of the previous position, then I would suspect they would be recommending appropriately.

Going back to the legislation that we talked about introducing—that we are introducing—there is no intention, and I will during the course of debate on that legislation make sure that I can satisfy the concern about whether or not this is intended to weaken the position vis-à-vis licensing hazardous waste disposal facilities. But there are some pretty insignificant requests that come in that should not trigger a \$6,000 or \$10,000 Clean Environment Commission review if they are of minimal or zero risk, and if there is not local concerns that are being raised about the siting of it. I think that only makes some reasonable sense to attempt to deal with that

It is not intended to slip anything under the rug or to create a situation where somehow the minister might be able to approve the licensing of a facility that would be detrimental to the community. It is meant to be an administrative improvement while still maintaining the safety of the community and the operation, and it does not take away from the public, up front public part of the process.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Will then there be regulations that speak to the size or the seriousness of the contaminated materials being disposed of or something under the changes to The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act that are being put before the House?

I also want to ask the minister just to conclude, given what he said about Domtar being instructed that its offsite disposal for Transcona—I am wondering what will happen if Domtar goes ahead with its plan to have an open house and present to the community a plan for onsite risk management and will attempt to sort of sell this as something that will be done now as opposed to something else that may not be done for a longer period of time. I am concerned that the approach that is being suggested, through the residents participating on the technical advisory committee and in meetings with Domtar, that they are going to suggest that it is either the

current status of that site which still is extremely hazardous or a risk-management approach or some other question mark, at some question mark time in the future. I am wondering if that is what the minister sees as happening here, and if that is the case, if this risk-management proposal is presented to the community and there is an attempt to sort of sell it to the community, if we can have Domtar just maintain that it wants to go ahead with risk management.

\* (1610)

**Mr. Cummings:** I suppose there is an element of risk, to pick up on that word, in having the Domtar presentation and open house done in that manner, but the member is quite correct that if in fact the community were to consider something other than what we are talking about, I suppose we then have a responsibility to explain why we have given the order we have and whether or not we would have any—"order" is the wrong word; we have communicated our position—valid reason to modify that position.

There is a lot of uncertainty that arises around this issue. I find it odd that the only known place to lodge this material right now that we are aware of is in Quebec. There are lots of people who have come forward and said that they have the next greatest idea in how to treat it, but, no, we thought we were on the road a year ago with the desorption process, and it, in the end, did not work.

So I think the member will have to appreciate that we are continuing to work with this. I cannot always predict the direction that some of this may take. If we provide an order to remove it, that order will have to take into consideration where it might be moved to. We want to get the job done in a way that there is also a finality to the cleanup of that site. So that influences how an order might be issued in the end.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I just wanted to encourage the minister to also respond to my question about the regulations, and I will leave it at that. I mean, we could talk about this for a long time, but I will pass off the opportunity to ask questions to my colleagues.

**Mr. Cummings:** Two parts that I should answer to the member's question. One is to continue on what I was saying a minute ago about Domtar communicating to the community a certain view of how this should be cleaned

up. The department officials will ultimately have to provide the analysis to respond to that process, or whatever they are—you would want to describe what they are selling to the community.

Secondly, the question earlier about, would there be regulations that would spell out a certain size of facility? I think we will likely end up relying more on a wording that would direct the department towards a size rather than specific parameters. I am informed that the amount of variation that could occur in applications for small sites might make it pretty difficult to put explicit regulations in place, but there are ways of containing it through other wording.

**Mr. Maloway:** Today the Minister of Government Services made a ministerial statement regarding regulations, and I note that evidently 113 regulations, or nearly a quarter of the total regulation base, is being identified to be repealed or streamlined. I wonder, how many of those regulations deal with the Environment department?

**Mr. Cummings:** It appears to be six areas, regulations relating to hotels, campgrounds, industrial and construction camps, rags and other materials, classification criteria on product substances and organizations. I suppose it would be better if there were some sort of an additional explanation as to what these areas are. What the department has looked for is regulations that are essentially redundant or not being used or can be handled in a different way. It is not as if we are backing away from regulatory responsibility. Four out of the six of these are areas that we regulate under The Public Health Act, and they would be replaced by a general sanitation regulation that would apply and make sure that we are not setting a standard in an area that we should be.

**Mr. Maloway:** Could the minister repeat that list again? I heard the first two, but missed a couple in the middle.

**Mr. Cummings:** We will provide the list. I will give it to you, a copy.

\* (1620)

**Mr. Maloway:** I can appreciate that the government is trying to reduce the regulations and foster more

competition. That is the intention of the government. Not that many regulations ever get eliminated. When it comes to dealing with business, it seems to be a lot of promises, but very little action at the end of the day. But what I want to say is that the government is working very hard in its stated idea to bring competition into the home care business, but it does not seem to be doing much about bringing any real competition into the gasoline retailing business. I know that is quite a contentious issue with the public at this point, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the minister to tell us how the Environment department regulates gasoline from the well to the gas tank.

**Mr. Cummings:** I am told the best way, if I understand what I was just told correctly, that we regulate it when it is in a tank. In other words, if it is in a tank at the wellhead, or if it is in a tank on a truck, or if it is in a tank in a farmer's yard, or in a dispensing yard, a retailer's yard, it would be regulated under one of the regulations or sections of our act.

**Mr. Maloway:** Could the minister then tell us what these regulations are? What exactly are the regulations governing the handling of the gasoline, and I guess the minister knows, and I have mentioned this to the minister, that I am interested in knowing what is to stop a farmer in this province, a native group in this province or any other citizen in this province from obtaining a quantity of gasoline from, say, a source in the United States and selling it to the public directly out of the truck. I know that technically it is possible to do. Five years ago, there were a lot less regulations in place, and it was possible to do it at that point in time. Today it is not. There are a lot of regulations, and I would like to know from the minister as to what the regulations are that prohibit this from happening, with the view, of course, to fostering some real competition in the gasoline business which we all know does not exist.

So why is this government trying to introduce competition into the home care business but at the same time protecting, standing by and protecting, the gasoline business, protecting its friends? That is right, there is no competition there.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I am aghast that we now have the urban member adopting some pro-trade principles for rural Manitoba which, in fact, I guess my

view is that they are there. Where he is talking about competition, the fact is, provided they meet the transportation rules and there are a number of farmers out there who do—I have some that I am aware of where they do directly compete by buying proper equipment and bringing tanked gasoline and putting it into their own storage vessels.

They can redistribute, but where they would be caught in environmental regulations is, if they buy a series of old 10,000-gallon bulk storage tanks and stick them up in their farmyard, they better meet the environmental regulations. That is not anticompetition. That is to enable protection of the environment on what I hope is a reasonably level playing field.

Agriculture, however, and I think the member has probably a different angle on this, but agriculture, for example, provided their tankages are under 1,000 gallons, can store any amount of fuel without breaking any requirements to The Environment Act and without having diking and all of that that can be very expensive.

Where the issue starts to become clouded, and perhaps this is where the member is heading, if you are going to drag a semi out to the field and load 60-gallon tanks on the tractors or put the hose into a truck and load her out of a semi, that is a practice that is not acceptable. I am not sure whether it is under environment regulations or under the retail, but it is not a sound—[interjection] Is it the dispensing regulation? That is not an environment reg, I am informed, if there is indeed a regulation that covers that.

**Mr. Dewar:** Mr. Chairman, last summer, in July and August, the Clean Environment Commission held hearings on solid waste management in the capital region, and one of—in fact, the No. 1 recommendation was that the Manitoba government should provide leadership in the development of an integrated system for solid waste management in and around the capital region.

Could the minister bring us up to date as to how far he has gotten along in that recommendation?

**Mr. Cummings:** We have recently let a contract, and there was a question earlier about contracts. We have recently been seeking a tendered contract to do some consulting work on assembling the information in the

capital region on waste management and to deal with the appropriate municipalities, not only to find out where their sites are but to assemble information on the condition of the sites and some of the risk factors around those sites, and hopefully initiate at the table in the capital region some reasonable response to the challenge of reducing the number of waste sites and to save everybody a few bucks in the process. If every municipality has every facility supplied by their own volition and their cost, there probably is not much of a saving that will accrue to them. As they look to save dollars and keep their tax base stable, we are going to get increased co-operation, but as I said before, we do not have a regulation or a planning authority in place to force this regionalization.

**Mr. Dewar:** Would the minister tell us which R.M.s in the capital region are considering adding additional landfill sites in their municipalities?

**Mr. Cummings:** I cannot name them all, but I know that there are probably three or four active ones, obviously the private one, Rosser, BFI. St. Clements has an initiative. St. Andrews has an initiative, not for landfill but for waste management. There are a couple of R.M.s, at least one R.M. south of the city of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Dewar:** I want to, as the minister could guess—that we would like to get into the issue of the granting of a licence to BFI to establish a landfill site in the R.M. of Rosser and some of the concerns that we have. I want the minister to know up front that we disagree with the decision of the minister to grant a licence to BFI. The issues have been raised many times. There are concerns relating to the pollution of the ground water aquifer in the West St. Paul area. We know that the city of Winnipeg, that the Brady landfill site has the capacity to serve the entire capital region. As I mentioned, the Clean Environment Commission recommended the province initiate a waste management plan for the capital region. I do not think that plan is yet in place. We know there is a potential for the city of Winnipeg to lose \$7 million in tipping fees if this goes ahead.

Mr. Chairman, the question would be, how does the minister reconcile his approval of the licence to BFI and his own stated objectives of waste reduction in the capital region?

\* (1630)

**Mr. Cummings:** I am glad the member asked the question, because a lot of verbiage has been put around this topic and a lot of effort has been put into it by a number of jurisdictions. I think there is a significant misunderstanding that has developed over the last while, despite the fact that we have the R.M.s and the City of Winnipeg, as I have indicated, at the table, capital regions. BFI has been in the works, frankly, for four years at least. Everybody at the table knew it, and nobody was interested in talking even at that point. I believe I received a letter from the city stating that as of 1994 they had changed their proposal. I think the members would have got the same letter, and correct me if I am quoting it wrong, I do not have it in front of me. I believe it was 1994, they said that they were prepared to open up their landfill for surrounding municipalities.

The BFI proposal was there, and, prior to '94, a number of people had been working on trying to amalgamate services out there. During that period of time, a number of municipalities started looking to close down their landfills. When I referenced a couple or three active municipalities siting additional landfill capacity right now, I should qualify that by saying we are not talking about additional, we are replacing existing in most cases. We are not talking about putting three landfills where once there were two. We are talking about putting one where once there were two or five, where in fact these discussions are occurring.

When we were having the debate and even when the Clean Environment Commission made its recommendation, all parties knew that there was active discussion for a number of years and a lot of money being committed. Frankly, the issue of flat out imposing a solution on the capital region would be the only way that any of this would not have unfolded as it has.

My view was that there was a lot of competition; there was also a lot of opportunity for co-operation, both of which can be good if they are brought to bear on the problem appropriately. The city of Winnipeg—the licence is still in appeal. I will try and stay away from the specifics of the licence, but I think it is reasonable to respond to the concerns that have been raised in the House as well about, why do not we just arbitrarily kibosh any further possibility of licensing landfills in the capital region? This is not just BFI. There are a couple of other facilities out there, plus we have St. Andrews

today looking at a material processing possibility, a waste processing investment.

I have no idea whether it will proceed or not, but I have encouraged co-operation from all of these jurisdictions at the same time that these discussions have been going on. Every one of them has approached this discussion, in my mind, with their eyes wide open. Now there have been some municipalities that have signed agreements with the city of Winnipeg, and I did not appropriately reference earlier. Ritchot and Springfield now have agreements to use Brady. So it is a small success, but it has occurred. St. Cements would be the one which is looking to site a new one, as I believe Tache did, and they got some infrastructure support if they could go ahead with their project.

Let us discuss what the city of Winnipeg has put on the table, and that is whether we agree or disagree with the figures put forward. Nevertheless, their challenge has been based on loss of revenue to the City of Winnipeg. There is another challenge based on environmental matters, and the Clean Environment Commission and the director made their decision based on what they felt was the best way of answering the question from the point of view of environmental protection.

I have consistently said that BFI and the city should be reviewing how they can make the best out of this situation in terms of protecting the city from loss of revenue and at the same time provide reasonable, cost-efficient service to the capital region. Now, there is lots of opportunity for trading of haulage; there is lots of opportunity for co-operation and exchange of materials from one end of the city to the other.

The real opportunity, I think, that nobody is talking about is if we look at the total value of what the City of Winnipeg collects from its landfill operation, BFI, if we want to look at it in the harshest way, is going after commercial waste. That waste has not always gone to Brady today.

Well, without naming the company, I know a very large producer of commercial waste which put waste in Springfield, some in Elie—a number of sights where they hauled to. The city did not get that waste. It went to alternate disposal sites. Nobody said it should not. It is just that now we have two significantly sized entities that

will compete for that same waste. The city certainly will continue to have full control of all of its household waste.

**Mr. Dewar:** Mr. Chairman, is it correct that BFI is proceeding with the construction of this site even though the City of Winnipeg is making an appeal?

**Mr. Cummings:** Environment licences are active at the time they are issued. They are not inactive while they are under appeal. It is an active licence as soon as it is issued. Appeal does not make it inactive. Appeal can throw it completely out of order, so it is a risk that the proponent takes.

BFI is not the only one who has been under these circumstances. Most of the major licences that have been issued end up under appeal these days, but the way the act is written—by the way, an act that your predecessors helped write—[interjection] Well, just following the law.

**Mr. Dewar:** So it is true that they are proceeding with construction at this moment?

**Mr. Cummings:** I cannot confirm what they are doing, but if they are doing something onsite, they have a right to do it.

**Mr. Dewar:** Are we allowed to talk about the licence while there is an appeal underway?

**Mr. Cummings:** You can talk, I can listen, but I will not respond.

**Mr. Dewar:** There are a number of issues I wanted to raise clearly with the licence. I guess I could just put the concerns on the record here.

In the general terms and conditions, No. 1, there will be a liaison committee established. This is adjacent municipalities. I was just going to ask which municipalities would be part of that committee. Then, clearly, I have some concerns about the fact that the licensee, in this case BFI, will be able to monitor themselves. I find that to be quite an interesting requirement, one that I would disagree with.

Then it goes on. We are concerned about, of course, the potential leakage of any leachate into the ground water. I want to talk about that. As well, I am concerned

that they may accept waste from outside of the province. That is a concern to me, as well. I understand that BFI has done that in other jurisdictions where they have established a similar site.

There are a number of other issues, but could we talk about the ground water issue? This is a concern to me, both as the critic for the Environment for our caucus, but as a member of the Legislature that represents West St. Paul. I have received several calls from residents, and, as the minister could appreciate, they are opposed to the BFI proposal, and the construction of this landfill site adjacent to the municipality, to their homes. They are concerned, and it has been, I do not think, clearly demonstrated to me that the issue of leachate contamination has been dealt with. Even BFI recognizes that it could potentially take 210 years to contaminate the ground water aquifer. Of course, the city contests that, and they feel it could be as early as 20-30 years that the contamination could occur. This ground water is a source of drinking water for many of my constituents in the southern end of my constituency and in north Winnipeg, individuals who use this aquifer as their source of drinking water.

As the minister is aware, there was considerable contamination of an aquifer just to the north of this by chemical spills at the Bristol Aerospace plant in the R.M. of Rockwood, and he knows the effort that was required to provide drinking water to the residents and the considerable expense of that remediation.

Can the minister make some comments about that? Can he assure the residents of that area that their ground water will not be polluted by the establishment of this waste management site?

**Mr. Cummings:** Yes, the licence is intended to provide that assurance. Under appeal, we will hear if there are reasons that have not been addressed, I am sure. The amount of protection that was put in place, additional to what was originally proposed, is significant, doubling, as a matter of fact.

\* (1640)

I know someone asked me facetiously, can you double state of the art. I would have to say that is a bit of a facetious comment because you can double the amount of

compacted clay, the amount of impervious liner that is put in, but it also raises the issue about whether BFI and the city have reason to talk.

The city, in fact, could earn a significant revenue stream by agreeing to treat any leachate that might be collected by BFI at their landfill, and charge BFI full price for it, whatever that might be. That is an example where, if the city believes they are losing part of their revenue stream, they can get some of it back directly out of BFI, because one of the conditions of the licence is that they have to have it appropriately treated. So the question will arise, are they going to build an onsite treatment facility or are they going to hire the city to manage it for them? I do not feel that I can direct that, but it is certainly a question that I think should be asked.

Out-of-province material is controlled by conditions of the licence, which say that it must have local and provincial approval, and the monitoring—I am quite sensitive to the question about whether or not we are allowing the fox to monitor himself in the chicken coop. The fact is that the fox is monitored even while he is doing the monitoring. This is a double check on anything that is being done and through spot checks and everything else. It is no different than what we do in any one of a hundred other government customer interactions with spot checks and monitoring of the information that the customer is putting together, provided the assurance is being done right. I should leave my comments at that point, unless the member has more questions.

**Mr. Dewar:** Well, I received a call from a constituent who lives nearby and he informed me that that area was under a considerable amount of water a couple of weeks ago. Was the minister aware of that?

**Mr. Cummings:** I am informed that we actually had heard the same rumour and have checked it out and it was not; the area that they intend to develop was not. Maybe it is a different area they are going to develop. Nevertheless, that is something that will be required to be dealt with. If there is something about the elevations, they will not get their operating licence until they have met those elevation requirements. That is not a problem.

**Mr. Dewar:** Mr. Chairman, as the minister is aware, the R.M. of West St. Paul and the reeve of the R.M. of West

St. Paul has been very active in their opposition to this development.

Has he met with the reeve recently? Has he talked with the council and tried to alleviate some of the concerns, in particular the ground water issue?

**Mr. Cummings:** I have not, but I understand that there was at least some conversation between the reeve and the department. I am certainly open to any presentation they may want to make. They have made their opposition to this project known early on, and I have been very conscious of their concerns. I understand the department has been invited to attend upcoming council meetings. That will, undoubtedly, allow for exchange of ideas.

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a series of questions in regard to the approved licence for BFI and the R.M. of Rosser and its possible impact on the planning district proposed for the economic development of the airport. Last night, the Winnipeg Airports Authority, which will be taking control of the airport by early 1997, reported that one of the major components of the project was the development of the airport planning district.

My question to the minister is, is the minister familiar with the proposal of the planning district and the area that is being discussed?

**Mr. Cummings:** I attended a meeting two nights ago on that very topic. If I said I was intimately familiar with the plans, I would be wrong, but I am comfortable with the general knowledge of the plans.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Can the minister indicate if the BFI site is within the 15,000 acres identified by the Winnipeg Airports Authority?

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, the 15,000 is the larger circumference, and I am not sure that I can accurately address the question, but I have some confidence that the planning process will pick up any anomalies. As was indicated earlier today, the Department of Rural Development, the planners, in doing the review of the area, if they had seen or indicated the problem, they certainly have not indicated it to us. In fact that is what the planning process and the review was intended to do,



was to reflect whether or not there were any outstanding concerns.

I can indicate that as far as the airport flight paths and those questions have been concerned, those have been all thoroughly screened, and we are not aware of any problems. In fact, there was some considerable issue, as the member is aware, raised about whether or not changes had been made by federal aviation authorities specifically to accommodate this BFI site and whether there was something inappropriate about that decision-making process. The answer was that this is a standard that has been applied. I forget the precise number of kilometres, but this standard is applied. There was a list of, I think, some 20 or so airports across the country with similar size of planes being on the runway, and this was an acknowledged standard. I am not an aviator, so I read the information that was brought to me carefully and from that am satisfied that the location is not a problem for the airport or the proposed existing expansion of the airport planning area.

\* (1650)

**Ms. Mihychuk:** It is my understanding that Lynn Bishop from the airport, when hearing of the proposal of the BFI site in the R.M. of Rosser, expressed objection to that location on the grounds that it would indeed have an impact on the airport, given that the development that they are talking about will make Winnipeg, hopefully, a world-class site—"a gateway" is the wordage that I heard last night—a centre of air traffic and transport hub, where we see materials coming in from around the world, from Asia, coming into Winnipeg 24 hours a day, using the northern runway a great deal more than it is at this time.

If this type of development does occur—and our party is in favour of this development; we hope that it goes ahead; it is a major economic step for the capital region—to have something like the BFI site even potentially impacting on that development is a concern. Did the minister look at the potential of that impact, and is he saying that the concerns raised by Lynn Bishop are unwarranted?

**Mr. Cummings:** Do not put words in my mouth as reference of what I might think of any comments, which I cannot verify, that Mr. Bishop may or may not have said. I have talked to him as well and wanted to make sure that there was no possible situation where we would

do anything that would impede upon this development. I received from him, along with the federal authorities, that there is no conflict. Interestingly enough, the Summit sitting right on the shoulder of the airport, I mean, the city, over the years, has operated that site in very close proximity, and that is not a defence if either one of them is in the wrong location. I am certainly of the understanding that this is not an issue for the airport.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** It is my understanding that the issue is no longer at the forefront because the federal government apparently was under some pressure, I understand, to change their regulations. Once the regulations were changed, then the airport obviously—BFI fell outside of those parameters. Was the minister in favour, or does the minister support the federal government's changing of those regulations to allow BFI to be outside of those regulations?

**Mr. Cummings:** The member and I do not know each other all that well, but I detect a certain inflection of motive or some impropriety in terms of how these regulations are established. Maybe she should tell me who she thought was applying pressure because it sure as heck did not come from me.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** It is my understanding that a great deal of lobbying was being done by BFI to have the regulations modified, and I have no doubt. Presumably, BFI is interested in looking at, perhaps, eliminating the number of obstacles or barriers to the development of the site in Rosser. It is my understanding that they made an appeal to the federal government, the regulations got changed. My question is fairly simple: Does the minister support those changes?

**Mr. Cummings:** Again, the member has a certain inflection in her question that I do not particularly like. If she thinks that the federal authorities are so limp-wristed that they would respond to this type of request just because it was a good morning in Ottawa, hopefully the aviation authorities in this country have a lot more jam than that. It is certainly not my job to respond for them. I do not have any inclination—and I mentioned this deliberately earlier, the member from St. James might not have been clear what it was I was referring to, but my earlier reference to the 20 or so airports that have exactly the same regulations on them was material that was forwarded to me by my own request to try and determine

if there was any reason to be concerned, from the responsibility that we exercise not only in my department but in our government as a whole, in making sure we did not overlook something in this area. I was satisfied that their changes were done appropriately.

If you are asking me, do I support their changes or not support their changes, I do not have an aviation background or resources that would indicate anything other than what I saw in the reports from the federal authorities. If they are fudging the figures somehow, then they have got an awful lot to answer for, if that is in fact what the member is implying.

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair.)

**Ms. Mihychuk:** My question is to the minister responsible for our environment, Manitoba's decision to license BFI was one that he made, and I am somewhat reassured that he says that he considered all factors. My question was basically did we, as a province and him specifically as a minister responsible for the environment, look at those regulations, look at the potential impact, considering that he very well knows that locally we are trying to develop a world class facility for transport. Did he or his department look at this in terms of the WINNPORT development?

**Mr. Cummings:** Number one, this is not yet my licence. This licence for BFI was put together by the department and the director. I am not attempting to dodge ministerial responsibility for what goes on in the department, but do not ever confuse the idea that the minister issues the licence; the minister does not issue the licence. In terms of the specifics of do I support or not support the decision of the federal aviation authorities, I do not look at it in that manner. What I looked at was in the manner of whether or not the location had been suitably screened by those who might have concerns about it, and that included the airport authorities.

Unless there is something that changed since I talked to them, and I do not think there should have been, I received an assurance in that respect. Certainly the hard information that came from the responsible aviation authorities was what I referred to earlier, and either they are fudging their figures or we—do we have a reason to question them? I know that there were some people who were interviewed by the media who did question them,

but after I saw the number of airports that are in fact operating with those proximities, it was not seen to be a problem by me.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Would the minister table the proposed planning district, both in terms of the immediate 6,300 acres that has been identified and the overall planning district, the 15,000 acres in question; as well, the location of the BFI site in regard to that planning district.

**Mr. Cummings:** Yes, I suppose I can get that information, but I would think the member—like it is not the planning authority of the airport. If you were at the public meeting last night where they laid out their plans, then you probably already have the information.

\* (1700)

**Ms. Mihychuk:** The minister and I have not had an opportunity to be in a forum like this before. I can assure the minister if I had the information I would not be making the department go and search for this planning district and the proposals. I do not have a copy of that, and I would be interested in seeing where the WINNPORT and the airport development has identified as the area that they want to identify as a planning district. I am not one to try and create work or waste time. We do that enough at the other House.

My questions are basically trying to establish that clearly we have uses here that potentially may cause some conflict, and when we look at decisions made, the fear is that if the gateway concept does take off and if we see a significant increase in the amount of air transport, we may require another runway, we may actually expand our airport. My concerns are based that there has been a comprehensive review of the implications to ensure that we are not going to jeopardize what may be a very significant economic development north of the city for something that in my opinion we did not need, quite frankly. So that is the basis of my questioning. Perhaps the minister would like to comment.

**Mr. Cummings:** It is a fair question put in the context that you just did. I am not sure how much of the information is mine to release, and certainly I think the airport planning authority will likely be more than anxious to get that information out in front of all of us.

But remember what we are talking about in terms of the plan and the expansion around the airport. You are talking an industrial development. You are not talking residential, and you are not talking about making the runway another three miles longer heading out towards this potential landfill site.

I am sure, knowing what little I do about the planning process, but I think I can assure the member that the planning process, if it is worth anything at all, will have taken into consideration all potential problems that could be associated with this and whether or not there would be future incompatibility in some manner, but we will attempt to get that information in terms of where the specific boundaries are.

Today's landfill—and I want to make it clear I am not talking about BFI here, in case someone tries to say I am talking about the licence. Let us just talk about today's landfill. I guess I just caught myself thinking that I understand there is actually a bit of a mess around Brady right now, but the fact is a modern, properly operated landfill is not just dump and fill anymore. There should be recycling capacity. There should be a whole lot of other things, and, in fact, a modern landfill can have a face, a very, very small percentage that is kept open. The rest of it can be virtually farmed over or grow alfalfa on it, that type of cropping according to some plans that I have seen in my office, not from BFI, but from how the operations can be run if operated by a different plan than what we would normally have.

So I am suggesting that even in reviewing the proximity to the total 15,000 acres that WINNPORT might eventually want to assume, that we are not likely talking about an incompatible relationship. I will do what I can to find the information.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Can the minister assure us and those involved with the airport development that there will be some type of review of the potential conflict? As we see growth of the two land uses, is the minister considering periodic reviews of this issue?

**Mr. Cummings:** Maybe the member should repeat the first part of the question. I am not sure that I understood.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** It is my understanding that the minister feels fairly confident that there is going to be no conflict

between the landfill site and the airport development. I am saying in the future, when you may see some changes in that area, is there going to be a review process? Is the minister and the department going to keep in mind the potential conflict that may be there, and it may develop in the future.

**Mr. Cummings:** Then the process that we are in right now, if it can be demonstrated that there is something incompatible, potentially. It is not an issue that I would ignore. I mean, the appeal process is real.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** I thank the minister for those comments, and I look forward to reviewing the site maps. Can the minister provide for me some basic information? What is the depth of the till or clay at the site of the Rosser site?

**Mr. Cummings:** I am not sure we can give you those specifics. That information would have been presented at the hearings. I think we might be going by memory or guessing if I tried to answer it right now.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Is the protection of leachate through to the ground water going to be done artificially or through a natural system? By that I mean is it going to be some sort of a plastic liner or are we looking at natural materials being the base?

**Mr. Cummings:** Both.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** There is no doubt in my mind, with my scientific background, and it is fairly limited and getting out of date as the years go by fairly quickly, that we do have the technology to have a landfill site virtually in almost any type of material, and we can do that. My philosophical position remains that at the Brady landfill site we have a site that has significant Lake Agassiz clays, which are impermeable. They house natural substances that do not allow a great deal of permeability and that it is a natural site for a landfill. In fact, geologically, if you are going to have a landfill, around Winnipeg is one of the best, and south where the clay is thicker, all the better.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

There is the ongoing story that if it was not for some of the landfill sites, we would not have any ski hills at all.

Our toboggan slides were down into ditches, but at least now we have some topography, so it is not that I am opposed to landfill sites. I think that they can be harboured safely with minimal environmental damage. The question becomes, given that I understand that there is an enormous capacity, you know, philosophically, I would say it would be preferable to remain in the natural site where we have a lot of capacity. The decision to license BFI in Rosser, we will have to agree to differ on that basic decision.

I would like to ask the minister a more general question in terms of garbage disposal. Can the minister tell us how many pits, or shall I use more delicate terminology, garbage sites, landfill sites are in permeable materials, aggregate materials? I know that it is probably policy or hopefully our mission to remove sites from those permeable materials, but I also know the practicality. We do have many landfill sites that are still in gravel or sand or permeable till materials. Do we have an idea of how many?

\* (1710)

**Mr. Cummings:** We probably know how many are improperly sited and how many are going to have to be shut down in the near future, but I cannot tell you right at the moment. We do have a fairly extensive list out in rural Manitoba. I do not think, if we are talking province-wide as opposed to the capital region then, yes, we have an idea of how many are on, for example, one-year permits, to clean up their action. It might not always be because of improper siting. I think it would be fair to say that those that are the biggest problem have probably already been shut down. That does not mean that we do not have more. I know of examples a few years ago where the only place the water collected was in the bottom of the landfill. We knew it was in the wrong place.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** What is the relationship between the Department of Environment and the Department of Energy and Mines, which has a fairly extensive database in terms of where these aggregate materials are?

**Mr. Cummings:** I am sure we have availability to all of their data. We also use the data that the Hazardous Waste Corp. collected, which is probably more current, because they were looking for specific landfill-type information that did a pretty detailed survey of the whole

province, which is, while I have the mike, another reason why the corporation had so many expenses in the start-up period. It was not losses associated to handling hazardous waste. It was expenses which were useful for more than just Hazardous Waste Corp.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Would the minister be prepared to share the information that they have in terms of landfill sites on short-term permits, in addition, the number of sites where we do have water table at surface? Personal experience, not that much outdated, had indicated that there are several pits in the province where the water table is at surface and could cause some concern. I would be interested to see how we are progressing in terms of cleaning up our landfill sites.

**Mr. Cummings:** Yes, we can provide—there is no privileged information in this area. One thing that we have always maintained is that we—and it was in 1989-90 that we started increased enforcement and waste reduction policy really parallel. It has, in my view, worked out very well. As the regulatory enforcement came down more on the sites that were operating out there, it became more obvious to the owners that they had to consolidate for costs that were being imposed on them, at the same time consolidate because of improper siting.

The numbers have probably dropped a lot compared to the historic numbers which may not be all that—well, okay, make a liar out of me. There are about a hundred less than there were five years ago, I am told by staff. Bear in mind, frankly, there are probably landfills out there that are not used very much that we may not even know about. I mean, that is not an admission by commission; it is a matter of number of disposal areas that have been established across the province over the years.

In my own municipality, which is very small, there were Clean Environment Commission hearings on withdrawal of waters from the aquifer, and they referenced a couple of old landfills in the immediate area of the pumping site. After the commission was done and the report was issued, some of the local people were heard to say, what do you mean there are only two? I mean, there were likely five more within the next 10 miles. Historically, that is how Manitoba has developed, so we have come really, I would suggest, a long way in the last five years.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Can the minister share how many inspectors the department has in terms of looking at landfill sites and historically how that personnel ratio has moved? Are we looking at more inspectors, because we obviously have more regulations and more landfill sites as we create more garbage, or how is the monitoring of this regulations actually being enforced?

**Mr. Cummings:** While we are looking up the precise numbers here, I would say that we are not putting more officers in the field. The department did have an increase a few years ago, but it stayed flat or reduced slightly from that increase that occurred in 1989, I believe. We did decentralize as a result of a reorganization in 1989, and, frankly, in terms of how you enforce landfill, you need to be decentralized because then you do have the people in the regions who are familiar with the area and working with the local councils. It has been a very, you know, tying it to the decentralization, opportune time to do a whole lot of things. It is the same as putting police officers in a certain area. Sometimes you do not think you have a problem until you have an enforcement officer in the area because then you find the problems.

Almost everyone in the regional office can do enforcement. We have about 65 inspectors capable of doing waste disposal grounds. Bear in mind that we have a lot of public health inspectors out there who would also be environment officers. [interjection] There are 65.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** I would like to just do a local constituency question. I have got just a few more questions, a few more minutes before the time is up for the day, and I wanted to ask this one area of questions.

**Mr. Cummings:** We have staff here who are responsible for providing some information on the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund. If we do not need them—or do you want to ask questions in the morning?

**Mr. Dewar:** Tomorrow morning.

**Mr. Cummings:** We will be continuing at nine tomorrow morning? [interjection] Okay.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** I recently got a phone call from a concerned citizen saying that the potential water quality of Sturgeon Creek would be, in fact, perhaps jeopardized

by a decision to approve a piggery near Marquette, Manitoba. This is a piece of land that was purchased, I understand, by the Municipality of Woodlands. They wanted to establish a landfill site. The Department of Environment rejected their application, and, subsequently, the R.M. sold the property to another interest who is now putting on, I understand, 6,000 head of hogs on the same piece of land.

Obviously, the concern here is that the Department of Environment rejected the landfill site and now we have approval of a fairly major hog production. Can the minister provide for us the reasons for rejecting the R.M.'s proposal for a landfill site at the property? If the minister is not familiar with the location, I believe I have that.

\* (1720)

**Mr. Cummings:** We do not have, at our finger tips, any of the reasons that were put forward for rejection of the landfill. I know when I was at the site there is a fair bit of overburden. It might not have been enough overburden, however, for a landfill. Remember that a landfill requires a few metres of clay, so the two decisions may not be incompatible. I saw some of the soil opened up and it was clay as far down as they had opened it that day, and we are talking three or four feet. So, if you are talking about building a lagoon, for example, they can mitigate that by putting in recompacted clay or a liner if necessary.

A lagoon can be shallow, and I think the requirements for a hog lagoon is like six feet of clay—perhaps a little bit more, but six feet, for sure—between that and any potential ground water infiltration. That would have to be engineered, and we require an engineer's approval. While we do not design or necessarily inspect at the point of start-up, we require these types of operations to have been designed to engineer's specs to certain permeability and they have to deliver that information to us. Therefore, we believe we have a high degree of certainty as to what the quality of the lagoon might be, if in fact there is a lagoon.

I believe that is also a site where you have got about three or four sections of land around there where there are huge tracts of land. If appropriately contracted for them, material could be spread for fertilizer purposes, low

quality land, frankly. The comment was made to me there that a jackrabbit would have to pack a lunch to get across some of it a few years ago. It is not, like I say, high-quality land, but certainly what I saw—now if you want the detailed information of why the landfill may have been rejected, I suppose we can find that out, but I suspect it was as I said.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** It is interesting that the minister describes the land as being marginal. Often sites for landfill sites are based on lands that are nonagricultural. That is often because the ground materials do not sustain good soil development and, therefore, crop development is also very poor. In areas where you have a very coarse, permeable till, for example, you will get scrubby oak bush type of surface cover; you will have a shallow soil development where you have limestone near the surface. You will also have what would be called marginal agricultural land. You just need to go into the Interlake and you can see some of the topography there.

The question is, given that this is, indeed, marginal land, it would I think raise suspicion as to what is the soil material there, what is the surficial material, what is its permeability, what is the depth of limestone in that area?

The reasons that I heard from the person that called me was that the landfill was, in fact, rejected because water table was very close to surface. If that is true, and I have no doubt that this person was somehow trying to misinform me, he was actually I guess involved with the citizens group that protested the landfill site in that area, water table apparently is very high, and the concern then is, if the department said no to a landfill site, why would they say yes to 6,000 pigs?

**Mr. Cummings:** I think the specifics I will have to leave until we actually have them, but salinity is also a reason why you would not have good production. That could be related to the water table. But remember that livestock operation, they are required to have in excess of a year's retention capability so that spreading should occur at a time when it is not likely to be washed off or flooded out, so there are ways that it is not inconceivable to speculate on how this could be managed and not be a detriment to Sturgeon Creek.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** What assurances can the minister give the people that live near Sturgeon Creek, and in fact

Sturgeon Creek feeds into the Assiniboine, that monitoring will take place to ensure that we do not have the pollution of the water that feeds into our area?

**Mr. Cummings:** There are a number of things that enter into it. One is the guidelines under which these operations are expected to function, and we have The Farm Practices Protection Act, which dictates what would be acceptable practices, and we would be able to provide inspections.

If I could take the next two or three minutes, I would like to actually address that issue if the member does not mind. The fact is we want and we are encouraging increasing development of livestock operations in the province. You can tie it all the way back to the fact that we have lost the subsidies for moving grain out of this part of the country. There is still going to be lots of grain grown, and right now the price is very high, so it is going to move readily, but in the long run the development of this part of the continent is going to be related to value-added, one of which is increased livestock production.

Our government will do everything reasonable to make sure that we do not trade an economic activity. In fact, I think, given the comments that we have put on the record over the years, you can expect me to say that we will do everything possible to guarantee that we do not allow certain sections of the livestock industry to give the industry a black eye. We have no interest in turning a blind eye to bad operations. There have been some examples of where the edges of good reason have been abused, and, frankly, the Department of Environment and the Department of Agriculture will be expected to enforce and maintain a certain standard of operation that is not harmful to the environment.

I believe my word is my guarantee, but you cannot take a written guarantee to the folks on Sturgeon Creek until I know a little bit more about the specifics of the soil, but in the general sense, the ability to maintain a standard of operation in that area that would not contribute to pollution floating down off the fields—it is very flat country out there. A lot of alfalfa being grown is what I saw when I was there. It should be an ideal location if properly managed, but I would have to get more information on the soil types.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** The hour is now 5:30 p.m. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee. The committee will be recessed until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

## HEALTH

**Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau):** Would the Committee of Supply come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Health. Would the minister's staff enter the Chamber at this time, please.

We are on Resolution 21.4 Health Services Insurance Fund (c) Hospital and Community Services, Hospitals.

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** We have with us today Dr. John Wade, Deputy Minister of Health, and Mr. Tim Duprey, Assistant Deputy Minister for Finance and Administration, and the regulars that have been here all along who have provided us with so much valuable assistance.

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Mr. Chairperson, I thank the minister for accommodating our requests in terms of dealing with matters under this particular item. The budget has identified approximately \$53-million reduction for hospitals. Can the minister provide us with any kind of a breakdown as to where those allocations come from, and in terms of breakdown, urban/rural, tertiary care versus community hospital or any kind of breakdown in that regard?

\* (1500)

**Mr. McCrae:** As I said earlier, those numbers have not been finalized, but they will be as we proceed through the fiscal year. It is a time of change and so you are going to see that \$53 million come out. You will see \$38 million or so go in to help bring about the achievement of that \$53-million saving, but obviously the design teamwork and rural issues have not yet been resolved, so it is impossible for me to say at this point.

**Mr. Chomiak:** But surely that figure did not come out of the sky, Mr. Chairperson. Is there not an analysis or a breakdown in terms of how that, I mean, irrespective of what the design team recommendations are, and I understand they have done or are doing their financial analysis. Surely that figure did not just come down,

surely it was based on some kind of analysis. Can the minister give us that?

**Mr. McCrae:** The deputy minister and all of the people with whom he consults, i.e., hospital CEOs and medical leaders have identified those figures and targets in a preliminary way.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I am developing a new style as we are moving on this. I am not going to flog a particular horse more than twice, so I am just forewarning the minister. In terms of the transition support, the \$38 million, can the minister give us an outline or a breakdown as to how that money can and will be allocated?

**Mr. McCrae:** As I told the honourable member the last time we discussed this, we cannot achieve all those millions in savings beginning April 1 because we have not even made the decisions yet, so it is expected that a lot of changes will happen later in the year. So in order to keep the present system going until then, we need that \$38 million to make that happen. In addition, alternatives in the community need to be financed. It is too bad that we have this strike on right now because it confounds the issue a little bit. Anything we can do in the community, in block care or in long-term care, to bring about a reduction in acute care are the kinds of things that will happen. Announcements will be made and implementation will happen, but certainly I expect to see it later in the year.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Let me try a specific example. Community Health Centres have seen a budget reduction this year. The government has announced a \$38-million one-time, I assume, hospital transition support. What if a community health centre were to come forward with a proposal of several million dollars of a massively expanded community-based program? Would that be considered under the \$38-million transition?

**Mr. McCrae:** Community health centres are included and are part of this process. Proposals coming forward from them that would assist us in achieving the goals we have agreed upon as part of the consultative process are obviously going to get looked at seriously by decision makers.

**Mr. Chomiak:** But I am correct in assuming this \$38 million is one-time transition support?

**Mr. McCrae:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Just to take the example further, Mr. Chairperson, if, for example, community health centre X said, we want to offer a \$1.5-million program of community outreach to provide X, Y and Z services to our clientele, and you say, yes, it fits in with our plan, you have \$1.5 million this year, how can that community outreach, should that service be assured that it is going to have long-term or continuing funding for that program, how is that going to work?

**Mr. McCrae:** Obviously, the question is a bit hypothetical, as the honourable member would acknowledge, but a program that finds favour with the group that is looking at these issues would no doubt have to be funded, certainly, for this year on a this-year basis. If the program is to be sustained in future years, then it would have to be financed on an ongoing, yearly basis in the future. Funds would have to be identified for the purpose in the way that we always identify funds.

In a system where you do not keep adding new funds, which we do not do anymore, we have to reallocate. We know that there are areas of the health system where we are spending money, but we are getting limited health care outcomes that we can measure or use to justify the expenditure. It is in those areas where I could see reductions happening in favour of dollars being spent in areas where it is expected that the outcomes we want to achieve could be achievable.

**Mr. Chomiak:** That is what I am basically trying to get at in terms of what the \$38 million actually represents.

**Mr. McCrae:** In the same way that \$53 million was a preliminary number identified by the decision makers, in the same way the \$38 million was identified as what would be needed—and that was identified in a preliminary way too. So the planning must carry on in earnest to make sure that we can—there seems to be some comfort around the fact that that \$38 million is sufficient to get the job done.

**Mr. Chomiak:** What I am getting at is, the \$53 million is gone. The programs have been removed. The downsizing will take place. I mean, that is accepted. The \$38 million is a one-year, one-time transition. If it is to be used totally as a transition in order to move the

system, I understand that, but I do not have a clear understanding in terms of what we are going to be left with in the end, because there is always a danger when government does one-time funding to programs as to what the future of those programs is.

**Mr. McCrae:** I am not sure if we are at cross-purposes. I hope not. The goal here is to remove expenditures of \$53 million in the hospital system on an annual basis. We have to do that. The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) knows why we have to do that. [interjection] In part, we have to do that. He is right in saying, in part, because there is more than one reason for adjusting our health system. It is not simply because the dollars are being removed. It is the right thing to do, Mr. Chairman. There are some outcomes that we are expecting but not getting, and we need to get them or else how can I justify in this House or anywhere else all this expenditure when I am not getting the outcomes that I need as the Minister of Health in the province? So we have to take that \$53 million out.

The acute care sector has been identified as the place to do it. We are told that we have all these beds per thousand population, more than we need. How many more? That is what the discussions are all about. How many more have we got than what we need? I was teasing the honourable member for Inkster who, you know, suggesting—he was saying that we can take all these hundreds out. Nobody knows today, I suggest, exactly how many beds too many we have in our acute sector. We know in rural Manitoba, generally speaking, and in Winnipeg, Manitoba, generally speaking, but we need to get some precision around this, because you have to be precise in these sorts of things. It is hard to do that, especially when you are working with professional A, B and C, and you get four opinions. I mean, out of three professionals, getting four opinions is a difficult thing to deal with, but that is the kind of thing that happens. So we have to make some choices and decisions that have to do with quality care.

We know, everybody here admits that we have excess capacity. When we start to trim it, that is when we start to get into the difficulties, but that has to happen this year, and thank goodness we are not doing it all just by ourselves. We have all of these professionals and caregivers and client organizations involved in the decision making.



\* (1510)

**Mr. Chomiak:** Perhaps I will give an example that I gave to the Red River students in the hallway. Patient X goes into a hospital. We say that there may no longer be a need for patient X to enter that facility in that institution. Patient X still has a symptom, an illness, and his symptom and illness has to be dealt with somewhere, so patient X may not go to an acute care facility. The question is, where does patient X receive health services and how does patient X receive the health services that are required? That is the issue.

Now let me go to a specific then. The minister has already stated that there will be a reduction in emergency wards in the city of Winnipeg. I am not going to quibble about the numbers, but that has been stated. The government has announced a fairly extensive rejigging of the emergency system in the city of Winnipeg. Are monies allocated from this \$38 million for that purpose, and what is going to be the structure in the future?

**Mr. McCrae:** I think I understand the honourable member's question, unless it is a specific answer which has not been arrived at. We know we have an overcapacity of emergency services. Everybody agrees. I think even the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) agrees. So it comes down to a question of location of emergency services, location of quasi—if that is the right word in this context—emergency services.

Should there be seven, eight—yes, eight including Children's—emergency rooms operating in the city? The answer is no. There should not be. We do not need eight emergency rooms in a little city like Winnipeg. So how many do we need? Well, we have been told we need five. I think that is what we were told—six, counting Children's.

The honourable member knows this issue very well. He is an expert, I suggest, because he knows that we need six, counting Children's. I do not know if he agrees or disagrees with that, but that is what we are told by the experts.

So then the question is, where? If we have got eight and we need six, then two are not needed. It is pretty easy to figure out what this discussion is resolving itself to, and that is that two need to look at some kind of

change. The issue is, should it be Misericordia Hospital and Seven Oaks Hospital, which have been identified by some as the two? Well, those who support those two hospitals, you can expect to hear from them very quickly, or maybe we should leave them open and just work with the Victoria General Hospital. You will hear from those people too.

**An Honourable Member:** I would suspect so.

**Mr. McCrae:** And you would be right. So I think we understand that, and all I want to do, and all everybody else involved in the process wants to do, is make sure that the system is working when people have emergency requirements.

Now I used the expression quasi-emergency, and I wonder if we are doing, or have in the past done, enough work in that area. You know, when all the walk-in clinics in the city are closed in the middle of the night, it seems reasonable to expect that people are going to want to go to their hospital emergency room, and that is not the best practice. Everybody knows that is not the best practice. So, rather than run a full-service emergency room in more places than we need them, should we not look to make sure that we have the capacity for the right kind of service for the right kinds of situations?

There will always be those situations where it is not clear what your emergency problem is, and you may be best to show up at Health Sciences Centre, for example, where they have every kind of medical emergency equipment that you can expect to have in a modern and well-equipped emergency facility. That makes sense. We are not asking people not to access emergency service when they need it. No one has ever said that, and no one is going to say that, but if you have a hangnail—you know, that is the only example I can use. That is not the best example, but if you have got—

**An Honourable Member:** A broken foot.

**Mr. McCrae:** —a very minor problem. I was not going to say a broken foot because I know there are a couple of members in this place who would get—

**An Honourable Member:** I waited until Monday. I did not use the emergency room.

**Mr. McCrae:** Anyway, if you have a very minor situation and yet a worrisome one, maybe the full-scale emergency room is not the right place.

I like to encourage physicians and patients to have the kind of relationship, where they can consult at the appropriate time, and if it is in the middle of the night—as a person who was the father of young children, I know what it feels like at three o'clock in the morning to feel your child virtually burning up with fever and you wonder what to do. Should I go to the emergency room? Should I call my doctor? What should I do?

Well, I was not shy about that sort of thing. Maybe others should not be either. I would phone the doctor and find out what advice the doctor would give. Very often that kind of advice prevented me from taking the child to the emergency room. Sometimes it would be, do this, do that, and the other, and check with my office in the morning, and by that time, when morning arrived, the need even to check with the doctor further had passed. But that is good medicine, good health, I suggest, to have access to your primary care person.

I do not know, maybe my answer is not specific enough for the honourable member, but I think that all of the people working on the design teams, including emergencies, are attempting to look at what we need and then trying to make sure that we have the budget there to deal with what we need. It is clear to everyone that we have the budget to deal with what we need. It is just not properly allocated. Getting it reallocated is a painful, painful experience and transition. It gives rise to people saying, well, you do not know what you are doing, simply because you are doing something with which they do not agree.

They do not always agree for good population health reasons, but they agree for other reasons, or disagree or whatever. That is why we need to spend some tax dollars to inform the public of what the issues are and the various proposals to resolve them.

We will come under some fire, I suggest, Mr. Chairman, for spending taxpayers' dollars to hire communications companies like Biggar Ideas, for example, who win when requests for proposals come forward and their proposals win out of a field of others, but anybody who is critical of a government that wants to

include the public in the consultation process perhaps wants to focus the public's attention on their particular point of view to the exclusion of everybody else's. That is something that we are going to address head-on, and we are doing it now.

I see ads and I hear ads setting out the government's position vis-à-vis the position of other interested parties. I think that is appropriate in this day and age, at this time of change and transition, and I fully expect to hear criticisms from my colleagues opposite, but the point is they did it, other governments are doing it, and it has to be done. In order to bring about necessary change, you have to have a population that understands the need for that change. It is for that reason that you will see more of this sort of thing, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I note that answers to questions ought not to provoke debate, and I can indicate that the minister's response could keep me standing in this place debating for well into next week, just to the minister's response, but I want to utilize the opportunity of staff who are available, and I want to ask some other specific questions, although I may return to this area.

Can the minister give us a specific outline? The minister has provided us with the bulletins. Where is the financial analysis with respect to the Urban Planning Partnership at specifically, and will we have access to that information before the final decisions are made?

**Mr. McCrae:** The analysis of the cost is underway at this time. It is not completed.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Will we have opportunity and access to that information prior to the government making final decisions?

\* (1520)

**Mr. McCrae:** Virtually everything we do is public, and I have every expectation that all aspects of this process will continue to be very public.

This is a very open process we are in. There are so many people involved in it. It is no wonder that documents are made available publicly before I make them available because we have so many partners, and they simply want to make sure that their point of view is

properly aired, so documents become available. That is a price a government has to pay for being so very open like ours is.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I would still like to get some understanding from the minister as to who is making the decisions with respect to the allocation of this \$38 million. Is it the deputy minister and senior staff, or is it the urban planning teams? Who will be making the decisions with respect to the allocations of these funds, of this \$38 million?

**Mr. McCrae:** I believe in ministerial responsibility, Mr. Chairman. No matter what committees and representatives in the department, or whoever, are involved in proposals, I will never escape accountability for decisions that get made. So, therefore, I might as well say I am the one who makes all of the decisions.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, as a percentage increase probably Blood Transfusion Services has received one of the largest, if not the largest, increase in the Department of Health. Can the minister outline for us what that money is to be allocated to?

**Mr. McCrae:** We have a new funding method which is no longer subsidized by other provinces. Funding for blood cross-matching service is no longer subsidized by other provinces. New funding for the switch in blood products to—oh, here is a word—Factor VIIA. That is what this is about. It is the way that Blood Transfusion Services funding has changed. The subsidization from other provinces is not there, so it would reflect a greater expenditure on the part of our government.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, I asked this before, and the minister gave me a brief answer. Where are we going with respect to the Canadian Blood Agency and the Red Cross in terms of the government's plans?

**Mr. McCrae:** I do not know if the honourable member received the communique that was—he did. Okay. Well, that communique really forms the substance of my answer, and it is the same answer I gave before, but the minister has agreed that solutions must be governed by four very important principles. Safety of the blood supply is paramount. A fully integrated approach is essential. Accountabilities must be clear. The system must be transparent.

Our working group will be consulting the Canadian Blood Agency, the Canadian Red Cross, interested consumer groups to ensure that we come to some fruition respecting at all times these four principles.

**Mr. Chomiak:** The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and I were anticipating allocating some time this afternoon, and we were very pleased that the deputy minister is here. I understand that he may not be here for the balance of the afternoon, and I just wanted to confirm that because I am taking the questioning now, I just wanted to confirm that the member for Inkster at 4:30 will have an opportunity to question with the deputy minister present. I understand he has an appointment that is rather important. So, is the minister confirming that?

**Mr. McCrae:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Can the minister give me any idea of what the rolling budgetary expenses are for the hospitals for the upcoming fiscal year, the three-year rolling budgets that are given out regularly to the hospitals?

**Mr. McCrae:** We are not working on a three-year path at this time, Mr. Chairman. Transitions are going to be part of the culture of health delivery for the next number of years, but certainly for this next year. In the next three years it is impossible for us to have a three-year rolling report to make because we expect to see change in the next year or so. At that time, once the major changes are over, it may be that the rural health authorities or whoever might be doing that in the future, but we do not have it that way at this point.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I wonder if we could get an update from the minister with respect to the consolidation of the cardiac program and the neurosurgery programs at Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface.

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, significant progress has been made in these areas. More progress, I think, is possible. We have leadership at the two programs. The programs are the subject of agreement pursuant to the so-called Wade-Bell report. I believe subject to perhaps subsequent information being made available to the honourable member, we have been able to address our physician resource issues much more effectively. I am just not certain if we have solved all of the problems there yet, but through the advent of the academic health

consortium we have made and will continue to make very good progress in cardiac sciences and in neurosciences.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I am aware of some of the statistics the minister has released with respect to cardiac surgeries. Would it be possible for the minister to give us some statistics in terms of waiting lists for the various major surgeries at the major surgical centres?

\* (1530)

**Mr. McCrae:** We have some very, very significant improvements here with respect to surgeries. We are going to be able to do about 1,000 cardiac surgeries compared with the traditional 600 to 700, which is very, very significant. In March 1995, interim funds were approved for the period of March 15 to June 15, 1995, as a short-term strategy for reducing waiting lists. These dollars were redirected institutional funds and were shared with seven hospitals to reduce the waiting lists for joint replacement surgery, open-heart surgery, MRI scans and radiation oncology.

Dr. William Lindsay, head of the cardiac sciences program, is addressing issues related to cardiac surgery. This new system is expected to identify the priority of each patient based on standard clinical indicators. The final statistics for 1995-96 will not be available until later this year, but we do know that 58 additional joint replacement surgeries were funded in 1995-96. We have also been advised that St. Boniface General Hospital and Health Sciences Centre expect to have performed approximately 1,000 open-heart surgical cases in 1995-96, compared with 749 in 1994-95. We also provided funding for an additional 450 MRI procedures and have continued to work with the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation to address waiting lists for radiation therapy.

Manitoba Health will continue to work with the physicians and hospitals in 1996-97 to improve the system, to ensure that Manitobans receive surgery within appropriate time frames. Specific issues will be addressed in this consultative process.

All in all, a very, very positive report, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Could the minister give us any idea when we anticipate we will see the secondary services

report I have always called it Wade-Bell II. When we will be seeing that report?

**Mr. McCrae:** We hope, Mr. Chairman, if we are fortunate, to have this in our hands by the end of this month.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Will it be made public at that time?

**Mr. McCrae:** We will ascertain that when we receive it.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I know the honourable members want to carry on their conversation. They are doing it in the right place, if they could just tone it down a little bit. The honourable minister, to continue.

**Mr. McCrae:** I am sure that at some point that will indeed be public. Just exactly when, I do not know, but we will look at it with interest when we get it. So many people are involved in inputting it, I cannot imagine it not being a public document at some point in the future.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I believe I have previously asked and, if I have not, I am asking now, if the government will give us a list of all of the major consulting contracts that have been undertaken this year and last year with respect to the Department of Health?

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Speaker, anybody that is paid by the government is listed in the Public Accounts.

**Mr. Chomiak:** The government has contracted with a significant number of companies and individuals who do major work, and it is only in the spirit of openness and in the best interests of the public that they know who those people are and what those contracts are and what they are being paid. I would ask the minister again whether or not he will release that information.

**Mr. McCrae:** I agree with the honourable member, Mr. Chairman, and that is why this government is so extremely open.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Now that the minister has stated the fact, will he also translate it into action, and will he release that information?

**Mr. McCrae:** The action the member is referring to is very apparent. It is already part of our system.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Will the minister release information concerning the KPMG contracts?

**Mr. McCrae:** We will take the honourable member's question as a representation or under advisement.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, is the process towards an integrated service delivery system anticipating another public forum as was conducted in the past?

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, we see KPMG has already facilitated public forums. I know the honourable member knows that. At some point, you have all this input unprecedented anywhere right here in Manitoba, and then you have to make some decisions. It is not easy to do that, especially when you know somebody is going to be there to say, you did not consult enough because, obviously, I do not agree with your decision.

So only when we have consulted enough and agreed with the point of view of the dissenter will the dissenter be happy, and then you are going to make everybody else unhappy. Let us get our minds around the idea of the quality of service and listen to the advice we get. Go to the forums, and I commend the honourable member for the role he has played in that regard, but the forums have been had, and now it is time for us to look at the information gleaned and make some quality decisions.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, I am not going to pursue the issues of bed numbers and the like because that has already been pursued by my colleague in this forum.

What I would like the minister to outline for us therefore is what the time frame is for the decision-making process. Surely, the Department of Health which anticipates cutting \$53 million out of the acute care sector this year and which anticipates putting in \$38 million by way of transition funds has a time frame and an outline of the decision-making process.

I wonder if the minister can outline for us what that will be because people at the various institutions are clearly—and I do not think we always appreciate what effect these decisions have on the people who are caregivers in the system.

**Mr. McCrae:** I am reminded every day.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Well, the minister says he is reminded every day. I think it would help the process immensely in terms of dealing with caregivers if they were to have some idea of what the time frame is in this regard.

**Mr. McCrae:** The time frame for these discussions is April 1, 1996, to March 31, 1997. We know a lot of significant things have to be done. We know a lot of significant things have already been done, announced, implemented. It is in the course of that time.

\* (1540)

With respect to the hospitals, the honourable member wants to know when is this going to happen and what is going to happen. Well, I do not know, Mr. Chairman. If I knew that, I would have announced it and done it already. Let us be reasonable here. We have said that the KPMG report should be available at the end of this month. I expect that the work of the Urban Planning Partnership, they are finalizing their work now, so, there again, maybe at the end of this month we will reach that stage, but there is a lot more to do in preparation for what goes from that then.

I am trying to be as responsive as I can, but I do not know how to tell the honourable member that on, I do not know, September 4 we are going to make a decision about the Seven Oaks General Hospital, or on August 12 we will make one about the Misericordia. I do not know how to answer that question at this point, and it is not for lack of trying, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, the minister has been helpful with regard to that response because the two major pieces of the puzzle, if I can put it in those terms, the Urban Health Planning Partnership and KPMG, if those two enterprises come together at the end of the month, which is what the minister stated or very close to that, then presumably in the next several months there will be two things happening; well, possibly two things happening. Either there will be ministerial decisions and announcements, or what I was under the impression there was going to be, there will be some kind of a public discussion followed by ministerial decisions or final decisions.

I will tell the minister why I say that, because, for example, we who have been working on behalf of Seven

Oaks Hospital have been advised from the very highest levels that there is going to be some kind of public process prior to the final decision taking place. So perhaps the minister can outline which of those scenarios is going to be followed.

**Mr. McCrae:** We have been and are in a consultation process. I do not know what the honourable member perceives unless it is that he rents a room in the Legislative Building and has public hearings at which everybody comes and says, we disagree with the government. That may be his idea of a good way of making public policy.

We have had the process we have had thus far with the design teams and the Urban Planning Partnership. We have been receiving feedback from interested parties ever since, and that feedback is being brought to the attention of the Urban Planning Partnership and the KPMG. They will make their views known at the end of this month, and then it will be decision time very shortly thereafter.

**Mr. Chomiak:** The minister again has been helpful. He has outlined what the process is. I was under the impression—well, I laid out the two scenarios, and the minister has made clear KPMG comes in, the Urban Health Planning Partnership comes in and shortly thereafter the minister is making decisions, and he is not anticipating any kind of a public forum or a public input in this regard.

So the minister has been helpful and has laid out the scenario, and it is different than what was communicated to me. It was communicated to me, as to the scenario, specifically that relating to Seven Oaks Hospital, because the impression that the chair of the board, Olga Fuga, gave to us on the Seven Oaks grassroots committee was that there would be some kind of a public—what the chair of the board, Olga Fuga, gave to the committee was that she was under the impression there would be some kind of a public input prior to the final decisions taking place. The minister is saying the public input has already taken place. He is affirming that from his seat—

**Mr. McCrae:** Thousands of petitions, thousands of people in this building and—

**Mr. Chomiak:** The minister says thousands of petitions and thousands of people in this building. That is true,

and the grassroots of the city have generated a fair amount of public attention and drawn public attention to their viewpoints. One hopes that the government will be persuaded by the efforts of those citizens. Indeed, one hopes that the government will be persuaded by the efforts of the citizens that are now appearing in front of the independent committee to review home care, and we will see from that process perhaps that the government will respond and deal with the issue as has been obviously directed by the citizens of Winnipeg who have shown their opposition almost unanimously to the government's plans to privatize home care. But I digress, Mr. Chairperson, from the line item in the Estimates.

The minister made reference, in an earlier comment, to walk-in clinics, and the minister has constantly identified walk-in clinics as a difficulty in the system. Can the minister outline what plans are in place for walk-in clinics in the province of Manitoba?

(Mr. Frank Pitura, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, it is getting harder and harder to identify what a walk-in clinic is, so the question the minister puts is difficult to answer. [interjection] That is the next question? Well, it is hard to identify what a walk-in clinic is because, I guess, at some point, some people thought that that was a no-appointment place. Well, you can make appointments there. Emergency rooms are walk-in clinics if you want to stretch the definition far enough. An emergency room, you walk in, you get service. Sometimes you wait, but you get service. So I am having a little bit of a loss.

We are trying to work through the MMA, too, through the billing number system and the Physician Resource Committee. I know this is not a very specific answer, but it is hard because it is so very hard to identify what we mean when we talk about a walk-in clinic.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, that is in fact one of the issues, is identifying what constitutes a walk-in clinic and how one deals with funding arrangements attached thereto. Can the minister give us any more insight as to where the department is going in conjunction with the MMA and the MMA agreement to define the parameters of what constitutes a walk-in clinic?

\* (1550)

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, they are just lining up for my job. I cannot figure this out, why everybody wants my job so much.

The work of the Patient Utilization Review Committee is ongoing. The work of the Medical Review Committee is ongoing. The work of the Manitoba Medical Services Council in partnership with the government is also ongoing. Through all of those vehicles, we will continue to work toward better practice patterns for physician services; and combined with some help from public education programs, we expect to get a better type of utilization of our health services.

I know that when we get into a debate about eye care, for example, or we get into a big debate about how often you should have a full physical exam, those are really good things. Even though usually the government is the target of all of these discussions, somebody has to lead and so leading means being there and being part of the discussion. I think that is an appropriate thing for governments and I am first to tell you it is not always easy, but those discussions are going on.

Manitobans, I think they are getting much more informed about the services that there are out there, what they cost, how best to use them, and you are always going to find somebody who is just an outright loser when it comes to the use of our health system. There is going to be somebody breaking every rule in the book and that is going to happen. That is why you need these structures that we have in place like the utilization or medical review. But generally, even today, I think there is a sense that people want to use their health system right, and they are asking the government to build the kind of health system that lends itself to being used right and then it will be better. We will get better outcomes. We will get better value for our money and all the rest of it.

The government is not the be-all and the end-all of the health system. We are a funder basically, but it is time for governments to be vigilant about just what it is they are funding and lending their support to. Let us get the value for the money being spent.

On May 7, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) requested information respecting Manitoba Health's contract with the Victorian Order of Nurses. Manitoba Health is continuing to purchase nursing home help

services under the new contract terms with the VON until September 30, 1996. The rates currently being billed are—I do not know if that is something I should be making available at this point.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, this is not meant as criticism, but dealing with questions in this area is a lot like dealing with jello at this point, because virtually every issue affecting hospital and health care is under the auspices of one or other Urban Health Planning team. Because the Urban Health Planning teams have not made their final recommendations, and because KPMG has not made its final recommendations, it is very, very difficult to ask questions because, frankly, we are not going to get answers. But there are several areas where it is fairly clear.

In fact, I personally think that the government is going to proceed—and one should not give personal opinions, but I am on this track anyway—I think most of their recommendations under the Urban Health Planning Partnership are probably going to be going forward. That is my personal view. Certainly, it appears to me from the way the government is moving—at least in this area, the area of labs—given the recommendations of the previous lab committee and given the fact that most of those recommendations dovetailed with those of the Urban Health Planning Partnership that there is going to be major and significant changes in the lab sector in Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba.

Can the minister tell us how negotiations are going, for example, with MDS?

**Mr. McCrae:** It would be inappropriate and incorrect to describe any contacts that have been made by or to or from MDS as negotiations.

On May 3, the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) asked if permission is required by the parents of youths in order to be tested for HIV and AIDS and, further, if confidentiality can be assured.

A physician is obliged to follow the wishes of a patient respecting confidentiality. This includes testing for other STDs and/or pregnancy.

With respect to a youth, if the youth's physician is convinced that the youth is a mature minor and able to

make appropriate decisions for him or herself, it is quite appropriate for the youth to request testing and specifically to request that the parent not be involved. If a parent suspected something and sought information directly from the physician, the physician would then no doubt encourage the youth to release the information and/or the physician might hold a family conference, including the youth, to discuss the issues, particularly if the youth still lived at home and to ensure the best interests of the youth are observed.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, can the minister describe for me what a rapid-response laboratory is?

**Mr. McCrae:** I think the expression carries the connotation that you are going to get quick service.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, yes, I recognize it is that but, because it is a specific recommendation and in fact it is fundamental to the recommendations of the laboratory committee and because people in the lab sector are asking this over and over again, I wonder if the minister could just outline what is envisioned by a rapid-response lab? Is it a way station where samples are dropped off? I mean, is it a place where some analysis and some menu takes place but a limited menu? Can the minister define it? Since it is strongly recommended in the urban design team report, because it appears to be something that is probably going to be introduced and because people in the lab industry who have come to me say they do not know what that means, what is meant by it?

**Mr. McCrae:** Maybe we will just turn it around a little. The honourable member has done a fair amount of work in this area, and maybe he can tell us what his understanding of that term is as it is used. That way we can have an appropriate exchange of information, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, my understanding, from reading into it, is that it is a scaled-down version of a lab that has a limited menu that provides for—and the limited menu or the kind of services that are the standard and the most frequent services utilized and that it provides those and it is a drop-off depot where other, longer term testing is done, can be transferred to a central repository. That is how I read into it, but I really do not know, and the people in the industry are really uncertain as to what is meant by this term of art.

**Mr. McCrae:** When we return tomorrow, Mr. Chairman, I will have a little, I think, something more to say so that the honourable member will get a sense of where the department is as we look at these recommendations that come to us. We will consult the design team for a further understanding that we can share tomorrow with the honourable member.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, I thank the minister for that response. Just clarification again, the minister indicated, of the \$38 million, none of that is to be allocated to capital. Is that correct, \$38-million transition?

**Mr. McCrae:** None of that \$38 million contains allocations for capital improvements.

**Mr. Chomiak:** So, returning to a line of questioning I had started earlier in the afternoon, if for example the government accepts the recommendations of the emergency design team, and if it is necessary to augment the resources at one or two of the hospitals, the tertiary care facilities presumably in the city of Winnipeg, and if it is necessary to deal with capital equipment, for example, putting more ambulances on the road, presumably that could be dealt with through transition since it is the City of Winnipeg that handles the ambulances, would that money then come out of the transition fund for both the changes required at one of the tertiary care facilities and, if needed, the extra funding for transport and other related items?

\* (1600)

**Mr. McCrae:** We are not going to be accepting any recommendations that are going to end up costing us more. We have to redesign a system that will no doubt require some expenditures to redesign, but we are not out to spend more on an annual basis for any particular program simply because somebody suggested we ought to change it. We want to see changes that will improve service, but by that we also want service delivery to be made more efficient. We know we have thousands of people who have told us that our system is less than efficient.

That being the case then let us move to do something about that, but we know there are not more dollars available. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) can



attest to the fact that next year we are going to be working without \$220 million that we have had up until now, and we will not have that. That is a reality that some people tend to want to deny exists or to—I do not know, I do not know where they are coming from. The fact is we have to do a job here and we have less money to do it with. Obviously, when we look at the overall plan here, we cannot accept the in totality recommendations that have us spending more money when we have less money to spend.

So we will come out with the old Rubik's cube again, I guess, because it is the best way to describe some of these complicated issues. The idea with the Rubik's cube is to get all the red cubes to line up on the one side of the cube and all the blue ones and the different colour. You do not have your puzzle solved until you have all the cubes in the right places. So here with our design teams we have got all these design teams, at first working separately, coming together, and now we are trying to put all this puzzle together. It is quite a job as the member would no doubt understand, but we are not able to spend more money, and in the area of capital we have certain limitations there, too.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Well, this takes me right back to where I commenced questioning when we started the Estimates this afternoon, and that is, what is the \$38 million going to be utilized on? Perhaps the minister can give me an example or two, so that I can have some grasp of what the \$38 million is going to be utilized for.

**Mr. McCrae:** This is May 9. We are a month and nine days into a new fiscal year, and we have not closed any beds or achieved any savings. We have had to pay money to keep the services that we have got open. That is an example.

**Mr. Chomiak:** So I misunderstood the utilization of the \$38 million. I was under the impression that the \$38 million was a transition fund that would permit changes to take place and ease the transition from one to the other.

What the minister is saying, and I want to understand this completely. The example the minister has given is somewhat different from that. Is the minister saying that is only one example of what the \$38 million will be utilized for, and my initial assumption is still correct that

other monies will be utilized for structural changes, not structural meaning capital but structural changes in order to make this difference? Is that correct?

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

**Mr. McCrae:** If I give the honourable member another example, it might make it clearer. I think he has got it.

The first example was that the passage of time calls for us to spend money that we expect not to spend next year. Second example, the idea of alternative housing project where nursing services might be part of the program. It gets people out of the hospital. That alternative housing comes with a price tag, too, so we need money to finance that alternative.

We will also need to have funds in place next fiscal year, so that we can carry on with this alternative, but there will be savings in the hospital in the meantime, and it is from those savings that we will be able to fund programming in the future and remove funding from the health system, as well.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Well, the minister answered a question I had posed earlier and gave me some satisfaction that some consideration will be made, because there is a real problem in one-year funding on a transition basis in terms of a long-term program. It is a trap that all governments fall into and it creates difficulty.

But the second point, the \$53 million has already been taken out of the system or allocated within the system, so where are the savings going to come next year that will allow that continuing program to continue?

**Mr. McCrae:** I do not think we are speaking at cross purposes. I think the honourable member maybe is having trouble with the reality that we have to have a net reduction of \$53 million out of the health system for subsequent fiscal years. He is having trouble grappling with that. [interjection] No, he is saying okay. He is understanding that, but he is saying you cannot do it without further problems that go with it. No one is saying this is an easy process that we are in; I am not.

**An Honourable Member:** Because you are projecting decreases, as well, next year.

**Mr. McCrae:** You are going to have to ultimately have enough savings, if that is the right word here, to finance the level you need to arrive at in budget terms, but also to finance alternative services that you have to put into the community. We fully recognize that. It is not an easy process. I am not sure where the honourable member is taking me with this, but maybe he is trying to come up that somehow it was worse than \$53 million. Well, in real terms, that argument could be made. We have significant problems that have been brought about for the various reasons.

I wish the federal Liberals had handled it a little differently. I do not object to the goal they are trying to achieve—in fact, I support that goal—but it is a little hard to swallow this pill when they are not taking the pill themselves. Funding transfers to provinces are being reduced at rates way above reductions in the federal government programs themselves. That is the part we take issue with. That political fight, we are not going to just drop it, but there is no point setting up fair share offices and going and bleating and wailing and moaning and whining and screaming and all of that.

It has happened and it is going to happen. I cannot change it. So there is no point in absence of our ability actually to respond appropriately, just to fight the good fight for political purposes. This is too important to engage in that sort of thing. I do not mention it every time I stand up, but, every so often, so that the members will understand that it is not like I want to do all these changes as quickly as they need to be done. Yet, when you look at Manitoba and compare with other jurisdictions, we are taking a much more staged approach to things that we see elsewhere.

\* (1610)

It is for that that we have been judged a year ago at the polls and, you know, five, six, seven, whatever years, I guess it is not that many, four years from now, we will potentially be judged again based on our ability to deal with the resources that we have and to make adjustments accordingly. It is not easy, as I have told the honourable member, and we would invite the honourable member's support for the types of changes that we are engaged in.

It will call for significant change this year, and when you look at the bigger picture, it is a little bit hard. That

is why when I appeared in the main foyer of the Legislature here and spoke to about 1,000 people who wanted to make their views known about the Seven Oaks Hospital, it is my responsibility as a minister to look at the health system province-wide.

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in opposition can afford the luxury simply of looking at the Seven Oaks Hospital and nothing else. The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) enjoys the same luxury. He can be critical on all fronts, and I, for my part, have to justify positions taken in various parts of the system for the sake of the whole of the system. That is the difference between my responsibility and theirs, and I accept that responsibility.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, in fact, I now have a much better understanding of the funding under the transition and what that money is to be utilized for. In fact, there has been a cumulative reduction in hospital funding for the past several years. We have gone down considerably in the last several years, and it has been an absolute decline. It has been a net decline in the hospital sector for the past three years. So we are simply proceeding down this front.

The minister is saying the net decline will continue, and the real test, the real test of the process will be where resources are going to be utilized outside of the acute care sector in order to deal with what I referred to earlier as that patient symptoms. The patient still remains and the question will be where those resources will be placed and where those resources will be utilized, because the patient will still exist, though the bed may not exist or the institution or the means by which that patient will be dealt with will not exist.

The thing that surprises me is that with a net decline, an absolute decline, I would anticipate some substantial increases in certain areas, such as community health centres, and the minister has indicated there is an increase in home care this year. Heaven knows, there has to be, given the demands that are going to be placed on the home care system in the next several years if these changes go through.

I think I now understand what the \$38 million is going to, and it does differ somewhat from my earlier observations. If one looks at the writings and the

comments of the design teams during the process, if there is one point they are insistent on throughout, it is that resources have to be put in place before the changes take place. I do not know if those resources are going to be in place if the minister anticipates proceeding with all of these changes this fiscal year. That has always been our criticism of the government health reform policy since 1992. I wonder if perhaps the minister might want to comment on that.

**Mr. McCrae:** It is true that the honourable member has been critical at times of our performance. We are getting better across the country, I suggest, at measuring program efficiency and performance. There was a time when we did not do that. I sometimes think the honourable member and his colleagues are living in that time before measurement became a part of the system. Measurement simply was based on how many hospital beds you got, how many nurses you hired, and as long as you could throw more money into it this year, things were looking pretty good. Whether you were getting any health outcomes was quite another matter. So even though it requires change, we are now looking at outcomes far more seriously than we ever have and, for that, I finally thank those who have been involved in the system that brought that about.

What we are doing is pretty consistent. What we are doing this year is quite consistent with what you see in the 1992 document, *Quality Health for Manitobans: The Action Plan*, which enjoys unanimous support. Yes, people will quibble about whether we are really doing that or not doing that, and that is what politics is all about. It has nothing to do with health care, it has to do with politics, how well you can convince the people that the other person is wrong and you are right. That is what it is all about. It is in that environment we work. I often feel like thanking people, especially senior people in the Health department or in the Education department for that matter or any social service department for their forbearance. They did not really get into the job to be politicians or to know all about the politics of these things but they soon find out that is what they need to learn about because it is the environment they are working in, and I think it is unfortunate.

Be that as it may, it is like that because people right across the province value their education system, their health system, social services system. They expect their

politicians to speak out on issues. So whether you are on the opposition side or the government side, people want to know what you stand for. They want to know what is wrong with the system and they want to know what is being done to fix the system, but if there is any major improvement in health services that is very important for the longer-term future, it is the fact that we have finally learned to measure results rather than input. We are measuring output now and that is a far better measurement in terms of making decisions about the system, making decisions about changes. Doing this, we need to be as sensitive as we can in times of change. I say as we can, I do not have any choice about change. Change is necessary.

So while we are going about that change, let us at least try to be sensitive to the people in the system. I refer to the employees and the caregivers and the stakeholders. Obviously, the reason the changes are happening is for the purposes of the consumer that is the No. 1 priority person in the system. After that everybody else is important, too; but the No. 1 consideration has to be the patient, the customer, the client, whatever the consumer is.

I think I am hearing the honourable member. I know that sometimes he can be critical. Sometimes it is deserved. Most of the time it is not. Sometimes it is, and when it is, it is our duty to be responsive and be prepared to acknowledge that that particular change was not necessarily the right change, or it was not done right and to say so.

I know the other day when Premier Klein was in the gallery, the honourable member for Kildonan made the point that, well, you know, Alberta, they had the courage to admit they were wrong and to change course. What the honourable member for Kildonan forgot to mention was that Alberta had already taken some \$600 million out of their health system by the time Mr. Klein had said, we better take a detour—as I recall in response to the laundry workers at one of the hospitals or somewhere like that. The honourable member has interpreted all that as to be a major withdrawal from positions taken. I do not see it that way. After \$600 million has come out of the health system in Alberta, for the Premier of the province to say, well, you know, maybe we should take a little detour, if we came anywhere close to taking that kind of money out of our health system on a per capita ratio

basis, we would certainly be able to say, hey, we probably do not need to make any more changes.

\* (1620)

Even then it would be the wrong thing to say because I think change is necessary. Maybe Mr. Klein made his detour for the right reasons. I am not so familiar enough with Alberta politics and the health system there to know. But to characterize what he did as a complete withdrawal from the direction he was going is totally, totally misleading because they have got behind them significant change that it remains in front of us. This is not Halifax, but there are things about the system in Halifax that ought to be looked at in relation to what we are doing here. That is where they are making one hospital out of five.

I am going to get someone to write me a speech, Mr. Chairman, that sets out what is happening across our country, because we do not live simply in Manitoba and we are separate from everywhere else. I remember being in opposition saying to people like Eugene Kostyra and what is his name, Victor Schroeder, Finance ministers, and being critical of all their tax grabs and everything like that. He would say, well, you know, we are third best, Saskatchewan does this and B.C. does that. I would say the same thing these colleagues opposite are saying to me, but let us talk about Manitoba. So the more things do not change, the more things seem not to change. On the other hand, we are proud of our place in Canada as a health jurisdiction and we ought to be, and it is a credit to our politicians, it is a credit to our caregivers, it is a credit to our policy makers at all levels, that we have achieved what we have achieved in Manitoba.

So I accept some of the criticisms the honourable member might make. Generally, I reject but sometimes I accept because sometimes he is right, and when he is, I should listen.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Can the minister indicate who is doing the population-based analysis that the government is using to help determine these final decisions?

**Mr. McCrae:** The Epidemiology branch of my department and the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation are involved in providing analysis of population health trends and issues.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I am familiar with most of the population-based analyses done by the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation. I am not familiar with that done by the Epidemiology branch of the department. Can the minister table that data so that we, on this side of the House, can have an understanding of where the government is proceeding in various areas concerning its decisions concerning population-based decision making?

**Mr. McCrae:** Everything the centre puts out, the centre puts out. I do not control that. With respect to the Epidemiology section, the one report I recall is the burden of illness on diabetes, and I am sure the honourable member has that, but if he does not, he can get it. If there are others, we will have a look and see if there are others we can share with the honourable member.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I thank the minister for that response. I just want to understand this correctly. The minister has indicated that the decisions that are going to be made are based on the population and needs-based assessments that have been taking place. Is it correct to assume that those decisions that are being made, and those analyses are the ones done by the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation and no other external agencies or bodies?

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair.)

**Mr. McCrae:** The rural health authorities, of course, will be involved in developing their needs assessments in the regions of Manitoba. They will be assisted by the same reports that the honourable member and I have been discussing the last few minutes.

**Mr. Chomiak:** So it is correct for me to assume that the data that I have from the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, the public reports and the reports that have been referenced by the minister or will be forwarded to me from the Epidemiology Branch, are the basis upon which the minister and the department will be making its decisions?

**Mr. McCrae:** Well, that is a hard one, because they are definitely part of the decision-making process, but here we are listening to what people have to say from the northwest corner of the city. We are looking at their petitions. So there are a whole variety of things. The

things the honourable member tells me I have taken into account, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

These are two very important sources of interpreted data. You know the epidemiology section or the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation or individual hospital records of performance in their hospital, how many surgeries and what kinds and all of that. That is data which you look at when you are analyzing things.

There is quite a large combination of things but, ultimately, we want to put more emphasis on outcomes and less on politics, if possible. I mean, that is very important, to leave the politics out as much as you can and make health the No. 1 priority.

But how do you leave the politics out if you are looking at changing a hospital, let us say in one corner of the city of Winnipeg, and the people in that corner say, what are we, chopped liver? You are dealing with questions like that in an environment where you are trying to look at population health outcomes and stuff like that. It is hard to jump from one argument to the other, with some people it is. I think we have to be sensitive to the political views out there but, through public education and that vehicle, try very hard to make sure that we are trying to build a health system for everyone and that will be there for a long time.

It is no good for me to say today—let us use Saskatchewan for an example. Somebody said, we need this hospital in 52 locations. Then along comes another government and says, well, no, you do not, and they shut them down. Was that a political thing or was that a health-related thing? You be the judge. I am sure those people who said, we need this hospital, thought they were thinking about their health. Well, the NDP, what were they thinking about when they shut down and padlocked 52 hospitals? I do not know if they put condemned on them or what they did, but they shut them down.

Converted is the new politically correct language for the closure of a hospital. I use that as an example so the honourable member will understand that obviously, ultimately, as I said at the beginning this afternoon, the government of the day is going to be the one that will be

credited with or blamed for whatever decisions get made. I am trying very hard to focus the attention of all participants in the process, including members of the public, on the population health issues because that seems to be the most justifiable, over the long term, approach to take.

\* (1630)

There were people very upset about eye care when it was time to take eye care out of Seven Oaks Hospital and Health Sciences Centre and locate it at Misericordia Hospital. I do not know what those people are saying today, but we have proved that what we said was going to happen would happen. We are doing more procedures, we are doing it cheaper, and we are probably doing it better as well. So that all said, where are the people who felt that Seven Oaks was the right place to do eye care? Where are they today, and what are they saying today? Well, they are faced with the facts, and the facts are that we are doing a better job with eye care today than we used to do, even though some people wanted to stop us from making the changes.

Those are some general comments. I know the honourable member's foot needs a rest, so maybe we should take a break.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Chairperson, maybe it might be appropriate at this time because I do have a number of questions that I would like to pose with the deputy minister being here. He had indicated that he was hoping to be here for 4:30 p.m. So maybe what we could do is just take a few minutes recess and allow staff to use facilities, and we will get right back underway.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** The suggestion has been made that the committee recess for five minutes. Is it the will of the committee to be recessed? [agreed] The committee stands recessed.

*The committee recessed at 4:31 p.m.*

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#### After Recess

*The committee resumed at 4:42 p.m.*

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** The committee will come back to order, and I would now recognize the honourable member for Inkster.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Chairperson, I am going to attempt to be as brief and as concise as possible in terms of my questions, given the deputy minister's availability. I welcome the opportunity, and, hopefully, the deputy minister will be my preference, even to have the deputy minister respond directly to the questions, quite frankly; but of course, that is not the tradition and he has to go through the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae).

The question that I have to start off with is, the government's Action Plan back in 1992, the former deputy minister played a very significant role in terms of putting the document together. In the letter from the then deputy minister, I want to recite one particular quote, and it is in the opening letter where he says: "Recognition that services must be provided closer to communities where people live and work. By bringing together those two solitudes of community oriented and institution oriented services, we will bring about a better balance between the two systems. Throughout the change, we must ensure that the interests of the recipients of service is always our top priority."

The document in other places makes reference to community hospitals and the benefits of the community hospitals. It also indicates that tertiary hospitals quite often will do things which community hospitals could, in fact, do. I am curious as to where or what the deputy minister believes on this because I know it does have an impact. The deputy minister is the individual who sat and chaired this particular committee. I am very much interested in a personal opinion, and I know that is very abnormal to make a request of that nature. I am wanting to know if anything has changed in essence in terms of the department's view of community hospitals.

**Mr. McCrae:** What the honourable member read out is not inconsistent with the views of the administration today from what it was when it was written.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** There were a couple of things that were provided to me regarding the Urban Health Planning committee in how the decision in essence was going to be made, and I am just going to list some of those things, and I am wondering if the deputy minister

might be able to indicate if I have missed out on some of the things.

To take into consideration in coming up with the recommendations, you were to take a look at the size of medical program, including acute geriatrics, the size of surgical program, number of operating rooms, ICU beds, primary clinic space, diagnostic service capabilities, age and quality of physical plant, and day surgery capacity. In essence would you say that, was there any other significant thing that was taken into consideration prior to or in putting together the decision for recommendations?

**Mr. McCrae:** In addition to what the honourable member read out, we need to have as underlying principles the appropriate number of acute care beds being available. The member has to keep in mind they also work from an understanding that there is no new money for capital improvements. The issue of patient and physician mobility is also part of this. The other one that I do not think the honourable member mentioned was the consistency with the Memorandum of Understanding with the faith-based organizations which has to do with missions and ethics and roles of faith-based facilities.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I had three other points which I was hoping would have been taken into some consideration; minimal capital expenditures, and it sounds as if that is something that was taken in consideration in terms of making the decision. Another one in which I would ask for a comment on is—actually two—the future needs of Winnipeg, how that was taken into account and the principle of community hospitals if, in fact, that was taken into account.

**Mr. McCrae:** Indeed, the honourable member is right to point out those considerations because they, too, were part of the underlying assumptions that needed to be taken into account. Future population health requirements, aging population, growing population, number of births expected in the years ahead. In addition to that, the emphasis on hospital beds is not the main emphasis here although it is not excluded. The requirements are very, very important. We know that surgery, for example, it used to be when someone had an operation, friends would be told, well, this is what room number John or Mary is in, that is where you can send your get-well cards. Well, we now know that in most

cases you just send your get-well card to the person's home, because that is where they are. They have either had their surgery based on a not-for-admission basis or they have had a very short stay.

\* (1650)

I think that the member has to remember this is not a hospital-based health care system anymore. I think that is the mistake the honourable member makes and a few others around do as well. There is so much more that can be done in the community which was a major part of the assumption.

The community is more important today. There was a time when probably 60 percent of hospital admissions not that long ago were on an inpatient basis. That is reversed. Sixty percent is outpatient now, and one of the things we would like to do within three years is move that to 85 percent. Now the honourable member knows what that means. That means less requirement for acute hospital beds, more requirement for surgical facilities and more requirement for supports in the community. That is the kind of assumptions that those people working on this project have had in mind.

These are not unrealistic assumptions. These are based on our ability in this technological age to do a better and more efficient job. Those changes are real; they are happening. In fact, we are following those changes. In terms of hospital acute capacity, we are following, we are not leading, because even with today's surgical patterns, we have way more hospital acute bed capacity than we need. The honourable member, I think, recognizes that. Obviously, we can quibble whether we need three beds for every thousand people or 3.2 or 2.8 or something like that, and that is fine. It is reasonable that that should happen, but we cannot run away and hide from the fact that we have excess capacity in our acute beds.

One of the other assumptions, requirements, adopted right at the design team level is that before reductions take place in acute care, there be the appropriate supports in the community. Why do you think we have added the personal care capacity that we have added in recent years? Why do you think that we have spent so much more to develop our Home Care program, 111 percent as of now in terms of spending, yet the numbers do not come out. It is because the units of service are filled with an

intensity of care that was not there 10, 15 years ago. People are getting high-level nursing services provided in their homes today that people were only getting in the hospitals years ago.

Those are the types of things that we have taken into account, the very things that members opposite talk about all the time, and that is exactly what is happening.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** One of the questions I was thinking of asking and obviously am going to ask, but I will then continue to a different line after I pose this one, and that is I am not entirely convinced that there was an adequate amount of time for the Urban Health Planning committee in being able to gather the information.

For example, minimal capital expenditures was a part of that decision-making process, and I think it was very difficult to gauge what type of costs, and that is why there has been some pressure on the Minister of Health in terms of what sorts of cost analysis studies have been done. I do believe that there are going to be some fairly significant capital costs under the current recommendations.

I wanted to pick up on what the minister was talking about in terms of acute care beds. I think there is a valid argument that in Winnipeg we could see a number of acute care beds being cut back, and I think if it is done properly and it is monitored, any potential negative impact would, in fact, be minimized if there would even be a negative impact, as long as it is done in a proper fashion and monitored.

Under the current recommendations that have been put forward, what number of acute care beds would Winnipeg have? Can we get an approximate number under the current proposal or under the current recommendation?

**Mr. McCrae:** We have not arrived at that kind of number to this point. Many numbers have been bandied about, but until we factor in some of the things that need to be factored in, we are not going to talk about numbers until it is time. The factors we have to look at have to do with the average age of our population, the average age of our male population, the average age of our female population, the number of children there are to be served.

Those children and adult women and men are not all from the city of Winnipeg. They are from all over the province of Manitoba, they are from northern Manitoba, they are from Northwest Territories, they are from Saskatchewan, they are from Ontario, sometimes they are from elsewhere as well. What are the population health indicators in the various regions? How many people in Marquette region, for example, will be expected to require cardiac services that can only be accessed in the city of Winnipeg? How many people will require services on an inpatient basis or even on an outpatient basis but at one of our Winnipeg hospitals? Where are they all going to come from? Are they going to be male persons, female persons? What age are they going to be?

We have to have a lot of profiles to build into this model before we can be as clear with the number of hospital beds that it is expected would be the requirement. That is coming; the work is underway. In a sense, we are having a parallel examination of those issues in this Chamber as laypersons. Here we are, maybe some of us, trying to substitute our noninformed judgment for the judgment of those people whom we have asked to take part in this; people like doctors, nurses and other health professionals in the system.

I think that process is underway. I have told the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) that by the end of May we expect to be far enough along to have arrived at some recommendations. Conclusions should be arrived at before too much time after that. Do not forget we have budget requirements we have to keep in mind as we go through this year. The work of the primary and secondary study is coinciding with the work of the design teams and the Urban Partnership and Urban Strategy committees. Those are all things that we are indeed taking into account.

Where are all the doctors? Where are all the patients? What are the requirements going to be? You have to use the population health data that we have. Luckily in Manitoba we have a database that is unmatched anywhere, so we are expecting that we are going to make some pretty solid and justifiable decisions. No doubt the honourable member is going to be there to ask us questions about what inputs we had into the decision making that happened, and no doubt we will have answers for him when those questions come forward. There is no point asking them prematurely,

**Mr. Lamoureux:** The minister himself has encouraged and I think, in some part, I have been able to give some sort of insight in terms of where it is that we are coming from as a party in terms of the acute care beds. There have been other studies. I make reference to The Action Plan, but also from the Manitoba Centre for Health and Policy Evaluation, and one of the conclusions, and this is from a report from December '94, and in it it says that as part of the conclusion, less expected perhaps was the finding that the teaching hospitals also treat considerable portion of low acuity, low resource intensive cases, suggesting we function not only as a tertiary care institution, but also a large community hospital, particularly for pediatric and obstetric admissions.

\* (1700)

I say that because I believe that the Health Sciences Centre, in essence, is known throughout the world as a first class facility. I do not want to do anything to undermine the importance of this particular facility, but I am curious as to knowing the number, from what I understand and this is again information that was provided to me back in November of '95, there were some 854 acute care beds at the Health Sciences Centre. In the mind of the department or from within the Department of Health, do they have an idea of what it would take in order to retain that credible presence in terms of, there is a push to say, look, some of these community hospitals could be doing some of the things that the Health Sciences Centre is doing? To what degree could you actually, if you had to cut acute care beds, cut from the Health Sciences Centre before calling into question the integrity of that particular facility?

**Mr. McCrae:** I do not think anybody is disagreeing with what the honourable member is putting forward. In fact, I heard Dr. Wade say on more than one occasion that it is appropriate that treatment or surgery that is appropriately carried out in a community setting, like a community hospital, it is outright appropriate, that that is where it happened. Something that confounds this simple proposition is that you might be in Health Sciences Centre simply to get a gall bladder removed, which is something I am sure can be done at any community hospital in Winnipeg.

But suppose you are a stroke victim or suppose you have a cardiac condition, or suppose you have liver



dysfunction, or who knows what all you might have, there are so many things that could happen to make what you might, at first blush, consider a routine procedure into something very different from a routine procedure. If, somehow, some other condition you might have or conditions you might have become an important factor in your very simple gall bladder surgery, maybe the appropriate place for you to be is at the Health Sciences Centre. That is the point. We have to keep that in mind and it might confound people who crunch numbers, including me, but I am reminded again by Dr. Wade this afternoon that we want very much, just like the honourable member does, to use our community hospitals for the types of purposes the honourable member is talking about.

I think we got further along in a debate on that point than we needed to because there never was a sense that we should just move everything to the Health Sciences Centre, even amongst the design teams which I think have the medical leaders in all the different disciplines involved in there. So some people immediately said, oh, well, you have got an academic surgeon on this design team. Well, what do you think they are going to do? They are going to want to move everything to the Health Sciences Centre.

How very naive for anybody who would say that. It is contrary, obviously, to the plan that the honourable member referred to a while ago, The Action Plan for Manitobans set out in 1992. Do you think we are deliberately, four years later, going to go out and do something that is totally inconsistent with what we set out to do in the first place, which was based on good evidence and good data, good research that caused us to put that plan in place in the first place?

The former Health spokesperson for the Liberal party was totally onside, as I recall.

**An Honourable Member:** A good man.

**Mr. McCrae:** A good person, a medical person and, yes, he was critical when it was necessary to be critical, we certainly remember that. But on a couple of very important things, he was very supportive and maybe he took a few lumps for doing that, too, for being supportive, but he did the right thing and that was to support the kind of shift that the honourable member is talking about in his question.

For anybody now to suggest that, oh, you are veering off that is totally naive, because they think that because some physician involved on a design team has some political allegiance with some particular way of thinking, well, we have got to build on the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) some confidence that the people that are working and working very hard on these projects are not simply out anymore to protect their turf. The days of turf protection should be over. The days of putting the health needs of Manitobans as the priority in all of our considerations ought to be here now.

Turf protection ought to be a thing of the past. Health ought to be the question for today. I encourage the honourable member to be mindful of that and not to be out there trying to stir up trouble where it does not exist for whatever reasons. I mean, I am aware of the makeup of the design teams. I guess some people thought the design teams were hand-picked people who would dictate the future of health care without any cost-benefit analysis, without any analysis to make sure that doctors and patients can be mobile in the system, without any analysis that takes into account that there is no money, or very little money for capital improvement, without any analysis to take into account the other things that we talked about.

That is totally naive for anybody to think that way because when they do that, they impugn the real motives of the people who are involved in this process. It is not just the people who are members of these design teams because I have met with many, many practitioners, who, listening to the messages of the member for Inkster, reacted in a sort of negative kind of a way—all for what? To stir up in people a false sense of fear about the future? How is that a constructive approach? We have a job to do here. We have the right people on the job. We are listening to the people who are not closely involved in the committees themselves. You cannot have a committee of 10,000; it does not work. So you have to have these so-called, they called them troikas at one point because I think there were only three people on each team.

Everything is sinister when you are in the opposition. I remember, I was there once, so was the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay). I do not think the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer) had the pleasure to be part of that opposition movement which sometimes saw

some sinister aspects and things where they might not really have existed. That is what we do in opposition sometimes. I know it happens quite a lot more in a time of major transition of a whole health system across the country. I guess it is human nature to want to be critical for the sake of being critical, but there is more to this. I invite the honourable member to harken back to the days of Dr. Gulzar Cheema and the contribution he made. He was critical when it was appropriate to be critical. He was not critical just for the love of being critical.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** There are several components of what the minister has just finished putting on the record and which I could address and probably should. The beginning of his answer, if you follow through the logic, one then might argue, because complications could occur even in community hospitals that ultimately you should have one giant facility and all people going to that one giant facility, if you want to carry the argument to the nth degree. I trust and hope that that is not what the Minister of Health would in fact be advocating.

\* (1710)

I wanted to give a specific example in terms of what it is that we are talking about. You have reports that are there saying that tertiary hospitals quite often will do things that could be done in community hospitals.

There was another report, again from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, this one January of '96. It made reference to tonsillectomy procedures. I looked at one of the graphs and in the graph it says, in 1989-1990 in our teaching hospitals, 89.7—I will just give the percentages—45.4 percent of these procedures were done in teaching hospitals. In 1993-94, 52.3 percent, which is an increase. If we look at our urban community hospitals, 29.2 percent in 1989-90, and that went down to 20.4 percent in '93-94.

Now, there might be all sorts of rationale in terms of being able to explain why that has occurred. The Children's Hospital facility, for example, might be one of the arguments used in order to justify it. No doubt, Mr. Chairperson, I believe, and it is not just me personally, because we do have other documents that are out there that are saying that there are operational procedures, types of care that are being provided in teaching hospitals that could quite easily be done in community hospitals.

Now, if we are talking in essence about the way in which we deliver our services and as a result of that we are looking at whether it is 2.5 percent beds per thousand or 3.2 percent beds per thousand, which works out to somewhere between a range of 386 to 858 beds—and those are the numbers that are most frequently being talked about—why it is so important and why it is so relevant is that if, in fact, you can allow for community hospital facilities to continue on and not put into jeopardy the quality of service being delivered at teaching hospitals and follow some of the suggestions that are coming from not only The Action Plan but the Health Policy Institute, it would seem to make sense.

This is, in essence, the push that we are suggesting now and hoping that the Minister of Health, whenever there is, whether we are in session or we are not in session, will address that particular issue if, in fact, it is not taken into consideration once the ultimate recommendation or the decision that government has made becomes known to the public.

The last part of his comment he made reference to this protecting the backyard or individual's turf protection, those were the words that the minister used. I, like him, have talked to members of the committees, CEOs, individuals that sat on the Urban Health Planning Committee and I have heard firsthand that, yes, there was a certain element of turf protection that took place, so it is not me being paranoid, Mr. Chairperson, that in fact there was, to a certain degree, turf protection. That is something which I have heard from the board.

There was a lot of concern expressed from the medical profession regarding the composition and the percentage of tertiary representatives or individuals that had background with tertiary facilities that made up the particular committees. There are ultimately many different arguments that could be brought forward on either side as I have indicated to the minister previously. Our concern was that there were not options that were provided. I believe that if the Minister of Health said to the Ministry of Health, I want to have a model that sees community-based hospitals highlighted and does not put into jeopardy the quality of service being delivered at the Health Science Centre that, in fact, that model could and would be presented, but you have to provide the proper amount of time for that to be adopted.

I would ultimately argue that any costs that might be incurred because of that additional time, it would be money well spent, because we believe in the community hospitals. Ultimately, the Ministry of Health can say, well, look, we have hospitals across the country that are closing down. In some areas it might be justified; in other areas maybe it is not justified.

Because other jurisdictions might be doing something or taking action that is similar to what these current recommendations are does not necessarily mean that that is the direction that has to be followed. You also have to take into consideration public perception and what is the will of the public. What does the public want? The public wants to be able to have a community hospital facility.

Now I will be in my own backyard with the Seven Oaks Hospital, a lot of people look at it and they say, here is a modern facility. It is the most modern facility that we have in the province. The capital dollars that are going to be required will be phenomenal in terms of renovations. In terms of future needs of acute care beds, this is a hospital that is in, in all likelihood, a better position than any other urban hospital in the city of Winnipeg in terms of minimal capital dollars required into the future.

Does that mean that no change should be given to the Seven Oaks Hospital? No, we are not saying that at all. You can incorporate long-term care. You can incorporate geriatric services. To take away what people feel so closely to, Mr. Chairperson, your medicine, surgery, emergency, critical care, these are services in which people look at, in particular in my area of the city, and they say look, in the south end you have the Victoria, in the west end you have the Grace, in the east end you have the Concordia. What about the inner city? What about the north end?

That is the reason why, when we look at the proposal and we see that on the surface it appears as if the options have not been fully explored and we look in terms of resources, the minister has the responsibility to make a good decision. That good decision is going to be based on information that is provided to him. It is the Ministry of Health, in particular the deputy minister that is providing that information. The question then becomes, was the deputy minister provided the opportunity to be

able to present options that would take into consideration more than what is currently before the minister? What we want to be able to prevent ultimately is a bad decision.

We believe that there are other options, and we do not necessarily understand why those options have not been fully explored, or at least espoused upon. Hopefully when the decision is made, that if we do see the closure of the Misericordia and the Seven Oaks Hospital, we will see answers to the many different questions that people are going to have that could call into the question the integrity of the government and the integrity of the Department of Health. The questions that I am posing are not questions that I have just thought of on my own. These are questions that have come from CEOs in some of the administrations, and more than the ones than just the—some might assume that it is from the Seven Oaks. That is not the case. Three, four CEOs that have talked to me first-hand about the process, first-hand about the options. That is the reason why it is so important to us, and I will let the minister respond.

**Mr. McCrae:** I am intrigued by the comments of the honourable member. I would like to give him some comfort that these options that he refers to, the ones that he has heard about in his discussions with certain CEOs are, indeed, not news to us. We talk to CEOs too, and we get their input, and we are reviewing their options and those put forward by board chairs as well, reviewing those things and analyzing and agonizing over all of this.

\* (1720)

I am intrigued by the honourable member's argument with respect to capital improvements vis-à-vis the Seven Oaks General Hospital. Now, I was here, I think, Mr. Chairman, you will recall that we marched down the hall to Room 254 to attend a large gathering respecting the Misericordia General Hospital where it was the triple A approach: acute, active and alive, or something along that line, for Misericordia Hospital, was the hue and cry. We had, I thought, an extremely civilized—civilized is the right word—evening. The honourable member of course was espousing the cause being put forward that day, which was to preserve Misericordia Hospital basically in its present state with acute care and all of that.

Now, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has talked about the Seven Oaks Hospital

and how minimal capital improvements are required to keep it as an acute care hospital. The honourable member for Inkster was very supportive of the people here that day and the position they were putting forward. I wonder if he would enlarge on the whole capital issue vis-à-vis Misericordia Hospital for us.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** What I alluded to was that the Seven Oaks Hospital is a very, relatively speaking, modern facility compared to other urban hospitals. There are going to be significant capital requirements, for example, if you expand acute care beds over at the Concordia Hospital. There are going to be very significant capital requirements if you have to start changing halls in the whole setup of the Seven Oaks Hospital in order to convert it into a geriatric centre. There are going to be very significant costs for emergency services, O.R. rooms at the Health Sciences Centre, and no doubt other areas as a result of the current recommendations.

It is estimated, at least I understand, that they might even have to have an entirely new emergency services built on with the Health Sciences Centre as a direct result of the recommendations. The Misericordia Hospital, currently and into the future, is going to require capital dollars in order to maintain in whatever capacity it is going to be delivering services.

We are at a bit of a handicap. Back in October, November, I had thought that, if we had to cut a number of acute care beds, the biggest loser out of this would be the Misericordia Hospital. The more that I got involved in talking to individuals, experts in the health care field, you get a better understanding of how in which acute care services are being delivered, I do believe that the Misericordia Hospital can have a future role in the deliverance of acute care, along with emergency services, and, yes, it is going to require capital dollars. There is no doubt about that into the future; all of our urban hospitals are going to require some capital dollars. If you were to look at the recommendations that are being proposed and you accept them wholeheartedly, the amount of capital dollars is something that really has not been addressed. How many capital dollars are going to be required to convert Seven Oaks Hospital into a geriatric service centre?

I could ask that question, but the minister does not have the answer. I asked back in December. How many

capital dollars were going to be required in order to bring the Health Sciences Centre emergency room up to par? We currently know that even today we understand that overflow from the Health Sciences Centre emergency goes over to Misericordia. If you had closed down both Misericordia and Seven Oaks, what sort of a situation does that put the Health Sciences Centre, the type of capital dollars.

Ultimately, I do not believe that it will be the capital dollars that will have to prevail. It is the ongoing operational cost that government has to be concerned with, and where are you going to get the savings of those operational dollars? Well, look at the costs of maintaining older facilities compared to new facilities. Look at the cost of providing that service from a community hospital perspective to a tertiary hospital perspective.

I believe that there you will find many different ways in which dollars can, in fact, be saved. Ultimately, as I have indicated, it is the way in which you want to deliver that service, and I believe that service is best delivered in our community facilities. If, in fact, you have to cut back on acute care beds in order to acquire the savings, then there are acute care beds that can go, and I have acknowledged that in the past. The actual number, I am not prepared to give the minister a number, because he has much better resources that I do, but my concern is that he uses those resources, and at the end of the day, he is prepared to be able to answer the many different questions.

I guess, Mr. Chairperson, my final question is, because we are running out of time, the minister in a letter sent to me did indicate that, again, he was going to provide some sort of a public forum outside of the petitions and cards that have been sent in. I am wondering if he might be able to give us some sort of indication on whether or not that is going to happen in the near future, in particular, given that he indicated that there will likely be some decisions being made at the end of the month.

**Mr. McCrae:** The honourable member has failed the test of logic, Mr. Chairman. He did not address the question respecting the Misericordia Hospital that I put to him. He has not come forward with anything helpful in terms of how you address that capital issue at Misericordia Hospital, where it is clear that significant capital requirements would be part of a plan that would lead to the system that he supports.

He lent his support here at this Legislative Building in front of hundreds of people, let them know that he supports them. Well, the problem with that is that it defies logic. He has not given us any evidence at all to justify or to lay a foundation for that support that he has put forward.

I am a supporter of Misericordia Hospital, Mr. Chairman. I am always working with the people there. The fact is, though, in a time when dollars for capital expenditure are not there, the honourable member has failed to show that his support is well placed. Be that as it may, we are involved in that process that I referred to with the honourable member. I have answered this question. We are addressing his issues as he raises them.

We are addressing other issues being brought to us through public consultations that are being conducted on a regular basis as we speak.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** The honourable member for Inkster, for 15 seconds.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** My question to the minister then is to reverse it. How many capital dollars then would be required in order to sustain Misericordia as a hospital with acute care services?

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** The hour being 5:30 p.m., this committee is recessed and stands recessed until 9 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 9, 1996

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