



Fifth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
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.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
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DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
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DRIEDGER, Myma	Charleswood	P.C.
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EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
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FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
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HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
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KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
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NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
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PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
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TWEED, Mervin, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 6, 1999

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Bill 20—The Chiropodists Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les chiropodistes

PRAYERS

Bill 21—The Ophthalmic Dispensers Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les opticiens d'ordonnance et modifications corrélatives

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Bill 28—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Law Amendments
Fourth Report**

Bill 30—The Veterinary Medical Act; Loi sur la médecine vétérinaire

Mr. Jack Penner (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the Fourth Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Your committee has also considered:

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Bill 23—The Order of Manitoba Act; Loi sur l'Ordre du Manitoba

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Fourth Report.

and had agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

Your committee met on Monday, July 5, 1999, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

MOTION:

Your committee heard representations on bills as follows:

THAT subsection 8(2) be amended, in the English version of the part preceding clause (a), by striking out "to or" and substituting "or to".

Bill 21—The Ophthalmic Dispensers Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les opticiens d'ordonnance et modifications corrélatives

MOTION:

Dr. Scott Mundle, Manitoba Association of Optometrists

THAT section 12 of the bill be amended, in subclause (1)(a)(i), by adding "or, where he or she is unable to serve on the council for any reason, the Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench" after "Chief Justice of Manitoba".

Bill 30—The Veterinary Medical Act; Loi sur la médecine vétérinaire

MOTION:

Dr. Ab Hague, Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association

THAT subsection 14(1) be struck out and the following substituted:

Albert Van Der Meulen, Private Citizen

Secretary of council

Your committee has considered:

14(1) *The Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint the Director of Protocol of the*

government or another employee of the government to be the secretary of the council.

Mr. Penner: I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that the report of the committee be now received.

Motion agreed to.

Committee of Supply

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Mervin Tweed (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the following '98 and '99 annual reports: the Co-operative Loans and Loans Guarantee Board, the Cooperative Promotion Board, and the Manitoba Development Corporation.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Winnipeg Child and Family Services Temporary Placements—Hotels

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Family Services stated that it depends on the weather and the circumstances the number of children in hotels. Later it was quoted, and quoted today in the media, that there were 32 children in the Child and Family Services division of Winnipeg in hotels, and we have received minutes of meetings that indicate that there were 31 in December of 1998, 28 to 29 on average in April and 32 as of yesterday.

Can the minister please inform the House of the truth, of the facts, and is this not a systemic problem with too many kids in hotels after the Premier (Mr. Filmon) last year promised to deal with this issue?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I thank my honourable friend for that question because I do want to indicate to all Manitobans that in fact the number of children that are in hotels does fluctuate from month to month depending upon the circumstances and the situations.

Madam Speaker, I have to indicate very clearly that this is a Child and Family Services agency that is having to deal with children after the fact because they have been abused or neglected in their own home circumstances. It is very important that the agency determine how to most appropriately deal with the children who come into their care. From time to time, if there is not a specialized placement option or opportunity for those children, they are placed in hotels.

I indicated yesterday, and I will say again today, that they are working very aggressively to move children as quickly as possible out of a hotel circumstance, but the reality is, Madam Speaker, those children have to be protected. I would want the agency to act appropriately to ensure protection, safety and security of children.

* (1335)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, the issue of safety and security of children is not the issue. It is where that takes place. Should it take place in a proper setting or should it take place at a \$231-per-night hotel room?

The minister also indicated that the stays of children have declined on an average-stay basis, but it is quoted in the media today that there were 22 children on an ongoing basis and one child had been placed in the hotel for over a year. Will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) please get control over this situation? We want safe, secure settings for our children, not hotels at \$231 a day.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, again I thank my honourable friend for the question because he seems to think that there is a very simplistic answer to finding the appropriate supports for children who are in care. Without getting into any details around case specifics, I

have to indicate to my honourable friend that the children who end up in hotel placements for longer periods of time are very complex issues. It is not a simplistic issue of trying to find a foster home for an infant. You have children who are very troubled, with very complex issues surrounding the circumstances for those placements. It sometimes takes time and considerable time to find the appropriate care and support for those children.

So, if my honourable friend thinks that it is very easy and that the agency is not doing the very best that it can do to try to find the appropriate placement, then I think he needs to think again and maybe needs to understand the complexities of the circumstances surrounding some of these children.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, perhaps the government should have considered these complexities when it made cost-saving decisions a few years ago.

I want to quote from the minutes that advise us that the agency is stating that they should have explored buying out Seven Oaks when it was closed by this minister, by this Premier (Mr. Filmon), and advise that the building is still there. The agency is currently looking at utilizing it as an emergency placement facility during the Pan Am Games, because they have only secured a number of hotel rooms at Place Louis and they are worried that they do not have enough hotel rooms. Is this the long-term plan that we can expect from this minister that was promised three years ago, two years ago, this year but never has resulted in any real, good results for kids who have to stay in hotels because of her policies?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, when it comes to support for children to the Child and Family Services agency in the city of Winnipeg, I want to just go over the chronology because I think it is extremely important to note that back in 1991-92, we provided \$43.2 million to the Winnipeg agency. That has increased year after year to this year when the budget is \$69.4 million, a significant increase—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. That is a significant increase, and the millions and millions of dollars, year after year, that have been put into support for children and families through the Child and Family Services system—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Are we seeing healthier families as a result of intervention after the fact? We are still seeing significant numbers of children who need protection from abuse and neglect, and it is not from the Child and Family Services system. It is from family circumstances, and that is why we are putting more resources into early intervention.

Department of Family Services Service Co-ordination

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, we know from the minutes of Child and Family Services board meetings that many of the children who are in supposedly temporary accommodation in hotels have significant mental health issues. In fact, the board had a discussion about whether or not mental health facilities would be more suitable given that half of their clients in hotels in April had mental health issues.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if there is any co-ordination going on between her department and the Department of Health given the problem that we have here that only 37 beds are available for mental health patients in the whole province for children under 18. What is she doing about this issue?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): As a result of the closing of the Seven Oaks Centre, there has been a youth emergency services set up that is working extremely well, and that is a working together of the Child and Family Services agency, Macdonald Youth Services, the mental health and psychiatric beds, the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre. Those services are being co-ordinated in a much more significant way than

they ever were in the past. We are seeing good results through that process. It is a continuation of an evolving process to try to ensure that services are co-ordinated and families are better served. We will continue to try to ensure that all parts of the community are working together so that children can be better served.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services, who talks about co-ordination of services and new services: why is it, if there is all this co-ordination going on, that there are more children in hotels this year than there were last year when there was a crisis in child welfare? What is her co-ordination doing? How is it getting children out of hotels? What is the plan? What is this minister doing?

* (1340)

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

Mrs. Mitchelson: I thank my honourable friend for that question. I would be more concerned about a crisis in the child welfare system if children were being left in circumstances of abuse and neglect. We know that children are coming into care, that the plans are being done as aggressively as they possibly can to try to ensure that the proper placements are found. But I will repeat again, Madam Speaker, there is not a simple answer to the issues that present themselves when there are complex needs associated in many instances with older children within the system. We have to continue to try to ensure that the services are co-ordinated and that we work with the agency and other services that are out there and available to ensure that the best supports are there for kids when they need it.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the minister, under whose watch we have seen Seven Oaks close, no plan for alternative services, cuts to foster care rates, more children in hotels this year than last year, and she blames it on the weather: what is her plan? What is she going to do, and why blame it on the weather?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We have not had a circumstance or situation while we have been government that has seen three children die in

the hands of those that—died when the New Democratic government was in power, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Mitchelson: There is not any Minister of Family Services, regardless of political stripe, even Muriel Smith who had significant issues to deal with when she was the minister in the New Democratic government responsible for Child and Family Services—I have indicated before, and I will say again, that there is not a Minister of Family Services, regardless of political stripe, that does not lose sleep as a result of the issues that they have to deal with in Child and Family. They are not issues that are created by the minister; they are issues that are created as a result of children being abused and neglected in their own homes. Our responsibility is to try to ensure that communities are healthier and families are stronger. That is why we are putting millions and millions of dollars more into the front end to try to ensure that children do not need the supports from the Child and Family Services into the future.

Winnipeg Child and Family Services Temporary Placements—Hotels

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): As much as this minister may try to blame others or the weather, the fact is that what we are seeing here is the legacy of 11 years of neglect by this government. We have seen this government destroy the previous Child and Family Services structure and wipe out the role of many volunteers. They cut funding to foster parents associations, and they cut foster parents rates.

What I want to ask the minister, who a year ago said that it was unacceptable that kids were in hotels: is she now saying today that it is a complicated problem? Is it now acceptable that 30-plus kids are in hotels because of the disastrous policies of this government?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): This is not an issue that I think anyone should be yelling or screaming about. It

is an issue that is very serious for children and families.

Hotel accommodation is not acceptable under any circumstances. No one has said that it is the acceptable or the preferred method of treatment and support, but the opposition, without knowing any of the facts or the details around the circumstances of the children that are in hotels at the present time, are making accusations. If they knew the severity and the complexity of the issues that surrounded children, they would understand the reason for an individualized, very specific and specialized plan that is needed for these children. There is no easy answer, and I will say again, Madam Speaker, there is no quick fix.

These are children that have multiple problems, and the issues need to be addressed in a way that is sensitive to the needs of those individual children.

* (1345)

Mr. Ashton: I wonder if the minister will explain to those of us who make no apology for voicing the concerns of many Manitobans about our kids, and I am one of them and our entire caucus. I want to ask this minister: what is it? Last year it was unacceptable. Is it today a complex problem? Where is the plan? When is she going to deal with the fact there are 30-plus kids in hotels? That is not acceptable no matter what the circumstances.

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is a very serious issue, and we do know that the children that are in hotels, because a specialized plan is still being developed for those children, are alive. We need to continue to try to ensure that the appropriate services and supports are available before they are moved out of those hotel rooms, and we are still not in a situation, like the former government, the New Democratic government, was, where in fact they had to have a report done by Reid and Sigurdson as a result of several deaths of children in care under their watch.

Mr. Ashton: As a final supplementary, and I would plead with the minister: will she explain what plan, if any, is in place? Because a year ago she said it was unacceptable; today she says

it is a complex problem. When are we going to get kids out of hotels and into the right kind of facility, the right kind of placement that they need?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, I will repeat again that I will not accept an agency leaving children in a situation where they have been abused or neglected. When those children need support and service and when they have highly complex needs, sometimes a hotel placement is the only option until a well-thought-out plan of support for that child can be developed. Again, I make no apologies for taking the time to ensure that the right plan is in place for those individual children. I would like to see in the future no need for the use of hotel beds, but we are not there yet.

Chemical Withdrawal Unit Summer Closure

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. I wonder if the Minister of Health could perhaps explain to this House how this government that is bringing in legislation to mandate that people have to receive drug treatment and other forms of treatment in order to receive benefits, how the minister can explain that the chemical withdrawal unit at the Health Sciences Centre is closed for the summer?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Well, again, the member for Kildonan is very familiar that summer schedules are not unique in the province of Manitoba in a whole range of areas. In fact, if you look at our health care system in totality, you look at our hospital system today, last year we had some 195, I believe, individuals panelled for personal care homes in our acute care setting. Today that is down to about 50, freeing up acute care beds.

The issue of summer schedules is not unique in the province. It certainly was the case under NDP governments previously. It has been a pattern in Manitoba for many decades.

* (1350)

Mr. Chomiak: The minister can say all that he wants—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the honourable member has a question.

Mr. Chomiak: Will the minister not admit that, despite his trying to evade the question and despite all his talk about, oh, it being previous plans, if this government sets a priority on something and plans something, how can they ironically close the chemical withdrawal unit when this government is taking the strong stand to mandate that people have to get chemical treatment?

Mr. Stefanson: Again, I repeat for the member opposite that summer schedules are not unique in the province of Manitoba. They have been that case for many decades under previous governments, including previous NDP governments, so that is not something that is new in terms of scheduling, meeting the staffing needs, allowing individuals to take appropriate holiday times and so on. But, again, the member, I am not sure what side of these issues he is on, whether or not he is supporting the bill that he refers to that was introduced recently. It was hard to tell yesterday from comments of his colleagues, including the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and others. So where is he on the issue? Does he support that bill? I gather we are going to find that out in the next few days.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, will the minister not admit that it is a tad bit strange, I think, for Manitobans to concede—

An Honourable Member: Passing strange.

Mr. Chomiak: Passing strange, I might add, for Manitobans to review this government who have the longest waiting lists until recently in the entire country for most programs; yet when they come forward with a program mandating that people must have treatment, they close the chemical withdrawal unit. How does the minister reconcile that?

Mr. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, it is hard to lend much credibility to the member for Kildonan when he puts incorrect information and exaggerates situations about waiting lists. He knows full well. He has had a chance to see waiting lists on a national basis. He has had an opportunity to see how Manitoba stacks up, and

in many, many areas we stack up extremely well. We stack up in the lower half and some of the shortest waiting times in all of Canada, and that is because we continue to dedicate additional financial resources to that very important issue of reducing waiting times, whether it is for diagnostic services or surgical services—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

*(1355)

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, I know that the Minister of Health would not want to put inaccurate information on the record, and I hope he will refer to the report of his own Winnipeg Health Authority that said the waiting lists for MRI, for CAT scans and for ultrasounds were the longest in Winnipeg in all of Canada.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan, the honourable member for Kildonan did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, to complete his response.

Mr. Stefanson: Just to conclude, Madam Speaker, the member for Kildonan knows that in many areas our waiting lists are amongst the lowest in Canada today. I am sure that is one of the many reasons why they supported our 1999 budget that includes \$194 million, 10 percent more, now \$2.1 billion of spending on health care in Manitoba, because it is doing just that. It is continuing to provide services, continuing to reduce waiting lists in the province of Manitoba.

Winnipeg North End Revitalization

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for either the Minister of Housing or the Premier (Mr. Filmon). The growth of the ghettoization of north end

Winnipeg is second to no other in Canada in terms of major metropolitan cities.

My question for the government is to ask specifically: what is the government doing to deal with the deterioration and the rapid rate of deterioration that we are seeing in the north end of Winnipeg?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): Madam Speaker, naturally we are very, very concerned about the problems and some of the concerns that have been brought forth not only in the newspaper but by members of the House and the member for Inkster as to what is happening in parts of Winnipeg.

We have worked very, very closely with the City of Winnipeg in looking at problems of concern. We have instituted different types of projects, partnerships with housing projects in Winnipeg, for example, Westminster Housing association. Just recently we were involved with the renovations of some housing in the inner-city area. Through our Manitoba Housing Corporation, we have given a couple of homes to New Life Ministries to renovate. They have used these as a bit of a catalyst to raise funds for the renovation of other homes in the particular area. We have worked with the Kinsmen Club in joint ventures for funding in the renovation of housing in the inner city. Manitoba Housing works very, very closely with R.B. Russell School, for example, involving some of the aboriginal students for renovations in some of our public housing associations.

Property Assessments

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gilleshammer). Does the government have any idea in terms of the impact on property tax reassessment which is going to be occurring next year where we will see properties depreciate as much as 50 percent in the north end of Winnipeg? Is the Minister of Finance even aware of that, and what is the Minister of Finance prepared to do in dealing with that issue?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister Housing): Madam Speaker, the problem of assessment that

the member is talking about is something that he is well aware is within the city's jurisdictions in regard to their evaluation of their properties. The shifting of the taxing that the member is talking about is an occurrence that is happening because of the evaluations going to market-based value of the properties. I am not sure whether the member is saying that this is a good process or that he is saying that there should be a different process of assessment, but I think those are some of the things that I know the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), through the Assessment department, is working very, very closely with the City of Winnipeg assessors in trying to come to a better understanding of the conditions of assessment that are required in the City of Winnipeg, and hopefully that there will be a more equitable base for taxation in regard to the market evaluation of the properties here in Winnipeg.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, what we are asking for the government to recognize—and I posed the question in terms of what the government is actually doing to address the whole issue of depreciation of property taxes in the north end. It is because of the amount of neglect, whether it is through the city or the province, in not dealing with the issues that are necessary in order to keep that property appreciated.

I do not know why the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) is so excited about the question. I am trying to put forward the question and would ask for her and the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) to be a bit patient in allowing me to pose the question. Thank you.

* (1400)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am not certain if the honourable member for Inkster was debating with the members in the opposition or was standing on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: Just on a point of order, Madam Speaker. Part of our procedure is, if we have a question, we are provided the opportunity to be able to pose that question. The amount of heckling that I was receiving from the member

for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) in the first supplementary question and the conversations that were taking place make it very difficult to pose a question. I do not come to the Chamber with a written question per se. I quite often do it based on research that I have done and depending upon the minister's response. It is very hard.

I would ask, Madam Speaker, that the New Democrats respect that fact and allow me to pose the question so the minister is better able to answer.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Inkster, indeed the honourable member for Inkster did have a question. I was experiencing difficulty hearing the question, as I have been for most of the afternoon. I would ask for the co-operation of all members on all sides of the House to be more respectful to the members both posing the questions and responding to the questions asked.

* * *

Mr. Reimer: I think I do remember what the member for Inkster was asking me earlier in his preamble.

I believe what the member is asking is in regard to the programs that this government is coming out in regard to making Winnipeg and the neighbourhoods a safer community. Madam Speaker, we have made a very serious commitment to our Take Back the Streets Initiative in trying to make Winnipeg a better and a safer place to live, to work and to raise a family. One of the ways of doing that is to look at the positive aspects, the aspects of community development, working with the communities in trying to bring forth not only the best of what is in the community but working for whole neighbourhoods in trying to make it a safer place. With the safety of neighbourhoods and the sense of community that comes back into various areas of Winnipeg, naturally there is a willingness for people to live and to reside and to work and play in these particular neighbourhoods. There is a combination of elements that have to come into play in regard to trying to work with the neighbourhoods. We believe that we are on the right track to try to work with the

neighbourhoods. Those are the things that will make a change in the city of Winnipeg.

Youth Crime Parental Responsibility

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): To the Minister of Justice. During the last election the government promised a so-called crackdown on youth crime, according to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), with The Parental Responsibility Act as its centrepiece amid a great hoopla on how the government was going to make parents financially responsible for the actions of their children. Indeed, while many said it would make no difference, that it was election hype, it has been a centrepiece of this government's justice program.

My question to the minister is: would he tell us how many parents have been found financially responsible under this act since it was announced over four years ago?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I will take the question as notice from the member. I do not have those statistics here.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the minister telling Manitobans that he does not even know how well, if at all, this centrepiece legislation has worked, given that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on the day it was announced promised Manitobans that this legislation would make Manitoba's streets and neighbourhoods safer?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The member has posed his question.

Mr. Toews: I have indeed had conversations with staff members, not only staff members, in respect of the principles of that particular act. Indeed the act, as a principle of holding parents accountable for the actions of their children, has had a very significant impact in the context of our youth justice committees. Many of our youth justice committees see the importance of parents being present at the so-called alternative sentencing for the children. That principle, that very important legislative principle set out in The Parental Responsibility Act, has had a very important impact in ensuring that parents are in

fact responsible to an appropriate level in those cases where they have not been exercising the degree of responsibility that they should be.

So the principle that was enacted in that legislation indeed is very important and is being utilized.

Mr. Mackintosh: Will the minister instead admit that he does in fact know how many parents have been financially responsible? Will he confirm that since it was announced over four years ago not one single parent has been found financially responsible under the centrepiece legislation? How can this be a crackdown?

Mr. Toews: As I indicated, in my conversations with the youth justice committees and the members of those youth justice committees, the principle that parents are in fact a part of and accountable for the actions of their youth is a very important concept that these individuals look at in terms of determining what is the appropriate response from the youth justice committee.

So I see the legislation as a very important declaration of values by the government and indeed by society to ensure that parents are in fact held accountable and that youth justice committees know that that in fact is an important aspect of their deliberations. I want to commend the youth justice committees in the work that they have been doing in that particular context.

Health Care Workers

Recruitment Strategy—Northern Manitoba

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Over a month ago I asked the Minister of Health if he would work with the Medical Services Branch of the federal government to deal with the critical shortage of nursing and doctors in the North.

I want to table a federal document here that outlines the formula that I mentioned to the minister a month ago. It indicates that there is over a 35 percent shortage of nurses in northern isolated communities, as I mentioned to the minister.

I would like to ask him: since that time, what arrangements has he made so far with the

federal government in terms of trying to find a solution to the problem?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, as I indicated at the time when the member for The Pas asked the question, our department is working with the federal government to address the issue of filling the vacancies in our northern communities, particularly as it relates to the need for more nurses. I indicated at that time that the \$7-million nurse recruitment and retention fund is available to do just that. We have obviously notified the committee that is administering that fund that they have the option of utilizing that fund to help provide support to attract nurses to our northern communities.

I also communicated with the federal government our concern about this issue, our willingness to work with them to resolve it, recognizing that it is one of these issues that does fall under federal jurisdiction. But also, we are responsible for the health of all Manitobans, and therefore we are dedicating the staff within the Department of Health and we are dedicating financial resources like accessing the \$7-million nurse recruitment fund to help address this very important issue.

Mr. Lathlin: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister why his government has not had any strategy so far. It seems to me that he is just starting to think about developing a strategy with the federal government when this situation has been in existence for a long time. I want to ask the minister if he has any strategies in the short term to deal with communities like God's River where they were down to one nurse last week, and Garden Hill has had a shortage of nurses for most of the year.

Mr. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, we have a number of strategies to provide more nurses in Manitoba. As the member for The Pas, I believe, knows, our budget includes some \$32.5 million for 650 nursing positions. We have a \$7-million nurse recruitment fund; we are working with our educational community, our Faculty of Nursing at the University of Manitoba, the licensed practical nursing program at Assiniboine Community College in Brandon, all to produce more nurses in Manitoba. So we are doing a number of things to bring more nurses into the nursing

profession in the province of Manitoba to encourage people to come back into nursing.

Obviously, all of those will help to address the very issue that the member is raising here today, the need for more nurses in our First Nations communities, primarily in northern Manitoba. So we have offered to work with the federal government that has primary responsibility for providing these services in First Nations communities on reserves, and we are dedicating various resources to help address that issue.

* (1410)

Mr. Lathlin: My last question is to the same minister. I would like to ask him if he would not acknowledge that the shortage of medical personnel, nurses and doctors, in the North results in patients being forced to travel to Winnipeg and elsewhere for tests and treatment that is costing a lot of money when it should be done in their communities at a lower cost.

Mr. Stefanson: Absolutely, Madam Speaker, a focus of our government has been to provide health care services where people need them, when they need them. A major part of that is to do it in communities closer to home, and that is why we have continued to see enhancements to communities like the Brandon Regional Health Centre. We have seen enhancements to the hospital in Thompson and so on for that very important reason. Again, not only does it make economic sense but, more importantly, it provides more appropriate care for individuals.

So I agree with that statement that we should be working to provide services wherever possible as close to home, and obviously this issue of providing more nurses in our First Nations communities is a very important issue that we are committed to help address, recognizing that it is not solely our responsibility. It is also the responsibility, primarily, of the federal government. But we are dedicating staff within Health and accessing various financial resources like the nurse retention fund to help to address that very important issue.

Community Colleges Report Release

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, on June 21 we asked the Minister of

Education why his government was already three years late in conducting the five-year review of colleges mandated by his own legislation. We now know that the colleges have completed the review, and I would like to ask the minister if this is not another case where the announcements are used to fool the public rather than make a real commitment to them. Is the minister prepared to release the reports on community colleges?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training): The honourable member knows that what she says is nonsense, because it was not so long ago she stood to her feet to support the \$4-million colleges growth fund contained in this year's budget. She and all of her colleagues rose to support the budget. That \$4 million is going to do things like put 35 more seats for computer accounting technicians in Red River College. It is going to put 55 additional seats for computer analyst programmers. It is going to put 18 for plumbing and piping, 15 for welding. That is just Red River College, Madam Speaker; 55 for early childhood education. At Assiniboine Community College, another 15 seats for office administration, 25 for early childhood education, 25 for business, not to mention—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, Beauchesne Citation 417 is very clear that answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

I believe the minister was asked about tabling a community college report. I do not believe his answer has any connection whatsoever to the question.

I would like to ask you to bring the minister to order and ask him to answer the very important question raised by our member.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Education, on the same point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Well, the honourable member for Thompson puts a very technical construction on

both the question and the answer. I know the honourable member for St. James is interested in what is going on in our community colleges; that is why she asked the question.

Now the honourable member for Thompson, through a point of order, wants to prevent the free flow of information, the openness that we on this side of the House want to project in this House. So I do not think there is a point of order there, or if there is, the honourable member is working at cross purposes from his colleague the member for St. James.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, I would agree that the honourable member did have a point of order. The question asked was: when will the minister table the report? I would ask that the honourable Minister of Education and Training respond to the question asked.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Well, I am certainly taking the question of the honourable member for St. James under advisement, but I know she would like to know that there is an additional 100 seats at Assiniboine Community College for practical nurse training in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I believe the honourable minister indicated he would take the question as notice, and that is all that is required.

The honourable member for St. James, with a very short supplementary question.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Education inform the House as to what he is trying to hide from the public? Why is he not releasing the report? Is it a condemnation of this government's record to community colleges?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I am really quite shocked at the language being used by the honourable member for St. James in her so-called support for our community colleges.

To quote Mr. Jim Carr, who speaks for the Manitoba business community today, he has said

that community colleges are quite nimble and can adapt within weeks and months to job shortages. That is exactly what the list of seats that I referred to a moment ago will assist with.

Another commentator, Graham Starmer of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, has said that Manitoba's labour shortage is more acute because we have such a diverse economy. That is not a bad thing. That is a good thing, and it is a good thing to line up behind the good stewardship of the Filmon administration over the last 11 years in making such a buoyant economy which makes these challenges so real for our colleges and our colleges that are responding so well.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Rulings

Madam Speaker: I have two rulings for the House.

On June 2, 1999, I took under advisement a point of order respecting the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings) using the words "if the member chooses to misrepresent the situation, that is his choice." The words were spoken about the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers).

The phrase "choose to mislead" was ruled out of order in this House in November 1988, and I would further note that in November 1995 the phrase "the member chooses to misrepresent" was voluntarily withdrawn when a point of order was raised.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the word "misrepresent" suggests an incorrect or misleading representation or account, usually with an intention to deceive. What the minister said on June 2 infers there was intent on the part of the honourable member for Dauphin to mislead the House. I would therefore call on the honourable Minister of Natural Resources to withdraw the words in question.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, as I have warned my children when playing hockey, there is no

such thing as an accidental butt end, and I apologize and withdraw the statement.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable minister.

I have a second ruling for the House.

On June 10, 1999, the acting government House leader, the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mr. McCrae), raised a point of order that the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) was calling to the attention of the House the absence of members from the House.

I took the matter under advisement and reviewed Hansard. What was said was "to the Minister of Justice, who appears to be losing his backers over there." There was no breach of Citation 481(c) of Beauchesne which states "a Member, while speaking, must not refer to the presence or absence of specific Members." The honourable minister did not have a point of order.

* (1420)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Equity Tax Credit

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, as part of my government's ongoing commitment to further economic development of our province, coupled with our continuous efforts to make our tax system more progressive and competitive, we were proud to recently announce the introduction of the equity tax credit.

Manitoba investors are now eligible for a tax break of up to \$4,500 over a three-year period when they buy qualifying shares of an eligible Manitoba-based company. The credit can be deducted from Manitoba personal income tax and pertains to equities listed exclusively on the Winnipeg Stock Exchange. This new tax credit will help us further develop capital markets in Manitoba and will provide another incentive to invest in Manitoba companies. This, of course, will result in job creation for Manitobans. Manitoba has been experiencing phenomenal

economic growth and diversification in the past few years. We are branching out into nontraditional sectors and are making a name for ourselves in many cutting-edge industries such as film and video production, health research, and value-added agriculture. This Equity Tax Credit is just the latest way that my government is giving its support to Manitoba-based companies and industry. The Equity Tax Credit will help strengthen and fortify Manitoba businesses and give them the resources they need to grow and expand. We all know that a strong and healthy economy leads to a strong and healthy province. My government is committed to both. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Brandon Regional Health Centre

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Yesterday in Question Period I raised the matter of structural problems at the Brandon Regional Health Centre related to a flooding that occurred because of a breakage of a valve in the air conditioning system. Fortunately, the staff were able to fix it up quickly, but nevertheless it could have been very serious if the roof of the emergency room collapsed.

Madam Speaker, these problems are not new. The administration of the Brandon general hospital for years has had to cope with this. They have always thought, though, that the government was going to come forward with a modernization of the building and therefore put off a certain number of preventative maintenance procedures that could have taken place.

I read from the letter dated September 21, 1993, to the then Minister of Health. It is from the chairman of the board of directors at Brandon general and signed by two other officials from the board, and it says: solutions are long overdue and absolutely necessary. Time-expired facilities continue to deteriorate, mechanical systems routinely require very expensive retrofit and repair, building and system codes in most instances do not reflect current standards and are failing repeatedly.

This was 1993, and we still have the situation of Brandon waiting for a new hospital to be built. I suggested yesterday, in all seriousness to the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson),

that funds be put aside to enable the administration to engage in certain preventative maintenance to avert any potential disaster that could be around the corner. I wanted to remind the honourable minister and the House that since 1988, when the first Minister of Health was appointed, the Brandon general hospital facility was put under review, and that is about all we have had as far as the Brandon general or the Brandon Regional Health Centre is concerned. Madam Speaker, I would hope the minister will take my suggestion seriously.

Income Assistance

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Madam Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to talk about The Employment and Income Assistance Amendment Act that was introduced in the House yesterday. This legislation will allow us to help people on social assistance escape the trap of welfare dependency and achieve self-sufficiency. Welfare should be a hand up not a handout. It has never been intended to serve as permanent income replacement for able-bodied Manitobans.

My government wants to help people on social assistance become self-sufficient and to acquire the skills they need to provide for themselves and their families. Some of the programs we are proposing include work for welfare which would require all clients capable of working to draft personal job plans and prove that they are actively seeking employment. Clients will be expected to participate in community service until they gain employment. This service will help them increase their chances of finding work. Learnfare, which would help Manitobans both with and without children acquire the skills and experience necessary to find work and to succeed in the workforce. Able-bodied childless youth will be expected to attend school to receive their benefits.

Finally, the addictions treatment program will oblige childless welfare recipients who have addictions problems to engage in addictions treatment. Those with children will be strongly encouraged to seek treatment, as well, but their benefits will not be cut for noncompliance. The

welfare of their children will be carefully monitored.

Madam Speaker, there are jobs and opportunities to be had in this province, and we want everyone who is capable to capitalize on these opportunities. We want to connect people to these jobs because we know that a lifetime on welfare is a commitment to a lifetime of poverty. Turning a blind eye to the problem of welfare dependency is simply irresponsible, and my government will not ignore the problem.

Winnipeg North End

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): On the way down to Question Period today, I was listening to CBC Questionnaire, and they had Tom Simms of CEDA and John Prystanski, the city councillor, talking about the fire zone in the north end of Winnipeg. I understand the member for St. Johns' (Mr. Mackintosh) sensitivity because I, too, am very proud to come from the north end. It is hard to point out the problems without stigmatizing the area. It is a wonderful area of this city to live in.

The point that Tom Simms made on CBC Questionnaire was that this is not a problem that just affects the north end. People from River Heights, people from Tuxedo, people from all over, if there is a zero percent property increase next year, they will still be paying higher taxes in their areas as a result of the decreasing value of the property in the north end, properties where, according to Tom Simms, the values have fallen as much as 50 percent in one year. When there is a reassessment, all of us will be paying higher.

Now that is not the only reason. There are human issues concerned. I worked in that area for a number of years as a community police officer. I chose to live in that area, and it is an area that all legislatures should look at because it affects all of us in Manitoba what happens to that area of town.

Video Game Classification

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, last evening the Municipal Affairs committee met and considered Bill 14. Bill 14

amends The Amusements Act so that digital video disks and video games can be classified by the Film Classification Board. The Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Vodrey) was on record as saying that she did not intend to have the board classify video games, and last night her position did not waiver.

Although I proposed a second amendment which would make classification by the board mandatory, government members used their majority to defeat the amendment. Members of the opposition do not believe that classification of video games should be a matter of ministerial discretion. As video games have become increasingly graphic, realistic, violent and pornographic, we believe that the need for classification has become paramount. We think the majority of Manitobans agree with us, and we were extremely disappointed to learn that the—

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Environment): I believe the amendment was withdrawn not voted down. That is a very misleading and incorrect statement to leave on the floor, very bad. I do not know; it is probably a dispute over the facts, but the record will show the member was ruled out of order. It was not turned down.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the matter raised by the honourable Minister of Environment, there was no point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Osborne, to complete her member's statement.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, I do thank the Minister of Environment. She is quite right. The amendment was ruled out of scope; it was not voted down. So she is quite right.

We think the majority of Manitobans want to have video games classified, and we were extremely disappointed to learn that the minister did not consult with Manitobans about the kind of legislation they would prefer. I would have thought that this minister, who is also Minister

responsible for the Status of Women and a former Minister of Justice and who claims to be a proponent of zero tolerance, would have had the sensitivity to consult with parents and with women's groups, especially since violence against women is a fairly regular feature of video games.

In conclusion, we are disappointed with the minister's decision, a decision which ignores the public good and which is plainly illogical in that it does not classify video games, though films and videos are classified.

* (1430)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, there is a fair bit of work that has to be accomplished today. First of all, I would like you to canvass the House to find if there is unanimous consent for the Committee of Supply to sit in two sections in Rooms 254 and 255 respectively while the House is considering bills.

Madam Speaker: I apologize. I was otherwise distracted. I wonder if the honourable government House leader would repeat the announcement.

Mr. Praznik: I am requesting the unanimous consent of the House for a number of things. The first is for the Committee of Supply to sit in two sections in Rooms 254 and 255 respectively while the House is considering bills.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the Committee of Supply to sit in two sections in Rooms 254 and 255 respectively while the House is considering bills? [agreed]

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I am also seeking unanimous consent for the Estimates of the Department of Finance to be considered in Room 255 while the Estimates of the Department of Justice are considered in Room 254.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the Estimates of the Department of Finance to be considered in Room 255 and the Estimates of the Department of Justice to be considered in Room 254? [agreed]

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I would also seek leave of the House for the Estimates of the Departments of Northern Affairs, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Agriculture, and the Children and Youth Secretariat to be considered in Room 255 on completion of the Estimates of the Department of Finance and other Estimates originally assigned to that section of the Committee of Supply.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the Estimates of Northern Affairs, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Agriculture, and the Children and Youth Secretariat to be considered in Room 255 upon completion of the Estimates of the Department of Finance and other Estimates that were originally scheduled to that section of the Committee of Supply? [agreed]

Mr. Praznik: I would also seek unanimous consent for the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources, Community Support Programs, Urban Economic Development Initiatives, Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Works and Economic Development Partnership Agreements, and Employee Benefits and Other Payments to be considered in Room 254 on completion of the Estimates of the Department of Justice and other Estimates originally assigned to that section of the Committee of Supply.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the Estimates of Natural Resources, Community Support Programs, Urban Economic Development Initiatives, Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Works and Economic Development Partnership Agreements, and Employee Benefits and Other Payments to be considered in Room 254 upon completion of the Estimates of the Department of Justice and other Estimates originally assigned to that section of the Committee of Supply? [agreed]

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I would also like to inform the House that the meeting of the

Standing Committee on Law Amendments, originally scheduled for this evening, Tuesday, July 6, 1999, to consider Bill 26 has been cancelled. I would also like to inform the House that the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations will be called for tomorrow evening, Wednesday, July 7, 1999, at 7 p.m., to consider Bill 26.

Madam Speaker: For the information of the House, the Standing Committee on Law Amendments scheduled for this evening, Tuesday, July 6, at 7 p.m., to consider Bill 26 has been cancelled. The Standing Committee on Industrial Relations has been scheduled for Wednesday evening, July 7, tomorrow evening at 7 p.m., to consider Bill 26.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I also wish to announce that the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs will meet this afternoon at 5 p.m., and I am not sure if that requires the consent of the House to sit standing committee concurrently. I believe it does, so I would seek leave of the House to have the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs meet at 5 p.m., or following the completion of the Estimates process should it take longer than 5 p.m., to consider Bill 25, the clause-by-clause consideration.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs to meet at 5 p.m. this afternoon to consider Bill 25 clause by clause? [agreed]

Mr. Praznik: Before I move the Estimates resolution, I would ask, upon following moving into Estimates for the two sections of the Committee of Supply to begin their work, with respect to work in the Chamber for the regular sitting of the House that you would call debate on second readings for the following bills: Bills 36, 37, 38, 39, 35 and 43, to then be followed by calling for third readings, the bills as they appear on the Order Paper for third reading.

As well, and I look to the opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton), following that, if we have not yet reached the time for private members' hour, to call the government motion with respect to amending various bills for the purposes of

numbering. That matter has to be dealt with as well.

Madam Speaker, the last instruction, we will just omit that. We will not call that motion today. Following the completion of those third readings, if the hour has not yet reached 5 p.m., I would ask if the House could then call it 5 p.m. in the Chamber and proceed to private members' hour, in which case I would ask at that time you would call Resolution 38. I believe it is moved by the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin).

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House, provided all matters assigned to be dealt with in the Chamber are completed prior to 5 p.m., that we move into private members' hour to deal exclusively with private members' Resolution 38 proposed by the honourable member for The Pas? [agreed]

* (1440)

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs for 5 p.m. this afternoon be amended as follows: the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson); the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) for the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou); the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that this House, as agreed, do now resolve itself into two sections of the Committee of Supply, one to meet in Room 254 and one to meet in 255, to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Most Gracious Majesty.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 36—The Registered Nurses Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr.

Stefanson), Bill 36, The Registered Nurses Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I am prepared to yield to my colleague the member for Kildonan, who will place on the record our comments about this particular piece of legislation.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on behalf of fellow MLAs in our party to indicate that we will be supporting this bill's passage at second reading. My comments will not be lengthy in this regard. Certainly the amendments and the changes to The Registered Nurses Act have been reviewed by our caucus and ourselves, together with the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses. Most of the changes contained therein are in conjunction and in relation to almost all of the professional bodies legislation that has been amended recently. That is not to say that in some areas we perhaps would not do better or do different. But certainly in practice we support the bill, and we do not want to unduly hold up passage of this legislation.

I do want to indicate that with regard to nurses it is interesting that in the province and at the civic level there are celebrations that take place. There are certain weeks that are designated as symbolizing attention towards a particular group or body—firefighters week, multiple sclerosis week, diabetes week, and the like. I note that in the pattern of this government that they sort of have a pattern. Every four years this particular administration, just preceding an election, the government discovers health care and indeed they discover nurses. This legislation and many of the actions and the announcements of the present minister are part of nurses month by this particular government. [interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if you would call the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) to order. I cannot even hear myself talk above her rantings.

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Environment): The member indicated that they approve the bill in principle but there are certain things they would change, and I think we would appreciate knowing what changes they would make. It would be relevant to the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Might I ask honourable members wanting to carry on a conversation to do so in the loge, though. I am having difficulty hearing the honourable member at this time.

The honourable member, to carry on.

Mr. Chomiak: Just in that regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not mind. In fact, the parley back and forth is generally something that we do in this Chamber, but for the past few moments I literally have not been able to hear my voice on these speakers because of the comments from the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh). So I thank you for your admonishing and pointing that out, and I certainly look forward to her comments on this legislation during the course of this debate.

So, as I was saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government every four years ought to designate and they do designate a month or a period of time, and it is the nurses month. This is nurses month and it precedes a provincial election, as does the legislation. You know, we have seen a revelation, that the government has decided—after we have been imploring them for years to hire nurses and after having laid off over a thousand nurses, we see the minister stand up this last month and say we believe in nurses and we have a nurses' retention fund.

We see the government standing up and saying we are now going to go hand in hand and march with the nurses to try to make a better health care system, after having spent 11 years, albeit with a period of time just before the election when it is an exception, having spent 11

years doing everything in their power to diminish and denigrate the role of nurses in our society. I am afraid that after 11 years, the confidence of nurses and others in our society is not going to come back by virtue of this discovering of nurses, the nurses month that the government has now entered into.

* (1450)

The next bill will be of occasion to discuss this even further. The very government where the minister said there was no role in the future for LPNs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after imploring and begging the government, after having nurses come to the Chamber and the minister refusing to meet with them, saying there is no future for LPNs, all of a sudden the government has discovered LPNs. We welcome that even if it is a deathbed conversion, even if it is a month or two before the election.

We will even accept the fact that this government, even for a period of time before an election, discovers the role and the value of nurses in our society. We welcome that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we are supportive of that because, frankly, for too long in Manitoba, nurses have been denigrated; for too long they have been downsized; for too long they have not been appreciated; for too long they have been laid off; for too long they have not been recognized for the long hours and their dedication; for too long they have not been seen as the linchpins and the very core of our health care system; for too long they have been under the stewardship and leadership of the member—there is no stewardship, the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) adds—under the lack of planning and the difficulties under the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), and we welcome a recognition by this government this month of nurses and the role and the function that they play in society.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not have a major problem with this legislation. We certainly look forward to its passage, and we certainly look forward—[interjection] The member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) says we are supporting everything. Let me just point out, we do support nurses, and we support your support of nurses this month. For 10 years, 10

long years, this government has denigrated, has done everything it can do to destroy the role and the function of nurses, and now, into an election campaign, this month, this year, they have discovered nurses. We welcome that conversion.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let it not be mistaken. It is not a conversion on our part. Indeed, it is a conversion on the part of members opposite to agreeing to our position, our consistent position for 11 years. If the member wants to check Hansard and if the member wants to check how often we stood up in this Chamber and said do not lay off those nurses; you are going to have a problem in the future; do not downsize them; do something about maintaining nurses; do something about the role of nurses; do something about the function of nurses; do something about recognizing nurses, and it went for nought.

All we saw was layoffs and minister after minister, indeed how many, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one, two, three, four standing up and saying, well, statistics say we have more nurses per capita than any other place in the universe and consequently that is the reality.

We watched that for 10 and a half years and now in the 11th year, in the last month, the dying months of a mandate of a government that is clinging to power, that is advertising, it is using public dollars to advertise its commitment to health care, in the dying moments of a government they discover nurses, and we welcome their conversion. Never let it be said that we have not been consistent.

On that basis, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we certainly support this legislation and look forward to its speedy passage and completion in this House.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Bill 36 is a bill which I think has the support of all three political parties obviously. We met with the nurses organization and had some dialogue in terms of their thoughts, what their expectations were, and even though it might not necessarily be 100 percent in terms of meeting all expectations, it does have the principle of what was being requested, from what I have been led

to believe, so we have absolutely no problem in terms of it going into committee.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), for Wednesday, July 7, 1999, for 7 p.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Burrows (Mr. Martindale) for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak); Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen); Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk); Osborne (Ms. McGifford) for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), for Wednesday, July 7, 1999, for 7 p.m.

Motions agreed to.

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Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): The cynicism across the way is a little bit overwhelming thinking that they are going to take credit for some of the nursing decisions in the province. I think they seem to have forgotten that there has been a nurse on this side for over a year now, and I think the nurse on this side is helping to influence some of the decisions that are happening over here.

I have a strong background as a nurse. I started as a general duty nurse and worked my way through the system in various aspects. I spent a considerable amount of time in nursing education through continuing education. I spent time working as a researcher with physicians as well as with nurses. I spent some time as a special project nurse, actually looking at the whole aspect of what is a nurse and how nurses make critical decisions during their workday.

That was a seven-year project where I had an opportunity to work in every area of the hospital and learned a lot about what made up a nurse in various areas, what made up part of her

decision making or his decision making, how that nurse captured their practice in documentation, and ways we could look at enhancing all of that within nursing. I spent my last four years as a nursing administrator on an evening shift at St. Boniface Hospital, covering some very, very interesting situations and having to make some very critical decisions that either affected nurses, physicians, patients, or their families.

I have had very rich experiences with colleagues, with patients, and with their families. I, in fact, remember the first patient that was very, very special to me when I first graduated. When I first graduated, I worked on a neurosciences unit as a registered nurse. In those days not a lot of people wanted to work on an area like that, because it was just too frightening. As new grads, we were faced with some pretty interesting challenges on a ward that saw a lot of head injuries, gunshot wounds, spinal cord injuries, various neurological problems.

I remember the first patient I had who was a head injured patient. He ended up being on that ward for a very, very long time. His name, we will say for right now, is John. John ended up being a very, very special person to many of us there, because at one point we thought he was going to die from his severe head injury. With a lot of very good nursing care, this particular man survived. He left all of us with an incredible lot of good memories.

* (1500)

Within the last few years, I had noticed an obituary in the paper, and it was John's. It was interesting to remember back to when I knew him 20 years ago or 20-some years ago and to think what an impact a patient like that could make to a young nurse that was just starting out in her career. I still have pictures of him at home in my photo album. I still remember how enriching an experience it was for me to spend time looking after this man and knowing that it was good nursing care that kept him alive, from the point of being unconscious to having a tracheostomy, to needing an incredible amount of nursing care, to teaching him how to walk again, to teaching him how to eat again, to teaching him how to relate to people again.

Besides John, I have also had many experiences watching patients die, holding dying patients in my arms, holding families in my arms when we had to tell them that their loved one had just died. I have taken numerous families to the morgue to spend time with their loved one, but prior to doing that, I, as a nurse, had to go into the morgue, locate the patient, prepare the patient, make the patient look presentable to the family so that they can have the quality moments that a family deserves with their loved ones in those times.

I have had to go to a morgue to find a diseased baby. Once I found the baby, I had to dress that baby. I had to wrap it in a blanket, carry it through the hospital and place it in its mother's arms. After spending half an hour with the mother and the father and the priest, praying with them, helping them to cherish their last moment with their child, I then had to take the baby from the mother's arms and carry the baby back to the morgue and leave the baby there.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

I have had to resuscitate patients. I have had to change innumerable dressings. I have had to work with families of Alzheimer's patients. I have had to work with mothers going through difficult labour. I have had the joy of working in a maternity area where you see an incredible amount of good, good things happening. I have had to work on medical wards where very young people have gone through some very horrendous illnesses. So if the members opposite think that those of us over here do not have a clue about what nursing is all about, then you are not listening to what I am saying if that is what you are thinking.

I have had more nursing experience than any of you over there, and there is nobody there that can tell me what a nurse is or is not, what a nurse goes through. The empathy on this side of the House, the understanding on this side of the House, is definitely there and is being put to good use right now in working with nurses in this province.

I have worked with some very incredible people in nursing. It has been a very exciting profession to see some of the dynamic men and

women that are part of our health care system. Whether they have been in the hospital or at the university or within the regulatory bodies of nursing, there are some very, very talented people out there who contribute a great amount to what makes our health care system work.

Expert caring is the core of nursing and it is really true, because it is nursing that often is the glue that holds a lot of things together. When a registered nurse asks a patient how they are feeling, she or he just does not just take their word for it. In the time it takes to have a brief conversation, the R.N. conducts dozens of routine assessments. When you go in to give a diabetic an insulin injection, you do not just walk in, give an injection and walk out of the room. You look at how the patient looks. You look at what their mannerisms are. You see how alert they are. You look at their skin. You look at their eyes. You are talking to them. You are looking at them visually.

An assessment takes many, many facets of observation. Registered nurses provide direct patient care in hospitals, homes and communities, and their expertise is vital to our health care system. Their expertise is valued and respected within our health care system. Registered nurses are very cost-effective health care providers with a wealth of knowledge. There are many opportunities for nurses to take a lot of the roles within health care and strengthen our health care system.

So to see a new act at this point in time, I know, is very exciting for nurses, because I have been there as they have been working to put this draft together. There is a great deal of excitement out there by the registered nurses to see that their act, with its changes, is now going to be implemented. In this era of health care reform, strengthening the role of registered nurses is critical to all Manitobans.

So what is a registered nurse? It has changed over the years. When I went in as a student, it was a three-year program. Now we have a four-year university program which, with some intervention and encouragement by this government, is now or can be for some students just over a three-year program where we can

graduate more registered nurses and have them out working in our workforce.

Nurses are highly skilled professionals who work in partnership with other members of the health care team, including physicians, therapists, technicians and pharmacists. The one unique thing about nursing is that they are the ones who are there 24 hours a day. As nurses, we actually learn to do many things, dispense drugs, fix televisions, serve food, walk patients, move patients on stretchers, carry equipment through the hospital. It is a multitasking level of person who actually is a nurse. From large urban hospitals to community clinics or remote nursing stations, registered nurses provide care whenever and wherever they are needed.

When we look at the calibers of nursing or the different groups of nurses that are out there, we have registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses and licensed practical nurses. All of them have different educational backgrounds and skill sets, but each plays a vital role in providing quality health care. The majority of nurses in Manitoba are registered nurses, but we are seeing an increasing number in licensed practical nurses who are entering training and graduating, and registered psychiatric nurses as well, and there is room for all these categories of nurses within our health care system.

I have strongly believed that, and it is a belief I bring to this government, that there is a role for all those categories of nurses. There is also a role for advanced practice nursing and the exciting possibilities that that could offer to our health care system and to the patients and families that are within that system. So it is an exciting opportunity to look at what advanced practice nursing will actually offer to Manitoba.

* (1510)

Understanding the needs of clients is essential to providing safe, appropriate care. Registered nurses are there in the middle of the night to call the physician when the nurse has made a full assessment of the patient and deems that it is time to give the doctor a call. Registered nurses co-ordinate all aspects of client care, giving emotional support and ensuring that comfort and treatment needs are

met. That is a challenge because there are so many things that nurses have to watch for when looking after a patient, depending on what is actually wrong with that patient.

In addition, registered nurses advocate for the development of client- and family-friendly policies and practices. Sometimes the registered nurse is the best advocate that a patient can have. That did not used to be when I graduated, way back when. Nurses were not allowed to advocate very much for patients. We were not allowed to sit on the beds and put our arms around a sick or dying patient. We were expected in those days to keep our distance in many ways, so it is exciting to see now how nursing has changed and that we have become a much warmer profession and a more accepting profession of recognizing the pain that patients and families go through, and we are now allowed to react to that in a much more sympathetic and empathetic fashion.

Registered nursing is a self-regulated profession, governed in Manitoba by The Registered Nurses Act, which we are about to pass through in an updated format. Registered nurses practise according to standards of practice and are bound by a code of ethics. MARN, the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, is the regulatory and professional body representing more than 10,500 registered nurses. MARN's mandate is to regulate the practice of registered nurses and to advance the quality of nursing to protect the public interest.

In order to practise nursing in this province, registered nurses must be registered with MARN. Standards for registered nurses' education and practice are set by MARN. The association protects the public interest by ensuring competent and ethical practice by registered nurses by promoting good practice, preventing poor practice, and intervening when necessary.

The profession of registered nursing is both an art and a science, and as a student nurse I can remember sitting with colleagues or fellow students at the time and debating whether it was an art or a science, more of one or more of the other. It was an interesting challenge in those days because nursing has certainly been

articulated more clearly as a profession in the last many, many years. But in the days back when, it was certainly one where nobody was quite sure whether to label it an art or a science.

It does focus on the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities. Nurses for a long time have recognized the need and the value and the great opportunities that lie before us to take nursing into the communities, to enhance the community supports and the ensuing benefits that would result from that. Even back in the '70s nurses were talking about health promotion, illness prevention, community nursing, and in my mind there was a lot of vision being demonstrated by that particular profession to showcase exactly what nursing had an opportunity to do and to be and what strong contributors they could be to a healthy health care system and a strong health care system.

Registered nurses are health care professionals who practise as direct-care providers, case managers, administrators, counsellors, child advocates, consultants, educators, researchers and independent practitioners. That is an exciting list of opportunities for nurses which also indicates the great skills that nurses bring to that particular profession and the contributions that they can make to our health care system.

I am glad to see that the challenges that were put forth by nurses back in the '70s are coming to fruition nowadays where we are seeing much more research and practice based on research. We are looking at outcomes of patient care and making practice changes based on outcomes. No longer is care just given because it seemed the right thing to do. It is a questioning profession that is looking at what is right, what works, how can we make it better.

Florence Nightingale in June of 1867, if you want to look at a visionary, made a statement which I think is really interesting. She said: My view is that the ultimate destination of all nursing is the nursing of the sick in their own homes. I look to the abolition of all hospitals but no use to talk about the year 2000.

For a woman of her day, the "Lady with a Lamp," whose name is so synonymous with

nursing, it is interesting to see that her vision was so, so far ahead of her time.

The nursing research that is happening nowadays is actually very exciting because nurses are starting to address many, many areas of health care, whether it is psychological, physiological, whether we are looking at how to help women cope with breast cancer, whether we are looking at how to improve the lives for Alzheimer's patients, how we can better improve the life of a patient in their last days, nursing is certainly taking a leading role in much of the changes that are happening within our health care system in terms of addressing the care that is given to patients and the kinds of care that work.

Registered nurses are key members of the health care team in hospitals, community nursing resource centres, outpatient clinics, nursing homes and schools, and in government, corporate and private organizations. They work in a number of areas, including critical care, which is a huge and challenging area. The technological changes that are going on in intensive cares and critical cares are absolutely phenomenal compared to the 1970s and '80s when nurses basically had to look after a patient and an intravenous and maybe a Foley catheter and maybe one machine. You go into a critical care area now, and you have to be a technician. You have to understand technology, unlike anything that has ever happened in the '70s and '80s. The technological changes of the '90s have been phenomenal, and it certainly has had its impact on nursing.

The technological changes, however, do not just end with critical care. They are now carried through to the wards where general duty nurses on medicine, on pediatrics, on surgery, on geriatrics are now challenged not just with providing direct patient care but to also caring for all of the machinery that is now involved in caring for that patient. So the challenges that are impacting nursing with technological changes are huge, just as those technological changes are hugely affecting health care dollars and the need for that.

Emergency nursing is another very challenging area. Fast paced, you never know

where your next patient is going; you do not know if you have a code green, yellow or amber coming in. You hear the ambulances coming; you know you have got maybe a code red; and you are set up. It is an area of nursing where nurses deserve an incredible amount of credit for some of the things they have to face. As a nursing supervisor in that area, there were parts of it that I was not even able to face myself. It was very emotionally exhausting in many instances, and you are very grateful for the nurses around you who are able to pick up where you could not continue.

* (1520)

Maternity nursing, fortunately for most of the time, is an exciting area. There is nothing more exciting than probably watching the birth of a baby. Psychiatry presents its own challenges, and psychiatric nurses certainly face their own challenges within that field. It, too, like many of the others, has become very, very specialized. No longer are we back in the '70s when patients were all sort of the same. Things have changed so much in terms of therapy, treatments, medications, technology, that the nurse from the '70s has had a lot of growth and development to the nurse of today in order to meet the needs of patients.

Geriatrics is, in itself, a challenge now, too. No longer is a nurse is a nurse is a nurse. That changed many years ago because there are such unique challenges within each area that the educational requirements for nurses within each area are highly demanding.

Many R.N.s are also self-employed as independent practitioners who provide direct care, education, consultation and counselling services to a wide variety of clients.

In whatever area or setting in which they work, registered nurses are responsible and accountable for their practice. Registered nurses co-ordinate all aspects of care and assist clients in meeting their health care needs. Most nurses going through training have to learn something called the nursing process, which is a problem-solving process to address problems and issues. Very similar to what probably most of us go through in a problem-solving approach, whether

you are in business or whether you are at home trying to make a decision. In nursing it gets a little bit more focused on what relates to nursing. As a student, most nurses terribly disliked the words "nursing diagnosis" and "nursing process;" however, as one graduates and puts the skills to practice, one finally realizes the huge value to be able to go in, assess a patient, and be able to come up with what is actually that nursing diagnosis, not a just a sign or a symptom, but what actually is the problem.

Not very different from many facets to government. It would be so easy with some of the issues to just say: oh, fix that, throw money at that; that ought to fix that particular problem. Whether you are looking at children's issues or health care or roads, you cannot just assume that once you have identified something, it is actually the problem, and that is what the nursing process teaches you. It teaches you to analyze in-depth all of the pieces, and then you take those pieces and you put them together and come up with your diagnosis.

Once you have your nursing diagnosis, you then determine a plan. At the same time you are determining a plan, you are determining how you are going to evaluate to see whether you have reached the outcome that you wanted to achieve. If you do not reach the outcome, you want to achieve, then you go back to square one and start all over again.

Nursing is, indeed, a challenge, and I am honoured to be able to stand up here and to support such a noble profession, to recognize that this legislation that we are passing is something that nursing will appreciate very much. With that, Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity of putting these words on record.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 36, The Registered Nurses Act.

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 37—The Licensed Practical Nurses Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson), Bill 37, The Licensed Practical Nurses Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières auxiliaires), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to deal with the second of the three acts dealing with the nursing profession in Manitoba. I welcome the opportunity, and I want to indicate that there was a time when members of this House did not believe that an act of this kind would ever come to fruition. Since 1986, the LPNs have been lobbying to have an act of this kind brought forward. Intense lobbying and changes were advocated, and intense lobbying was commenced in the 1990s to try to update the act, but it always met the government's refusal to recognize the role and function of LPNs.

Madam Speaker, I certainly enjoyed the comments of the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger). I happen to agree with most of her comments, and I found it very heartfelt. I certainly appreciate her comments. I wish that those sentiments had been expressed to the government for the past 11 years. I wish the member could have joined me when I sat in the basements of nurses in Transcona who had been laid off or in St. Boniface who had been laid off or the nurses who were in tears, because they could not do their work at the Health Sciences Centre because of layoffs. I wish the member could have joined me in the rallies that we attended here in the committee room that the minister refused to attend where LPNs said: We cannot, we have been laid off, we cannot do our

jobs, our patients are suffering. I wish the member could have joined me when I had individuals and patients talked to me about having to hire private-duty nurses to go into the hospitals to care for their loved ones, because the nurses were run off their feet.

If there is one consistent thing that I have heard as the Health critic since 1993, it is nurses are run off their feet. The member for Charleswood knows that and members opposite know that. If there has been one consistent theme and requirement in this House, it is that we needed to give nurses the resources and the ability to do their job. That is what has been lacking, and that is what this bill will—I am not sure in the hands of this government, because, frankly, it is a month before or two before an election. We know what the government commitments prior to an election amount to, but certainly this has been long advocated by LPNs who have advocated for an expansion in their scope and practice to carry out their abilities and functions.

The member for Charleswood talks about the ability of nurses to analyze the process, and perhaps the member for Charleswood and members of the government could analyze this process for me. When Madam Connie Curran came to town in 1992 and said: We do not need LPNs; we need to lay off nurses. The government paid her \$4 million, plus \$800,000 tax free U.S. [interjection] Oh, the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) says this is revisionist history. It is, in fact, real history, not the kind of history that was eliminated under the government in the school system.

* (1530)

I might add, Madam Speaker, the government did exactly what Madam Connie Curran said to do, and that is lay off nurses and, in particular, lay off LPNs. The Health Sciences Centre laid off LPNs and St. Boniface Hospital laid off LPNs. They closed the schools and then it went to the community hospitals. We stood up in this House day after day after day saying there has to be a role. There is a need and a function for LPNs in our system. The previous previous minister said nothing and the previous minister said they are going to have to do something else.

Now, in the dying days of a government that is clinging to power, that will do virtually anything to get re-elected, the government has now recognized that there is a role and function for LPNs. Now what political double-talk is this when this government says, when the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) said you cannot throw money at a problem, they are complex. I agree, and that is why for 11 years we have been proposing solutions and options. In the 11th year of this government, they announce a budget for the first time that takes a comprehensive look at health care, and what does it do? It throws money at health care problems, and they brag about it every day in this Chamber. Do they brag about the programs they put in place for the past 10 and a half years? No, because those were cuts. But now going into an election, they find the resources to send the money in. So who is cynical at this point?

Do you doubt why we are so skeptical of this government? Does the member for Charleswood not know that in 1995 the government promised \$600 million in capital to institutions and that promptly after the election cancelled it? Now most of those projects are being announced again. Madam Speaker, of course, we welcome the announcements, and, of course, we vote in favour of it. We have been waiting for it for four and a half years.

It is passing strange. I find it passing strange that in the 11th year, in the final months of this government, they would all of a sudden find the resources to recognize nurses. [interjection] Perhaps the member for Assiniboia will have her opportunity during debate to point out all of her contributions to health care for the past several years. I look forward to that opportunity.

Dealing with LPNs, I want to indicate that we met with the LPNs as well. If members want me to analyze the process and go back and show you the six or seven inches of correspondence that I have from LPNs urging us to do today what the government has done, and the correspondence goes back to 1993, then perhaps members would understand. If they want me to do that I am quite happy and content to do that. But the fact is, we have lobbied consistently to expand the scope of practice of LPNs and

finally, after initially and after consistently denying the role of LPNs in the system, the government has now brought in a bill that actually recognizes that role.

I want to take it further, because we have great difficulty accepting the assurances of this government. We have asked, even despite this bill being before us and even though the government has said, the new minister has said, and I will take him at his word, that he now believes in LPNs and he believes in a role and functions for LPNs, we have said, show us, show us by ensuring that LPNs have a role and function in our acute care hospitals and our tertiary care facilities. Because members opposite may not know it, but we have been approached by nurses and by administrators and others saying there is a role for LPNs in those facilities as well, not just isolating them in the community and rural Manitoba, but allowing them to function in acute care and full services hospitals.

So, Madam Speaker, this is the second of three bills. This is part of the process of government recognition of nurses month under the Filmon government, a recognition after 11 years that nurses exist, have a role and function, and can play an important part, an integral part of our health care system. I would be less cynical if members opposite had joined me in the rallies that we had at this Legislature when LPNs came here and said: do not eliminate our jobs; do not eliminate our teaching positions. I wish members opposite would have joined us when we did that. I wish they would have been there, but they were not.

You know, Madam Speaker, I know they were not there, because in the Committee Room 255 we invited the Minister of Health to address the LPNs and say what role and function the LPNs would have in a future in Manitoba. The minister not only refused to come but in Question Period later on virtually said there was no role and no future for LPNs in Manitoba. That was then. That was the real Conservative government. What other way can we judge it than to look at the 11 years of cuts, 11 years of not recognizing the role of nurses, 11 years of downgrading the role, 11 years of part-time jobs, 11 years of going to the States, 11 years of

limiting enrollment, 11 years of not recognizing the role and function? And now, in the 11th year, in what is maybe the last month and what is clearly the last session of this government, this government that is dying and clinging to power's office, they recognize that there is a role and a function for nurses.

We see the legislation. But we support it and we welcome it. If it takes an election to get the government to recognize the reality, then so be it. You know, we accepted the budget even though we do not place a lot of confidence in the government's ability to deliver, given their track record, but we accepted the budget because we saw a lot of programs and a lot of expenditures and a lot of improvements that we have been advocating consistently for a number of years.

Of course, we had to consistently be consistent with our principles in what is right for Manitoba, and we supported that budget. We are doing what is right for Manitoba by supporting this legislation, particularly the LPN legislation, which, frankly, I never thought would see the light of day under this regime, and I suspect the LPNs did not either. I know members opposite recognize that, particularly those in rural and northern portions of our province who see the incredible role that LPNs play in those facilities. What we are saying is we want them to have a role to play, not just there but in all of Manitoba in the tertiary and in the acute care facilities and an expanded health care system and in partnership with all of the nursing professions.

I think that the significance of this act is that it expands the scope of practice for licensed practical nurses, something that we have had in this Legislature by way of resolution and by way of question. We have brought it forward, and we were denied that opportunity by this government.

So I ask you, Madam Speaker, when the government denies it and denies it and denies it and then in the 11th year of a dying mandate, in fact, a mandate that, in my view, is no longer legitimate, but beyond their four years, beyond their four years when they bring in legislation of this kind, I guess we are a tad skeptical, but we welcome it, and we support the government on it. We have always and consistently, on this side

of the House, done what we thought has been right for the health care of Manitobans. I dare say, had the government listened to the counsel provided by members on this side of the House, we would not be in the hallway medicine crisis that we are in.

You know, Madam Speaker, day after day in the House, the minister stands up and says, our waiting lists are no longer the longest in Canada.

Well, you know what? It was just a few months ago that they were the longest, but now, following our—you know, Madam Speaker, three years ago we proposed a specific plan for reducing waiting lists in CAT scans, MRIs, and ultrasounds. The government finally implemented it and now says, well, we do not have the longest waiting list.

Well, thank heavens, thank the parliamentary system that there is an election every four or five years, because otherwise those programs would not have seen the light of day. The last time the government recognized nurses was, oh, just over four years ago, in March of 1995, before the last election. Now it is July and it is fairly clear that we are close to an election. Indeed, there would have been an election last month—if the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was not totally dictated by polls, there would have been an election. There should have been an election.

* (1540)

So we see this legislation. We welcome it. We support this legislation. I wanted to comment on the comments of the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), again outlining her role and function as a nurse and the passion with which she delivered those comments, and I certainly welcomed it. I wonder, where were those comments over the past 11 years? Where was that support when we were standing up in this House and saying, do not let Connie Curran cut all those nurses?

Where were those voices when hundreds of nurses were let off at the Health Sciences Centre? Where were those voices when hundreds were laid off at St. Boniface Hospital? Misericordia Hospital was closed down by this government. Where were those voices about the

nurses who are left in limbo? About the surgeries that could not be done? Where are the voices of this government right now when beds have been closed this summer at ICU because they cannot find nurses because the government laid off a thousand nurses and nurses are not willing to come here and take part-time work and face the prospects of being laid off again by a government who have a track record of promising something during an election campaign and then cancelling it following the election? Where are those voices?

Will those voices be there if there is a general election and this bunch is re-elected? My fellow New Democrats here raise the point of the Chemical Withdrawal Unit. Talk about cynicism. The government brings a political bill, a bill before this House obligating people to receive addiction training, talk about expanding addiction training, and then close for the summer the Chemical Withdrawal Unit at the Health Sciences Centre. Madam Speaker, does one not see that there is a tendency and that we are a bit and a tad skeptical of pronouncements by this government?

Now, members opposite say, oh, these problems are complex. You know, Madam Speaker, of course, they are complex, and, of course, they require complex solutions. But you are not going to solve these problems if you denigrate the role of nurses, if you lay off a thousand nurses, if you tell nurses they are not wanted, if you tell nurses they should be part time, if you tell nurses that they are overpaid. If you tell nurses that—how and why are you going to even begin to solve the problems when you have spent 11 years downgrading the role of nurses? Now, on the road to Damascus, on the road to an election, you all of a sudden awake and say: oh, but now we understand that nurses have complex jobs and the world has changed and they have needs and functions; we now understand that.

You understand that at a time when every province in the country is trying to attract nurses and when most provinces have recognized it and dealt with it earlier. We had a proposal several years ago to hire more nurses in Manitoba, even if you could not find a specific role and function in order to maintain them here, so that we had a

reservoir of nurses when the shortage came. Where did that recommendation go? Nowhere. But now, a month before an election, you put together a fund that is going to somehow attract nurses when every other jurisdiction has already gone ahead and done it or is doing it.

An Honourable Member: No criteria developed.

Mr. Chomiak: Well, of course, no criteria are developed because it is only an election ploy. Now they have put people in place. Well, of course, it is an election ploy. When you are waiting 11 years for programs and you see something in the last month, what else can one conclude? Was there a plan? Was there a process in place? No, the minister had an announcement, and then they announced the group was going to meet.

So I welcome the comments from the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger); I welcome the member opposite's support of nurses. I am glad that they now understand there is a role and function for nurses; there is a role and function for LPNs in our health care system.

An Honourable Member: Late.

Mr. Chomiak: It is a tad late, but better late than never. Indeed, it has just been pointed out to me that the act says that it come in—even I am not so cynical as to believe that the fact that the legislation is going to come in on a day fixed by proclamation. Even I am not so cynical to believe the government would not carry it out—

An Honourable Member: Years and years of legislation that has not been proclaimed.

Mr. Chomiak: And the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) rightly points out that there are years and years of legislation that has not been proclaimed.

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Environment): Repeatedly, all day long the NDP heckle, and we say very little. Any time we do heckling, they come on a point of order.

But just now the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) has been heckling more than I was earlier. He rose on a point of order about me, but not her. I do not know why. Maybe it is because he does not remember the rules apply to them as well.

But a point of order, the member for Wellington is making it impossible for us to hear what the Health critic—whatever his constituency is. We cannot hear him because the member for Wellington is heckling. I think maybe the rules apply to both sides of the House, not just this side. Could you call her to order, please, Madam Speaker? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, on the same point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On the same alleged point of order, I have read Beauchesne on a few occasions, Madam Speaker, but I have never seen any section that is even remotely connected with the comments put forward by the minister. In fact, it fit more into the classification of a schoolyard dispute, and I would ask you to call her to order. She seems to be rising on numerous occasions today on these sorts of things. I do not know why she is so agitated, but this is nothing to do with our rules. If she is that frustrated, I would suggest she take her frustrations out in other ways rather than stand up repeatedly in this House on points of order that have absolutely no merit.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mrs. McIntosh), I believe the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) was coaching the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) perhaps and not allegedly heckling the honourable member for Kildonan, and, therefore, the honourable minister did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, thank you for your ruling and for clarifying to the Minister of Environment. I cannot hear myself again because the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) is again chortling. But I want to say that the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) is

an excellent coach and has provided me with invaluable advice not only during the course of my legislative career, but during the course of this debate when she pointed out a significant section of this act.

Madam Speaker, this is positive legislation and I want to deal with the positive aspects of it. For too long in Manitoba, we have used nurses incorrectly, inappropriately. Probably the single biggest change that could occur in our health care system would be restore confidence on the part of nurses in the health care system that would restore their faith in the health care system and allow them to undertake their duties and their functions the way they have been trained and the way they have done so for a hundred years. If this legislation, together with the other professional legislation dealing with nurses, contributes in some small way, and I think it will, towards improving the situation and the confidence level for nurses, we certainly welcome and support that.

We certainly welcome the government's conversion and recognition that there is a role and function for LPNs. We welcome this legislation. I am prepared to share with any member opposite the copious volumes of correspondence between the LPN Association and our caucus and our caucus and the government, demanding this legislation, requesting this legislation, pushing for this legislation. I am prepared to provide copies of the numerous occasions in this House when we on this side of the House have asked numerous ministers of Health to proclaim and to expand and to deal with this legislation to provide for an expanded role and function of LPNs to work up to their capacity, and on that basis we certainly think this is a positive development. I think this legislation will be passed and I do not think I am inaccurate to say that this legislation will be passed unanimously by all members of the House.

* (1550)

I think it goes some way towards telling Manitobans and telling nurses, in particular, that we recognize their role and their function, their contribution, that we are looking forward to a future of working with nurses and having nurses work with us and having nurses lead us in some ways into the new era of a different health care

system, that we will look to their advice and we will look to their assistance in developing a better and an improved health care system, and that we welcome their role and responsibility.

This kind of legislation, passed unanimously by this Chamber, I think, will go some way towards healing some of the wounds and some of the very serious problems and difficulties that have occurred in this province over the past number of years. We have tried over the years to be a positive factor in improving conditions for nurses in Manitoba. We think this bill will go some direction towards doing that, and we intend to allow this bill to pass and to support this bill and support the role of LPNs. I think it is a significant day for LPNs, as it is for R.N.s, and as it is for registered psychiatric nurses that this Chamber recognizes their role and function and their expanded role and function.

But now the real work begins for whomever is leading the province in the next several months, and that is to put the words of this legislation and the words that we pronounce in this Chamber into actual practice. That is I think where the test will be. Whether the present regime will continue its practice of saying one thing during an election campaign and doing another after the campaign or whether a government will come in place that actually believes what it says and carries out what it says, that will be the test. That will be the real challenge in the future.

Let me just, again, reiterate that the single biggest difficulty in our system now is confidence, a lack of confidence by not only those receiving the care, but certainly by the caregivers. No amount of rationalizing and no amount of speech making and no amount of individual dedication by any member will change the reality of the situation in Manitoba if people do not have confidence in the leadership, direction, and policies of this government. If we can be a small part in trying to improve that situation and turn it around, we will do it, even if it means voting for a government's budget, even if it means supporting unanimously bills because the bills are the right bills.

Good heavens, how could we not support a bill that we have called for for 11 years, certainly the last six years? How could we not support it?

How could we not support an expanded role and function of R.N.s? Of course not. How could we not support a bill dealing with expanded role and function of LPNs? We have called for it for years. How can we not support many of the programs announced by the government, announced, I might add, by the government in the last few months since many of those same programs we called for for the past 11 years?

Having said those few words, we certainly look forward to speedy passage of this bill and perhaps, perhaps the beginning of a new era in health care in Manitoba, though I think there is one other step that has to be taken before that new era begins. That step will be at the discretion of the Premier when he does have the courage to call the next election and allow Manitobans to speak their voices, allow Manitobans to state their views as to the future of health care in the province.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Nurses provide expert care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Nurses are there Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, often leaving their families at home, often not there Christmas morning to see their children get up and see all the presents under the Christmas tree. Nurses do not always get the summer holidays they want because only two might be able to leave at a time, so their kids could be off. Nurses are not having the same opportunities as many other people to take their holidays with their kids. They are there 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. They are essential decision makers and problem solvers who work in partnership with other health care professionals.

The members of the health care team vary in their educational backgrounds and skill sets, but each has a part to play in ensuring safe, quality care. There has always been a role for LPNs. The LPN role in this province has never disappeared. It has always been there. I can recall working with some excellent, excellent LPNs. There were never very many in the hospitals. Most of the wards were staffed by registered nurses, and on each shift there might be one LPN, six registered nurses and one orderly. That is how we ran a ward.

Health care is however changing. There is definitely a role for each category. There still is

today as much as there was in the '70s, but we have to face the fact, too, that challenges within our health care system are changing. Health care in a hospital is not what it was in the '70s. The technology itself is changing. The complexities of the treatment regimes are changing. The complications of family interactions are changing. With that you have to look at who is going to care for that patient. Patients in hospitals are measured according to Levels 1 to 4. Well, back in the '70s we had a lot of Levels 1, 2, 3, 4. Nowadays we do not. We are sitting with a lot of Levels 3 and 4 within our hospital system. It is very important that when we look at the complexity of the health care needs of the patient that we are matching the skills of the nurses to the needs of the patient. That is critically, critically important. As I said, I have worked with many talented LPNs. I am a great proponent of having LPNs within our health care system. I feel there is a definite role for the LPN within our health care system.

Since taking office, I have met with many LPNs many times in this past year to hear what they have to say, to get their input so that as we are making decisions here, their voices could be carried to the decisions that are being made here as well. The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) was just talking about nurses being run off their feet. Nurses were run off their feet in the '70s, in the '80s; being run off their feet in the '90s is no different. When I first graduated, I was run off my feet. My morning baths which should have been done by nine o'clock in the morning were being done at 4:30 in the afternoon. We were very, very busy. It is a busy profession, it is a tough profession, and nurses that rise to these challenges are indeed exemplary in what they are doing. I have nothing but credit to offer them, pride in this profession, because I think nurses have been hugely challenged working within a health care system. It is not easy being a health care professional. It was not in the '70s, it was not in the '80s, and it is not in the '90s. It is a tough job—[interjection]

* (1600)

One of the members opposite is saying it is worse now. I would like to tell you what it was like in the '80s when I was a nurse on one of the

wards in one of the tertiary care centres. I remember many nights working in absolute tears because of the health care situation of the '80s. So I do not want anybody thinking that superiority you throw across at us here, that our system is so bad today. Maybe some of the members opposite should have been working in the hospitals in the '80s under the NDP government. I spent many times crying. Patients were crying. There were headlines of waiting lists of a thousand patients on a waiting list. There was a headline of four patients dying because they could not get into a hospital. I can remember we did not have supplies to care for patients—[interjection]

Is today worse? The NDP regime, the health care regime under the NDP in the '80s, was no cakewalk, believe me. Having been there, I can speak to it from a first-hand basis. If the NDP think that they are going to come in and create a wonderful health care system, I would be very, very skeptical having lived through one of them in the '80s. The question was put forward about our throwing all this money into health care in a very cynical attitude. Maybe it is because we listened in the public budget consultations when our Finance minister went out.

Manitobans asked for money to be put into health care, and we listened. We are putting money into health care as Manitobans want us to do. Health care definitely is changing. We have some huge challenges in front of us. When we talk about cannot get nurses up North, cannot get nurses here, I do want to add my comments on this particular issue because there is a nursing shortage in all of Canada. This is not just Manitoba. So for the members opposite to keep implying that the nursing shortage is government related, this is happening across the country. We also happen to have an aging nursing population.

There are thousands of nurses over the age of 40 in this province. We are seeing nurses retiring all the time. When we see nurses retiring, that is part of a problem that is occurring that has nothing to do with government policy. Nurses have a right to retire. Nurses are aging—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind all honourable members that they all will have

an opportunity to put their debate on this bill. The honourable member for Charleswood was recognized to speak to Bill 37.

Mrs. Driedger: In order to address the nursing shortage in the province, we have put a fund together. I am very involved in that fund. We also have a committee that has been meeting provincially, which is the Provincial Nursing Resource Committee. I am very glad to say that on the Provincial Nursing Resource Committee there is an LPN. The LPNs represent their profession very, very well. Their comments are taken very, very well.

The registered psychiatric nurses, the licensed practical nurses and the registered nurses, all three regulatory bodies worked together collaboratively to come up with legislation that was complementary to each other. That is something I am very proud of as a nurse to see happen in this province. We had three different categories of nurses work in collaboration to come up with their own acts that complemented each other, respected each other other's professions, and showed a huge willingness and maturity as a profession to work together.

There is a role for LPNs in this province. I am a strong supporter of that. I am glad to see that the legislation has come forward with its changes. I think we are on the verge of seeing some exciting things happen in this province in the nursing profession and the opportunities that are going to be here for nurses in Manitoba.

In one of the brochures on nursing that has come out, there are a couple of interesting quotes in it. It says that one of Canada's leading futurists cites health care as one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy for the 21st Century. Seven out of the 10 best future career opportunities are in health care and related fields. Of these seven, three will be in nursing or fields directly related to nursing. With the increasing complexity of illness, increasingly high technology developed to combat disease, an aging population and the need to promote health in individuals, families and communities, more emphasis is being placed on nursing education than ever.

Some quotes from nurses I think are interesting to put in the record. One nurse has

said: I have so many options available to me. I knew that I wanted to be a nurse, but I did not know which area of nursing would be best for me. The Faculty of Nursing program at the University of Manitoba is giving me the chance to try and learn different things. We cover a broad spectrum of nursing from maternity to geriatrics and everything in between. There are so many directions that I will be able to take my degree, and if I want to change I will be able to do that too without having to change fields. I could start in a hospital, move into the community, start working on my masters, whatever I end up I will have a career I can enjoy.

It is a pleasure hearing nurses nowadays talk about nursing so positively as this. Another quote says: nursing is a career that is both demanding and rewarding. I work in maternity as a labour and delivery nurse, a career that is both demanding and rewarding. Every woman who comes in is different, but they are all worried about the health of their babies, and they are all scared of the labour process. I have to keep them as calm as possible and be prepared for anything.

Another nurse says: everything I learned fascinates me. Every day when I wake up I ask myself what am I going to learn today. I am excited about becoming a nurse. Everything I learn fascinates me, and I know I will have a job when I graduate. I enrolled in the program, because I had heard good things about it, that grads were well accepted and respected for their abilities and professionalism.

* (1610)

What I did not expect to find is how close we are to each other. Everyone seems to support each other. I guess that is the kind of people nurses are. There are some wonderful stories and quotes out there about nurses. I have heard it, I have been there. I have worked side by side with them. I know their pains, I know their happiness, I know their challenges. I am very excited to be able to stand here and support, in this particular instance, the legislation for the LPNs. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, I want to rise to put a few remarks on the record on Bill 37. I think we need to recognize what

Bill 37 really does. It is really a repeal of an act which was and replaces The Licensed Practical Nurses Act. It will provide for the name of the regulatory body to be changed from the Manitoba Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, MALPN, to the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba. The change in name will make it easier for the public to identify the regulatory body for practical nurses from a professional interest association and will emphasize the overriding duty of the college to always act in the public interest and not engage in professional promotion activity that conflicts with this duty.

It is a very important change that is being brought in here. I think the recognition of the professionalism of this group of people that serves in the health care field is important. I will never forget when I was first elected back in 1988. One of the first meetings that really stuck with me was with a group of 41 LPNs from across the province, and they reinforced what I had heard many times during the campaign, the importance of the nurses and the provisions of the nursing profession that were provided within the health care system and the duties they performed, not only in the hospital settings but in personal care homes, out in the field, providing in-home care.

I think we need to recognize the dramatic changes that have been brought about in the last decade, and they have been brought about under our government, not under the NDP government. The nurses had lobbied long and hard prior to us being elected to make many of the changes that we have since made, to recognize the fact that people wanted to be served where they were most comfortable, especially those who were aged. Many of the LPNs and other nurses that served before in the institutions now serve outside of the institutions. Those people we never see.

I find it rather interesting the cynicism and the self-righteous indignation that I have heard expressed here by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and others on the opposite benches proclaiming to be the saviour of the health care system, proclaiming to be the proponent of the professionals in the health care system, which they are not.

Madam Speaker, I will never forget prior to 1988 the conditions that my people in my riding had to be institutionalized under; rainwater was coming through the roofs of the hospitals. The hospital at Vita, the tiles were falling off the ceiling. The hospital at St. Pierre, I will never forget walking into that facility, nurses carrying around pails, putting them under the various drips that were developing because the roof was so bad it would not keep the rain out. The windows were falling out of the facility in Altona, and nurses putting towels, LPNs utilizing their time to stick towels in holes in the windows and propping the windows up from the outside with boards so that they would not fall out during the winter months. That is where the time was spent of the LPNs during the NDP administration prior to 1988.

These people have the audacity to sit here and proclaim that they are the saviours of the health care system. It is really appalling, quite frankly, some days to sit here and have to listen to that self-righteous indignation that I hear day after day after day. Yet, when they were in power, they had the power to make the changes and power to bring the health care system up to standards, and they refused to. You know why I think, Madam Speaker, they refused to? Because they did not know how. It was because they did not know how.

That is really the message the first group of nurses that I met with in my riding, and as I said before, they were from all over the province. That is what they told me that this group of people who were in power refused to listen.

The act that is being brought here today is something that the LPNs have wanted for a long time. Yet could we have gained support of this till 1990? I think not. Could we have got the opposition's support on this kind of a bill from 1990 to '94-95? I think not. But now today they choose to support our budget. They choose to support, because they want to be seen in public as having had a change of heart. Well, there are certain kinds of reptiles that change their outside shell from time to time, but the inside never changes. The inside never changes, Madam Speaker.

So I say that the NDP party will never change. Their philosophy will not change. They

will keep on using crass political methods to keep nurses where they think nurses ought to be. But our party has not demonstrated by words. We have not stood on the street corner and hollered and screamed. Our party is known by its actions in the health care system. We have increased funding to health care by almost a billion dollars in the last 10 years. What do the NDP do and say? They voted against almost every one of those increases except now this last one. Check the record, anybody in this House, check the record of the NDP and where they have been. Have they supported the previous budgets that we have put forward where there was increased funding to nurses, increased funding to doctors, increased funding to the capital projects in health care? No. Increased funding to home care? They voted against every one of them except this last one.

I say to you, Madam Speaker, this self-righteous attitude that prevails in the opposite benches is a clear demonstration of why people in Manitoba will take a long time before they will ever trust them to govern. That is the message I hear. Seldom ever have we seen in Manitoba a party in power that has paid as much attention to the nurses. Seldom ever have we seen a group of politicians spend as much time with the professionals in the health care system as we do today. This act clearly demonstrates again the true desire of a governing party to deal with the real concerns.

The public participation in the regulatory process that will be added to this bill will be increased by requiring a minimum of one-third public representation on the board of college and on all committees. That is a dramatic change, something that the nurses have wanted for a long, long time. It will also require that meetings of the board and committees be open to the public except in specific circumstances. I think all boards and committees are given the ability to go in camera when specific instances and measures are dealt with. These measures to ensure public accountability are consistent with the recommendations made by the Manitoba Law Reform Commission in 1994.

* (1620)

I believe that the ability of the college to monitor the continuing competence of its

members will be increased substantially by this bill. The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba will be required to provide the Minister of Health with an annual report of its activities, including information on the number of licensed practical nurses registered and the number of complaints received and the nature of the disposition of the complaints and the composition of the governing board and committees and the financial institution.

The definition of practice of the licensed practical nurses will provide a broad scope of practice, a statement and a clear understanding of the LPN's parameter of the practice. It will also remove the provision which requires practical nurses to work under the direction of a registered nurse or a medical practitioner. A mechanism will be provided to recognize advanced practical nurses.

You know, I found it interesting when the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) spoke about the long, hard lobby and the stack of information that they had, correspondence they had from the LPNs. I would venture to guess, Madam Speaker, that a lot of that correspondence would be better than 10 years old. I would suspect that that lobby effort that the LPNs put on dates back to at least 20 years, because I remember well what the nurses were telling us during the campaign when I first ran and the requests they had made of the then government.

I think this legislation, in small part, addresses part of those concerns. I believe that the new disciplinary procedures, the complaints and discipline processes will be updated to ensure fairness for the complaints and the licensed practical nurse who may be the subject of the complaint. They have wanted that for a long time. These processes will comply with the current legal requirements for administrative bodies and will provide consistency with the health professional legislation such as The Midwifery Act and Bill 26, the physiotherapy act.

I think this government, Madam Speaker, will be recognized within the health care field as having dealt with matters that previous governments simply refused to deal with

because they thought it was too controversial. The changes that have been made in the health care system are starting to bear fruit in many, many areas. The services being provided are provided in a more consistent way of what the public has wanted.

Many of our seniors have lobbied long and hard to be provided with some measure of service within their homes to allow them to stay in their homes and not be institutionalized. That is why we are spending such a very significant amount of energy and time and dollars in providing those services now to those seniors in their homes. Let it never be said that we have not listened, that we have not listened to the seniors, that we have not listened to the people who could not help themselves, and that we have not listened to those who wanted to be allowed to stay at home and not be institutionalized.

Time and time again when I visit seniors in seniors homes, in those homes that have been provided, the personal care homes today, people, elderly people thank me for the changes that we have made to allow them to stay in their homes until they are ninety and sometimes even a hundred years old and for the additional services that are being provided in those homes. They are being provided by LPNs, by assistants of the LPNs, and by registered nurses, not in the institution. I noted when the honourable member for Thompson said we had deleted 25 beds in Thompson. Well, Madam Speaker, I would suggest to you that, instead of having seniors lie in those beds being institutionalized, being cared for in their homes is something that I think is being seen as quite an advantageous type of a situation in Thompson even. Maybe I am wrong; maybe the people of Thompson are telling their member of the Legislature something else than they are telling me. But I would doubt that.

I think they want to be provided with the services that they are being able to access today. I believe that the practical nurses are providing a very, very substantive service to the general public out there that they were not able to provide before. But has their workplace changed? Dramatically, it has changed. Will it change in the future? I would venture to guess that it will because all those people, all the experts, tell us that within the next decade we

will see even far more dramatic changes than we have seen in the last 20 or 30 years. I happen to believe that.

Whether it is in the field of agriculture, whether it is in the field of industry or whether it is in the health care field, there are dramatic, dramatic changes happening, and there is very little we can do about that except recognize the need for change. So we changed our health care system. How did we change it? We are allowing now people, community people, to sit on boards that have decision-making authority to direct the health care system. That is something quite foreign to our members opposite. The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) could not recognize the possibility of actual people being allowed to make decisions for themselves instead of a government directing and having total authority. The authoritarian type of governments that the NDP philosophy still holds to—oh, no, that is not quite so. The last couple of months we have seen the change or the perceived change, and I would beg to say to you, Madam Speaker, that it is perceived more than anything else.

Let me say this to you, Madam Speaker, if they think they are fooling the public out there, let them think again because they are not, not by what people are telling me. I happen to think that I have a fairly good dialogue with my constituency on an ongoing basis.

Health care is, and I think will be, one of the primary concerns of all people of Manitoba and how it is delivered is going to be important to them. Will change cause questioning in their minds? Absolutely it will, and it should. Will the allowance for them to take hold of the system and direct it, be involved in the system, be involved in the changes make a difference? I think so. I think it will finally cause confidence in the total governing structure of a decentralized decision-making process that I think is functioning well. I beg to think that the practical nurses under this act will be inclusive and allowed inclusively in the process of change that they have never been allowed before.

I find it very interesting when the opposition sits there in their self-righteous, indignant manner and tries to tell people in this Legislative

Assembly that they are the ones driving this legislation. That is one of the best jokes I have heard in a long time. I think the practical nurses will also think that is somewhat hilarious, because that NDP party could have changed this legislation 20 years ago if they had chosen to do it, but they refused. They refused 10 years ago to change it. In 1986, I remember a very significant lobby being put forward by the practical nurses, and yet the NDP refused to listen.

Well, my government has listened. My government has not only listened, my government has acted. I would suggest to you that during the next election campaign, this issue will be flagged time and time again that we will be seen as a government of action, and we will be seen as a government that listens and a government with heart.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I too want to put a few words on the record on Bill 37, The Licensed Practical Nurses Act. It was interesting in hearing some of the debate that was going on earlier from the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). In most part I agreed with his comments with the exception of the budget vote, but we have agreed to disagree on that one. I found it interesting in terms of the tactic, and that is not necessarily to impute negative motives, that was being brought forward by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger).

The bill that we have before us, much like our other professional bills, the real individuals or people who benefit by this are, in fact, the clients, Manitobans. This is a great leap forward in terms of establishing confidence in our health care workers as a whole. By doing that, I believe that the biggest winner is the public as a whole. We could debate endlessly this afternoon and well into the evening in terms of the critical and vital role that we all see in our health care workers and, in particular, our nurses. I have long argued and articulated from my perspective the backbone of our health care system is very much so with our nurses.

* (1630)

Having had the opportunity to be the health care critic for the Liberal Party, I was able to

have many different forms of discussions, negotiations in some areas, in terms of the types of changes that are necessary because the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) is quite right when he indicates that changes are on the horizon and those changes have to be dealt with.

A big part of the problem that we have had is how you deal with those changes. We have long advocated that you need to be working with the stakeholders in order to ensure that the changes that are necessary are, in fact, being enacted and enacted in such a fashion at the end of the day the quality of health care is going to be that much better. For some members of the Chamber they might say that they have a positive working relationship with the health care professionals. The discussions and the feedback that I have been given does not affirm that particular position, and I have not had the opportunity to look prior to '88, but we can see other jurisdictions where they have not had successful relationships with health care workers of different political stripes, whether it was the Liberals in Newfoundland or the New Democrats in Saskatchewan.

There is no doubt a lot that needs to happen, and I would ultimately argue that the greatest threat to the health care, which I hope and trust that we all love and care for so passionately, is, in fact, how we administer it as opposed to just strictly the dollar. The dollar is important and no one would question that, but it is how you manage the changes that are necessary which will ultimately determine whether or not we are going to be able to provide the quality health care that we all know Manitobans want. When we talk about that quality of health care that Manitobans want, we have to look at implementing those changes that are necessary and how we best do that. I would argue that we best do that by working with those health care professionals in establishing a relationship based on respect and move forward in terms of getting ideas from down, bringing them up, and the member for Kildonan made reference as one of his examples to Connie Curran, something that we, too, as a political party took great objection to.

We believe very much so, that those changes that are necessary you have to work with, in particular those health care workers in the many

different branches. I can recall a number of years ago sitting in the Health Estimates when Don Orchard was the Minister of Health. He and I had some dialogue about the LPNs and the future role that LPNs, in particular, would have. The government of the day's primary concern, and if you look up in Hansard you will find that, in fact, it is quite correct, was that of finances. They believed that the LPNs were financing their way out of the system and that seemed to be the primary concern for the Minister of Health of the day. Well, phasing out the LPNs for whatever reason that you believe, based strictly on a dollar value, I would have argued then and I would argue today is not what is in the best interest of our health care delivery.

The LPN, often referred to as the bedside nurse, plays an absolutely critical role in the delivery of our health care. We have seen expansion. The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), I believe, made reference to home care, where we have more and more individuals being provided good quality care in a more independent setting such as their homes and elsewhere and that has been very beneficial and the LPN has played a role there. They have also played an enhanced role in some personal care home facilities.

There has been a great deal of disappointment, I believe, of the role of the LPN within our hospitals and our acute care centres. I do believe that there is a role for LPNs in virtually every aspect of our health care system, and that is why the legislation which has been long in waiting for, we see by giving a better definition of the scope of practice that it will give a stronger sense of security for those individuals who want to enter into the profession. The bill itself also gives that much more assurance of that of, let us say public accountability—if I can use that terminology here—where there is going to be more of an independent reporting and monitoring of the profession, whether it is the number of LPNs that are in the system, where it is that they might be focusing, and all of this can be of great assistance to the Department of Health in terms of where it is that they could be placed.

A number of years ago, I had the opportunity to meet an individual by the name of

Lynn Clark who was with the LPNs and made sure that I was being kept abreast of the issues facing LPNs and was a very strong advocate for the LPNs. That is when I was really first made aware of just how serious a situation the LPNs have faced. It is one of the nice things in terms of being able to keep up that relationship with Ms. Clark that we are able to at least as much as possible stay on top of the issue.

That it why it pleases me greatly today to be able to say a few words on this bill, because, of course, it has the Liberal Party's support. We have long believed that it was necessary. We believe that it is going to be beneficial for our patients or our clients or Manitobans as a whole, along with our LPNs. I think it will go a long way in terms of ensuring that there is going to be a little bit more stability within our health care services and the way in which we service Manitobans in health care.

So it is with those few words that we are quite pleased to see the bill before us today. We hope and trust that, upon receiving Royal Assent, it will not be long in terms of its ultimate proclamation. With those few words, Madam Speaker, we are prepared to pass the bill.

Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure and privilege that I have to speak on this bill regarding the licensed practical nurses. I have five of seven sisters-in-law engaged in the health care field, of which the LPN profession is one that I am very proud to say one of my sisters-in-law takes great pride in presenting herself in her daily duties and off-duty hours representing the licensed practical nurses.

Just recently, it was announced by the government that the actual educational training of licensed practical nurses will be expanded in the province of Manitoba, more than doubling the number of spots available to young people, and maybe perhaps others who are looking at joining the health care professional field in the licensed practical nurses program which is offered at the Assiniboine Community College. In fact, \$576,000 of increased funding from the Manitoba government will be made available for this program. That will increase the number of students available, retrained in the province on

an annual basis from 90, as it currently exists at two sites, 30 being trained each year in Winnipeg and 60 in Brandon, that an additional 100 available spots will be made available to Manitobans this coming year.

With this additional sponsorship of training in the LPN program, this government has seen fit to expand the program through Assiniboine Community College to two additional sites within Manitoba, where the people interested in pursuing the profession of licensed practical nursing can, in fact, take their training.

* (1640)

Assiniboine Community College, when this announcement was made, expected that perhaps there would just be a few interested communities or areas within the province that would like to take on the training of licensed practical nurses. However, Madam Speaker, Assiniboine Community College was overwhelmed with the number of inquiries from all over the province interested in providing this type of training within their community for their young people.

Because of this overwhelming response, the Assiniboine Community College put together a preliminary survey which respondents were asked to fill out to show, in fact, their interest in whether or not they can potentially fill the classrooms in their community. In consultation with the Central Regional Health Authority based in Portage la Prairie, the initiative was taken. The director of personnel, Mr. Ray Koop, undertook this project and canvassed all facilities within the central region of Manitoba. Currently the central region has 257 licensed practical nurses within the facilities operated by the central region.

It was asked within this survey as to whether or not there was interest in expanding this particular number of employed licensed practical nurses over the next year. The reply from the facilities within the Central Regional Health Authority was that an estimated 20 to 30 additional employment opportunities, full-time employment opportunities, are forthcoming in the next year to two years.

Madam Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to see the licensed practical nurses

profession being expanded. At one time it was thought that the actual program and job opportunities for the licensed practical nurse would be limited. However, with the enhancement of the training program from 10 to 14 months, this has afforded the licensed practical nurse to keep up with the modern technologies and expand their abilities within their job description to provide health care within the facilities of Manitoba.

I might say that this program has been so intensified that, in fact, outside of a Christmas and Easter break, this program runs at a very intensive pace. Therefore anyone that is involved in and considering this occupation is, at conclusion of the course, an extremely dedicated individual.

I would like to commend Ms. Diane Shamray, who is the chairperson of Health and Human Services at the Assiniboine Community College, for her undertaking within her department the expansion of the training of the licensed practical nurses. I hope that her due diligence would find venues which will be very much an enhancement to the training of the nurses of the future.

It is vitally important that we as a province show leadership in the health care field, as has the budget which the members opposite supported. It is the intent to add 850 new personal care home beds province-wide. It is going to require many, many more nurses in which to staff and provide care for individuals occupying these care home beds.

In the recent announcement of the nursing negotiations, it was negotiated and made known to the public that more than 650 nurses will be hired in order to achieve the goal of staffing these personal care home beds which will come in on stream in the very, very near future.

Madam Speaker, not only are the current facilities interested in licensed practical nurses coming on staff, but in the Central Region there are other health care providers that are very much interested in licensed practical nurses in their facilities. The Manitoba Developmental Centre in Portage la Prairie is anxiously awaiting the potential of the program coming to Portage

la Prairie because they are in significant need of trained staff in order to provide for those that are less fortunate. Also, Rock Lake health district, Pilot Mound and Crystal City, Salem Personal Care Home in Winkler and the Tabor Home in Morden have all expressed an interest in obtaining licensed practical nurses in their facilities to provide for care for their residents.

I certainly encourage those decision makers within the Assiniboine Community College to provide for the expansion of the licensed practical nurses training program to the Central Region. It is very cost-effective to train students closer to their residence without incurring the additional residency expenditures that many students are expected to take on if they travel from rural Manitoba into the current cities of Brandon and Winnipeg where the programs are now offered. I believe that this expansion of the program will significantly enhance the intake of persons interested in achieving a professional status in the health care field.

It is with those few words that I most certainly appreciate the House affording me the opportunity to raise and provide those thoughts here today because it is an exciting future which I believe we have in this province within the health care field, an exciting future for those that take into consideration and go towards achieving the licensed practical nurse's status within this province. I commend all those that go forward into this profession.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading, Bill 37, The Licensed Practical Nurses Act.

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pitura), 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 the Queen.

Motion agreed to.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)**

JUSTICE

Mr. Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Justice. When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 4.2.(e) on page 108 of the main Estimates book. The honourable member for The Maples was posing a question to the honourable Minister of Justice when we last met.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I was just wondering, the minister was speaking about the Restorative Resolution Program at John Howard Society. I do not know if he had finished his comments, if he had anything to add to what he was saying yesterday about the funding of that project and where to find it in the Estimates line.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Indeed, there were some comments that I wanted to make and as soon as my staff gets those details for my consideration. As I was saying yesterday, I believe that generally speaking we have been very supportive as a government of alternative mechanisms for resolving some of these very important issues. We have recognized that in Manitoba there are alternatives that are as effective as the more traditional ways of dealing with crime.

I speak, first of all, about things like the youth justice committees. I know the member for The Maples and his colleague the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) have been very important players in the development and support of our youth justice committees, and people like him are to be commended on that.

What we have tried to do in the area of Corrections and Restorative Resolutions is to work with the John Howard Society. I had

indicated that there is co-operation between the provincial government and Corrections specifically in respect of this area. For example, when a person is charged with an offence, the court is presented with a plan that is developed by the John Howard Society worker. If all parties including the court agree, the accused is allowed to participate in the program and there are, generally speaking, the following criteria: The offender is facing a minimum sentence of 10 months; the offender has pled guilty; and, they are offences that fall within the acceptable category. This program has been operational for approximately five years. There are currently 123 active cases, and it is projected by the end of June that there would be about 150. We, as I indicated last, are quite supportive on an in-kind basis. We have increased our level of support, and we are supportive generally of this program.

One of the concerns, and I think John Howard recognizes the concern as well—and that is where I left my answer off last date—is the level of participation by aboriginal offenders. The member for The Maples, being a former police officer, understands that in fact there is a large degree of participation in our justice system by aboriginal people, unfortunately, more often as accused than as peace officers or court officials. We think that while that may be true for a number of reasons, the alternatives that we want to develop to the regular court system must also find a way to include aboriginal people. The Restorative Resolution Program does in fact include aboriginal offenders. While we see in our regular institutions a degree of participation, albeit not voluntary participation but as sentenced prisoners, we would see upwards of 60 or 70 percent as aboriginals in this Restorative Resolution Program, we see a participation level at about 22 percent.

Now part of that is due to the program criteria which restricts inmates charged with violent offences. Those are essentially the types of people who are going to jail in any event, if we look at the type of sentences people are receiving and the reasons why they are being sentenced. This, of necessity then leads to a lower participation, or not of a necessity, but by application I guess of the criteria, leads to a level of participation that I think needs to be examined on a continuing basis.

I do not suggest for one moment that John Howard or my own staff are in any way being inappropriate in terms of the criteria that they set. In all of these programs, we need to ensure that public safety is first. So I commend the staff in the development of this program, the application of the criteria. Although I would like to see a higher level of participation by aboriginal people in these types of Restorative Resolutions, I understand that there are some very practical limitations.

This was also, if I can just expand briefly, on some of the other steps that the government has been taking in order to look at ways of reintegrating aboriginal people into the general society where they have spent time in correctional institutes. That is why we have supported the program financially, the Legal Services of Winnipeg. I know the name has changed now, but the federal government and provincial government have contributed substantial sums of money. This is basically an aboriginal-based program. It is on a pilot project basis, so we have to see how it works.

The other issue, of course, that we have examined is the issue relating to the exploration of the idea that one of our correctional facilities, the Egg Lake facility north of The Pas, may be more fully utilized by aboriginals in a manner consistent with aboriginal programming. I know that there are issues that need to be dealt with in that context, and concerns, but we are supportive of exploring these alternatives in order to achieve what I consider to be the most effective type of corrections system, and that is a system that truly corrects people rather than simply warehouses them or puts them through the revolving door of prison and jail.

Just in that context, I note that in Alberta, where I was able to spend some time with the former Minister of Justice there, Mr. John Havelock, who has now been transferred over to Economic Development and Tourism, but I toured the Pincher Creek facility, which is a facility run by a native organization, as well as another correctional facility which is on a particular reserve, showed to me that there are different ways of dealing with these problems, and we need to keep mindful of those.

* (1500)

All I wanted to say is that Restorative Resolutions is part of that trend not only to try to find more effective ways of ensuring that people do not reoffend and in fact are corrected, but is also sensitive to the issue of our aboriginal people.

Mr. Kowalski: The low percentage of aboriginals involved in the program, I wonder if that is consistent. There is a report that has been put out by Lana Maloney in regard to conditional sentencing that is done in the province. I have had a chance to glance through the report. The percentage of aboriginals involved with conditional sentences, is it similar as to the number that are involved in the Restorative Resolutions project?

Mr. Toews: I welcome the question on conditional sentences, because it does deal with an issue that we as a government have been quite concerned about. In the context of that program I do have some information on the participation of aboriginal people, but it is also important, I think, to understand the program and then to deal with that specific issue, because it does lead to some questions.

As the member may know, Manitoba has opposed conditional sentences because of a problem of enforcement. There have been serious problems in the legislation. We have drawn those to the attention of the federal Justice minister and asked for certain amendments to those. An amendment indeed to address the enforcement issue comes into effect at the beginning of this month, July 1, 1999. The amendment partially solves the enforcement problems but raises other difficulties.

Some of the difficulties in enforcing conditional sentences until the new amendments took effect in July of this year has been the uncertainty about whether the sentence continues to run after a probation officer lays a breach. Defence counsel in a few cases successfully argued that a sentence in fact expired before the police executed the bench warrant. The court then had no jurisdiction to deal with the breach. We have the situation then of a court ordering a sentence, the sentence being breached, a warrant

being issued, but because the convicted person serving the conditional sentence could not be apprehended until after the expiration of the conditional sentence, there was no remedy to the problem. Compare that with the suspended sentence which is still present in the Criminal Code, and why they left the suspended sentence, I do not know. I still think it is a much more effective way of dealing with exactly the same issue if the concern is too many people in jail, if that in fact is the concern.

The suspended sentence, if somebody breached a condition of the probation that might have been attached to a suspended sentence, the breach was laid and the person could be resentenced. As well, they would be charged with breach of probation.

One of the solutions that Manitoba in fact has done is to charge offenders with being unlawfully at large when they breach a conditional sentence, because as the courts continue to say, these people are imprisoned in the community, so if you have breached it you are unlawfully at large. This allows the court to hold offenders accountable even if the conditional sentence has technically expired.

Parliament addressed the enforcement issue through an omnibus bill known as C-51, and these amendments in fact stopped the clock. If there is a breach, it suspends the running of the sentence from the time the probation officer lays the breach until either the court denies bail or the court deals with the breach. A judge then has the discretion to recredit part, or all, of the time. Offenders are still bound by the condition even when the clock is stopped, and probation officers continue to supervise. Unfortunately, however, the maximum penalty for the breach is still the remnant. The amendments to C-51 do not change that. So if you have been conditionally sentenced in the community, the sentence is running, the clock stops at two months left, the only penalty is the two months. Under the old suspended sentence you could be brought back to court and resentenced. I think that is a much more meaningful possible disposition.

Also another problem with C-51, the new legislation, is that it makes sentence calculation extremely difficult. An error in calculating the

sentence expiry date could lead to serious problems. The probation officer could supervise the offender too long and lay a breach in error after the sentence expires. Also, the probation officer may stop supervising too soon. This is not because the officer does not want to supervise, but it is so difficult to actually calculate the time on these conditional sentences. I think the federal government has to take a look at this entire issue and, frankly, I think they could have done much better by simply perhaps amending the suspended sentence section rather than this fiction of serving a sentence of imprisonment in the community.

In respect of the actual statistics on conditional sentences, Manitoba courts impose an average of 36 conditional sentences per month. Manitoba supervised 812 conditional sentences from September 3, 1996, to December 31, 1998. Mr. Chair, 686 of these were from the provincial court, 91 from the Court of Queen's Bench, 23 from the Court of Appeal and 11 from other provinces where they transferred jurisdiction. For Canada as a whole, the number of conditional sentences in that same time period was 27,721. Manitoba has fewer conditional sentences, and I think that is a percentage basis, than any other jurisdiction other than Prince Edward Island and the Territories. That has basically been because of our opposition to conditional sentencing and the problems. I know in certain jurisdictions, and I believe it is British Columbia, they have basically stopped enforcing all these conditional sentences because they simply do not have the personnel to enforce them. I think it is part of the entire problem about the crisis in the British Columbia provincial courts, and they simply are not able to supervise effectively.

* (1510)

I am not putting the entire blame on the British Columbia government. I think this is another example of how the federal government passes laws and then expects the province to enforce those laws and bear the cost. Similarly, with the Youth Criminal Justice Act that the federal government is presently proposing, they have tried to reform the Young Offenders Act and created some severe administrative and enforcement difficulties that the Province of

Quebec has indicated will cost the Province of Quebec an additional \$25 million to implement. I do not know how much of that is on an ongoing basis, but certainly the concern that we have about these types of programs is that the federal government should do more consulting.

In respect of conditional sentences, in Manitoba they have an average of 4.4 special conditions per order in addition to the mandatory conditions that exist. Probation orders had an average of 2.7 special conditions per order. So we see the number of conditions increasing in conditional sentences.

Many conditional sentences require offenders to take various treatment programs or counselling, and a variety of other conditions were ordered. The most common are 67 percent of them include the condition of abstaining from alcohol or drugs; 62 percent relate to curfew; 45 percent relate to community service work; 28 percent relate to residing at a specific place; 19 percent have no contact or communication with a specific person; 16 percent prohibit the possession of firearms, and 14 percent order restitution.

In Manitoba, and again this is what concerns me, I know that defence lawyers have said that conditional sentences are not being ordered in cases where there is violence. In fact, that is not correct. It has been a real concern of mine. I heard a defence lawyer being interviewed on the radio saying our judges do not grant conditional sentences for violent crimes. In Manitoba, offenders receive conditional sentences for the following types of offences: in 42 cases, 5 percent of them sex offences against children; in 18 cases, 2 percent sex offences against adult; in 93 cases 11 percent are family violence; in 162 other cases or 20 percent, other offences against persons. In 315 percent, that is 39 percent, the total offences against persons. In 286 cases, 35 percent were offences against property; 21 percent for narcotics cases, 167 cases; and 5 percent or 43 other cases, others, include failing to comply or impaired driving and the like.

The following national statistics are approximate only due to differences in how they are reconciled and because data is not available for Quebec. In Canada then, generally 6 percent

involve sex offences; 25 percent are other offences against persons; 44 percent are offences against property; 4 percent impaired or dangerous driving; 5 percent are offences against the administration of justice; 10 percent are against the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act—I used to know that as the Narcotic Control Act—and 7 percent in respect of other offences.

So I see our government's concern about the use of conditional sentences as being a very valid concern especially in respect of sex offences or other violent offences. I know that fairly recently, the Manitoba Court of Appeal in the Bruyere decision came out, in a robbery it was, on a conditional sentence—on a robbery. Frankly, when you committed an offence years ago in respect of a robbery, you went to jail, if not penitentiary. I think this is a very dangerous trend.

Manitoba has appealed a number of these conditional sentences where we have stated conditional sentences are being inappropriately ordered by our courts including our Court of Appeal, and the Supreme Court of Canada agreed to hear three of these cases, including some other cases from other jurisdictions. We hope to receive a definitive ruling from the Supreme Court of Canada setting out what types of offences are eligible for conditional sentences. Generally speaking, our prosecutors still continue to oppose conditional sentences.

In Manitoba, I can indicate that 73 percent of the Manitoba male offenders who receive conditional sentences had prior records; and for 74 percent of those 73 percent, the previous charges were for similar offences. So people are receiving conditional sentences for similar offences. In respect of females, 58 percent of the Manitoba females receiving conditional sentences had prior records; and for 79 percent of those 58 percent, the previous charges were for similar offences. In general then, 69 percent of all Manitoba offenders who receive conditional sentences had prior records. In other provinces, the percentages with prior records were 40 percent for Nova Scotia; 63 percent in Ontario, but a staggering 81 percent in British Columbia.

The sentence length, and I think this is a very important question that the member has

brought forward, is 56 percent, six months or less; 27 percent, seven to 12 months; and 16 percent, more than 12 months. As the member is aware, conditional sentences are available only for sentences of two years less a day and under. If a person is appropriately sentenced to two years, the conditional sentence is not available. Indeed, the sentence that was imposed recently by our courts is under appeal where a conditional sentence that totalled I think about 44 months or so in the context of a federal prosecution is under appeal.

Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

The issue that is directly related to the question is that the employment status at the time of sentencing for males, 40 percent were employed, females, 27 percent; part-time, males were 6 percent, females, 4 percent; unemployed males were 45 percent and females, 60 percent; students, males, 6 percent, females, 8 percent; retired males, 3 percent and females, 1 percent. I believe that then comes up to 100 percent in each category.

Probation officers prepared pre-sentence reports for 39 percent of the offenders; 44 percent of the reports were for property offences and 35 percent for offences against the persons. The success rate of these conditional sentences, that is, the sentence completed without a breach—and that I think is a relative success rate because we do not know from these statistics what happens the day after, but 51 percent of the sentences were completed without a breach; 16 percent, their sentences were breached; and 32 percent, the sentences are still under supervision at this time. Omitting sentences still under supervision, the breach rate is about 24 percent.

* (1520)

A comparison with other provinces is difficult because of differences in data; however, data from six jurisdictions shows that about 25.6 percent are breached, and that is roughly equivalent to what is occurring in Manitoba.

In respect of aboriginal offenders, the percentage of offenders who were aboriginal was 40 percent in Manitoba, males 38 percent,

females 50 percent. In Saskatchewan 73 percent of the people on conditional sentences are aboriginals. So 73 percent in Saskatchewan, 40 percent in Manitoba, 20 percent in Alberta, 16 percent in British Columbia and 7 percent in Ontario.

Mr. Kowalski: Just to refresh my memory, when you were talking about restorative justice or resolutions, what percentage in that John Howard program were aboriginal? You mentioned a figure.

Mr. Toews: Approximately 22 percent. So here we see quite a higher rate as a total percentage of conditional sentences. That is why I say that there may well be some room to work with those numbers, but there are all types of reasons that John Howard may not consider certain people to be appropriate. It has to do with not only John Howard's willingness to work with them but also the court's willingness to send those to the Restorative Resolution Program.

In Manitoba there are some other aboriginal statistics very shortly. I could complete this, and this may be helpful for the member. I know that it was very informative for others in my department. In Manitoba aboriginal offenders in comparison to other offenders were more likely to be unemployed at the time of sentencing, about 66 percent. I do not think that figure comes as a surprise. They were more likely to have committed offences against persons, about 53 percent, and less likely to have committed property offences, about 25 percent, or narcotics offences, about 14 percent. They, generally speaking, scored higher on risk assessments; 44 percent were considered high risk to reoffend whereas 49 percent were medium risk. So the risk assessment tools being used by our correctional people indicate a higher risk assessment.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Aboriginals in comparison to other offenders received shorter sentences on average. They were also more likely to breach a condition; 55 percent of the persons charged for breaches were aboriginal.

So if you look at all the statistics one can see that there are some issues that need to be

resolved. So the issue with John Howard only having 22 percent could well be complicated by some of the other statistics that I have pointed out. That does not mean we do not stop trying, but I think it is important to recall that.

Mr. Kowalski: On this line, and I have not been here for the entire Estimates, on this line 2.(e) managerial support, I believe it might have been explained already, the increase in the management position from 83.6 to 91.6, what is the reason for that?

I understand that it has already been explained in this committee, so I will read the Hansard in regard to that. The second part, I notice there is an increase in two full-time equivalent positions there in professional/technical. Is one of those Wendy Huggan?

Mr. Toews: I can indicate that that was not her position. I do not have any other details available on that right now, but that is not her position.

Mr. Kowalski: But it is in this budget line that her salary does come out in this Public Safety department. This is where she is employed?

Mr. Toews: She certainly is employed in the Public Safety branch, and she is indeed under that line, 2.(e). She, in fact, filled in an existing position. The other ones relate to other positions. I can get you some more detail if that is what you want.

Mr. Kowalski: So we see an increase in staff of three full-time equivalents between administrative support, professional/technical people. What is the reason for that increase in staff?

*(1530)

Mr. Toews: Mr. Chair, the increase of three full-time equivalent staff for the Law Enforcement Review Agency, which is \$131.2 thousand, and our salary increases resulting from negotiated collective agreement and elimination of reduced workweek, \$153.5, and casual resources for women's advocacy re the Lavoie Inquiry Action Plan, \$45,000. The explanation is in that footnote on page 41.

Mr. Kowalski: For the Public Safety branch in the next year, I know they have been involved in

a number of conferences. Is their role going to be the same next year? Are there additional tasks being planned for them in the next year? Are we going to be seeing them having the same status as this year?

Mr. Toews: The member raises, I think, an important question with respect to the mandate of the Public Safety branch and I think, generally speaking, the mandate of the branch is twofold: No. 1, dealing with victims and, No. 2, crime prevention at a community level. I think these are all very, very important aspects of this government's philosophy towards the issue of crime. While we do not have the direct control over legislation, and indeed have a lesser degree of involvement in policing that, for example, in this province, falls mainly to municipalities and, of course, there is a provincial responsibility in terms of the RCMP where we are contracting with the RCMP as our provincial police force. Most of the direct law enforcement is done by either municipalities or the RCMP which do not always report to this government on an operational basis. The relationship is more of a contractual basis for the provision of these police services, whether it is in the municipalities or in other jurisdictions.

With I think the advent of the Charter of Rights, there had been a growing alienation of the victims of crime, and I think jurisdictions across Canada have felt it important to ensure that victims who have long been seen as the forgotten voice in the entire justice system in fact have a stronger voice in the system. Traditionally, it had always been the Crown prosecutor who not only spoke for society at large but also for the victim and indeed for the accused. The motto of the Crown attorney is not simply to obtain convictions but rather to see that justice is done, even in cases where it meant the acquittal of an accused.

The Crown attorneys I think have done an excellent job in maintaining that even-handed fairness and ensuring that society generally is heard. But with the strengthening of the rights of the accused and the predominance of the interests of the accused in many of the judgments that we see coming out of the courts because of how our Charter of Rights is worded and has been interpreted by the Supreme Court

of Canada, I think there has been a growing sense of frustration by victims and community organizations generally. So as this concern accelerated, it was incumbent upon governments to begin to address that concern, and hence this creation of this Public Safety branch to address the concerns of victims and also to stimulate crime prevention programs at a community level.

The victims' programs, for example, that we talked about last date that the RCMP essentially co-ordinate throughout the province that began as a pilot project, and we have talked about some of the grants last day as well, have been more formally and permanently recognized by our government to ensure that these programs are continuing throughout the province of Manitoba, not only in the city of Winnipeg.

The other very important function that the branch carries out is through the person of the crime prevention co-ordinator. That was the person that the member referred to earlier, Wendy Huggan, who has been recently hired by the department. One of her duties, of course, is to work with grassroots crime prevention, and that involves the COP program, the Citizens on Patrol Program, an extremely successful program that I think found most of its roots in the rural areas and which I know has been met with a tremendous measure of success.

Indeed, I know the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) wrote me a letter and asked me for more information on the success of these programs in the rural areas and indeed wanted to ensure that his community also benefited from these programs. I know that over the last year or so this branch has been instrumental in accommodating the requests of not only MLAs acting for and in the best interests of their constituents by helping with the creation of the Citizens on Patrol, but community groups generally. So we have seen, especially I would say in the core area of Winnipeg, these types of groups working together with community police initiatives in a very effective way. The role of the Public Safety branch is to support these groups either through practical assistance or indeed monetary assistance where that is available. I can say that, generally speaking, these groups receive small amounts of money

and yet have been very good stewards of these small grants and have been able to utilize these grants and effectively take steps to protect their communities.

In an anecdotal way, I can say that I had a conversation just outside of the community policing office in the Selkirk housing project, and a citizen, a member who is very active in the local Citizens on Patrol and working with community policing there—and I know the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) has some more than passing familiarity with that area. It may well have been part of his beat at one time, so he knows the area that I am talking about and the very serious social and criminal challenges that that area presented.

We had made a particular announcement at the community policing office there. Constable Ducharme was there, Willy Ducharme, I believe his first name is, certainly a well-accepted police officer in the community, working together with the community, working together with community organizations. This specific citizen told me that the calls for assistance, and this is anecdotal so I cannot confirm that, but he indicated that the calls for assistance dropped in that Lord Selkirk Housing area and the immediate area from 700 a year to about a hundred a year. Again, I attribute that success not only to the very active role of the community police office and efforts of the police but through the Citizens on Patrol organizations.

So what we have seen is the success of these kinds of programs not only in the rural areas where in some areas crime has been able to drop 60-70 percent in small communities where these Citizens on Patrol groups have been formed and are maintained. But even in our urban areas, one often thinks about large urban areas as not amenable to that type of solution. I think that community organizations who deal with the city on a block-by-block basis realize that there are vibrant communities and communities of interest that allow these people to get together and, with minimal support from government, can make a tremendous difference in their community.

So these types of responsibilities are the responsibility of the Public Safety Branch. The additional responsibility that they will be

acquiring is the responsibilities under the community protection act, and that is the act that this government has recently introduced into the House. To some extent it is experimental, but I think it is a very important tool again in giving people in the community an opportunity to take control of what is happening in their community, not simply to wait for government to do something, not simply to wait for the cruiser car to arrive, but like the Citizens on Patrol programs, involve them in an active and ongoing way, in a way to protect and enhance living conditions in their community.

* (1540)

So this act, for example, allows community organizations to make applications to the courts for various orders, initially at the Provincial Court level and then subsequently at the Queen's Bench level which could eventually involve the padlocking of residences that are used for purposes that are destructive to the neighbourhood. Again, this idea has a root in our legal system. In the 1920s, the Supreme Court of Canada, in a case called *Bedard and Dawson*, dealt with a narrower version of this type of legislation where it dealt with the idea of bawdy houses and padlocking bawdy houses. This legislation is in fact an expansion of that idea and incorporates a number of American ideas where in New York and Los Angeles and other jurisdictions, they use these types of civil remedies to help communities make differences. They have proved successful. Clearly, the degree of success depends on the measure of community involvement that will occur. The issue though cannot simply be left on the community, and that is why we have in this budget enhanced the resources that will be available, including investigators, to assist community organizations. So we want to work with the police, with the community. These investigators can help marshal some of the evidence that will be required in this type of activity.

It is often difficult to look at how one measures success. I know that sometimes people look at statistics. It is a very misleading thing sometimes to look at statistics. I know the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) stated today that there had been no cases in Manitoba

where a case involved The Parental Responsibility Act, where a parent of a child, in fact, has had a judgment award against him. That is incorrect. My information leads me to believe that there has been some success in that. Specifically, I am aware of a case in Flin Flon where a judgment was awarded against the parents of a child who had broken a car window with a rock.

But you do not measure success in the number of cases that may be brought under a particular statute. It is like trying to measure the success of our legislation dealing with the seizure of motor vehicles for prostitution-related activities. I mean, how many motor vehicles have been permanently forfeited? I am not aware of any at this time. But to say that the legislation has not been effective is being extremely misleading, because we know from police sources and community organizations that in fact it is a very welcome tool. Similarly, with The Parental Responsibility Act, in my conversations with youth justice committees, they were very interested in The Parental Responsibility Act, indeed, incorporated the thinking in The Parental Responsibility Act in how they administered justice. So the issue of a parent being responsible is sanctioned by our Legislature, that there is a degree of responsibility for parents in respect of criminal activity of their children. I hope that legislation continues to be used, not only in the direct mechanism provided under the legislation, but that the legislation affords community organizations, and I include youth justice committees in that context, with new ways of thinking about problems and realizing that government, as a principle, supports the idea that the family unit owes a measure of responsibility, not just the child. We cannot isolate the child from the family unit, hold the child accountable by himself or herself.

As staff points out, while we know that there has been utilization of The Parental Responsibility Act, again, we do not know how many cases have been settled out of court as a result of that. If we looked at the number of Queen's Bench judgments that are being handed down in civil cases generally, I think we will see a remarkable drop over the years in civil cases generally. That is attributable to a number of reasons, one of them being the no-fault auto

insurance, and other reasons. But that does not mean that the courts do not serve a useful purpose or that specific pieces of legislation do not serve a useful purpose.

For example, if a parent or a person who has had property damage against their property knows that the kid a few houses down did the damaging and goes up to the parents and says, look, your kid tossed a rock through my window, under the law, you are responsible, what responsible parent, knowing that maybe they had not been as responsible as they should, would not say, look, I am going to make that good in terms of paying that off and then deal with my child in that context?

So court statistics are a real misleading way to measure success. I think in many respects this is something that we will also see in the context of the community protection act. We may not see full padlock orders, just in the same way we have not seen full orders of permanent seizure of motor vehicles. But as MLAs in the areas that might be affected by prostitution-related activities or houses being used as crack houses, I think, anecdotally, and then over a period of time, we will be able to see a demonstrable effect, not necessarily reflected in court dockets, because certainly court dockets, in some sense, reflect a failure of our legal system. The idea that a judgment in the court is somehow a success is not in fact necessarily a measurement of success. How many cases we are able to resolve peacefully by other means in fact is a much truer representation of success and in fact much more difficult to quantify.

So I think those who walk around spouting figures and saying this is a measure of our success or lack of success really need to have their thought processes examined. The issue, for example, on domestic violence, we have seen an increase in violent crimes in the area of domestic violence. Does this mean that all of a sudden Manitobans became more abusive toward their spouses? Of course that is not correct. What the statistics indicate and Statistics Canada specifically recognizes in respect of Manitoba, is that we have taken a private problem and made it public. This indicates the level of violence that may well exist in any community, whether it is in Manitoba or otherwise.

* (1550)

I know people say, well, look at these tremendous violence stats in Manitoba in this area. Is it not shameful? In fact I think it is a credit to the police and indeed to this government that this prior secret problem where people were abused and threatened and killed is being brought out into the public. Again, the statistics are not really an indication of the level of the problem or the lack of the problem.

In other areas, like the laws that we have passed in respect of drinking and driving since 1989, the traffic research institute has indicated how effective our administrative suspension laws and seizure laws have been in that respect. The true measurement of the success is not the number of arrests that police officers make for impaired driving but indeed the number of deaths or injuries and the reduction in those deaths and injuries. That is the true measure of success. The number of arrests are of course dependent on the level of enforcement. But there is something about a dead body that speaks much louder than every single statistic, that is, you cannot hide the dead body, you cannot hide the serious injuries. So when we see real reductions in those kinds of deaths or injuries, I say then we are beginning to see progress in some of these programs that we are making, and, eventually, these kinds of programs of the Public Safety Branch, which the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) has already recognized has been a tremendous success in rural areas, will also bear fruit in our urban areas because I have no less a high regard for the people of Winnipeg than I do for the people of Manitoba generally.

Mr. Kowalski: You mentioned about the investigators that somehow will be assisting with enforcement of the new legislation that has been presented in the House, yet I do not see additional positions in this budget for the investigators. Where are these investigators coming from? Is it people who are already in the department? Who are these investigators going to be?

Also, while I am asking about that, today in the Free Press and also on CBC Questionnaire, as I mentioned in the House, there is heightened concern about the fires that are going on in a particular part of the city and the housing stock

and the property values. I believe Tom Simms mentioned that the Minister of Housing's constituents will be paying higher taxes next year because even if there is a zero percent property tax increase with reassessment, the shift of the tax burden will be going to his constituents. So Tom Simms made sure that he mentioned that today on CBC Questionnaire.

But, with that, will there be any direction by the minister to target that area as far as enforcement of this legislation? Would there be any strategy? Where would the direction be coming from for the investigators to look at, especially in that area where it is receiving a lot of notoriety? Will that be a focus of their work?

Mr. Toews: The focus of this unit, generally speaking, will be to provide the government infrastructure for the support of these communities. So it will be, in many senses, a community police officer working together with a community organization that says, look, we have this issue of a crack house or indeed some other booze can or something, and we need some kind of support.

In many ways, we want to ensure that the initiative remains at the community level. These are community organizations that need to take the step to say we want to help the police not only in terms of the regular enforcement that they can do but also through this new mechanism.

So it will be a resource available and, in that sense, supportive of proactive measures by the community.

Mr. Kowalski: But having worked in those communities, that is one of the problems because of the transient nature of the population and a lot of rental properties. It is wonderful to have this legislation, but there needs to be supports for community building, to identify the leaders.

Sometimes in some of those communities the residents do not have the necessary skills or background or confidence, and I am wondering—it is fine to have this legislation, and it is fine to say that it is to be a community initiative, but will there be supports, will there be encourage-

ment to the community? Will there be community building, so that they can take advantage of this legislation as another tactic in the strategy to solve some of the problems going on in areas of the city that are having a lot of problems these days, a lot of decay.

Mr. Toews: The member raises a good point in terms of support for community organizations and the issue of whether community organizations, viable community organizations, exist in some areas. That has always been a concern in working with many of the programs that the Public Safety Branch, in fact, has been responsible for.

It was the same concern that was raised when we set up our Urban Sports Camps or our community sports camp. There were apparently no community-based organizations that could undertake this initiative, and yet through the assistance of the Rotary and other organizations, individuals were identified, so that we now see two very successful, large community sports camps and various satellite programs run out of them in other locations in the city working as a result of tapping into community organizations and community groups, one of them being the Winnipeg Native Alliance and Mr. Troy Rupert in that respect.

The legislation that was developed here in Manitoba and, as I say, has its roots not only in some of the constitutional litigation from the 1920s, but indeed from American research that people in my department have done. I know that one of our senior policy analysts, Mr. Glen Lewis, was involved in the development of this. Not only was Mr. Lewis involved, but I know that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) had a number of discussions, and others had discussions, with Reverend Harry Lehotsky, who works in the downtown core area and who has been very effective in terms of the contributions that he and his organization, his church, have made in that area.

One of the mechanisms, and I have heard him speak about it a number of times, that they would utilize is they would stand in front of crack houses or drug houses or booze cans and hold prayer meetings, just stand out in the street and hold prayer meetings. The people would

come out of the homes and say: what are you doing, you know, you are essentially interfering with our business? This is very troubling.

The response was a very peaceful one. Well, you are being very destructive to our neighbourhood and we are just simply trying to pray that you understand this kind of problem.

I know that he is very supportive of this kind of legislation, and it is a tool that he, in fact, sees as being effective. You or I may debate about the merits of prayer, or we may not debate about the merits of prayer, but he not only believes in the merits of prayer, he also believes in certain statutory actions that his organizations could use. So he has been very supportive of this.

Even recognizing that a person like Reverend Harry Lehotsky is a very sophisticated individual and is well known in that particular area and brings some of his experience from other jurisdictions to bear on the resolution of this problem, not every organization would be quite as sophisticated as his in terms of his church organization or community organization and some of the other projects he is involved in.

* (1600)

Even if you look at the other less sophisticated organizations, as organizations they may not be sophisticated, but I think it is very misleading to view the people in these communities as not being sophisticated. They know what their problem is. They have been dealing with it on a lengthy basis. Sometimes as these individuals come together into even loosely knit organizations like our Citizens on Patrol organizations, they have made a tremendous difference.

So what we are hoping is that through our public safety branch and some resources being granted in that respect, and I believe for this year, the resources being granted, we are estimating that about \$100,000 are being required in this fiscal year as that program starts. I think the support that we can give is very, very important. Again, depending on the measure of uptake on this, I think it will be very important to support these community organizations, so that government plays a facilitating role, govern-

ment plays a supportive role, but essentially the police and the community organizations are the ones who will have to actually come out and say: we have a problem; how can you help us? We can work together with them in that respect.

We estimate, I just indicate for the member's knowledge, that while \$100,000 will be necessary in this fiscal year, probably \$200,000 will be necessary in the following fiscal year.

Mr. Kowalski: This afternoon we talked about the restorative justice program that John Howard runs and we indicate that it is now included in a line in the budget and that there are people seconded to it. It started off as a pilot project, and now it is in the Estimates. It is an ongoing situation. It gives rise to one of the problems for an advocacy. Whether it be the John Howard Society or Elizabeth Fry Society, they have a role to play as advocates. As advocates, they are advocating for a side of society from which you do not get any votes, supporting prisoners or prisoners' rights. Nobody has much sympathy for people who commit crimes, yet they still do have rights. Their complaints have to be fairly dealt with, and that is why we have organizations like John Howard and Elizabeth Fry.

When we get into a situation like this where the John Howard now has become part of the government Estimates, their program, does it restrict their ability, then, when they see the provincial Corrections doing something that maybe they do not agree with from their role as advocates? As the government moves to service delivery from these organizations outside the government, does that hamper their ability in their role as advocates?

Mr. Toews: I think the member raises a very important question and role of government in respect of an advocacy organization, and we understand that the John Howard Society has perhaps more than just the role of advocates. Indeed, we look at them in terms of being service providers. That is what the government of Manitoba and Corrections specifically contract with John Howard Society. We are looking for the provision of services, and we contract specifically for the provision of services. We do not quarrel with the fact that

they may, as an organization, have another role as advocates, and may have a philosophy that might be at odds with our government's philosophy in some respect. But, if we can utilize that organization in order to fulfill a legitimate government need as determined by the Legislature, then we will continue to contract with outside organizations.

The issue raised by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) in the prior question relating to organizations like Citizens on Patrol, in a sense, we do contract with them as well. We give them \$2,000, and they provide a service. Not in the same formal way that, perhaps, we contract with the John Howard Society, but we recognize that there are certain groups outside of government who can very effectively fulfill a role.

* (1610)

For example, in Corrections, we contract with various ministers and elders to provide religious services to the inmates in our facilities. Those ministers, whether they are United Church or Presbyterian or Mennonite or otherwise, may advocate or talk about issues that government may not always agree with. That should not be the concern of government. Clearly we do not want to see them advocating breaking the law and that kind of thing, but, generally speaking, we respect their religious freedoms, and we contract for a certain provision of services. That is what we are also doing with the John Howard Society. We recognize that they believe that they have an advocacy role, and so we want to ensure that, despite the fact that we may not always agree, they, in fact, do provide the services that we are contracting for, and that I as minister am responsible for.

In that context I know that the John Howard Society has taken issue with this government in respect of some levels of funding, and I know they were critical originally when this government stopped funding the advocacy portion of their services. I believe that happened a number of years ago when we basically went to them and said: look, we are looking at you to provide certain services.

Now, the John Howard Society published a newsletter in the spring of this year which was

critical of decreasing government funding to private after-care agencies, and specifically to the John Howard Society by what they claimed 30 percent over the past 10 years. I also think that, while they are advocating, which is in fact what they are doing, they are advocating for more money, government also has a right to respond to those types of criticisms. The newsletter was critical, for example, of the capital investment at the Headingley Correctional Institution, and they indicated that at the same time there was decreased funding for community agencies.

Now, on May 17, I responded by letter to the executive director of the John Howard Society, basically challenging the depiction of information presented in the newsletter with some of the following points. My points were that the article failed to accurately acknowledge the actual level of funding provided to community agencies. The article also failed to acknowledge the very significant level of in-kind contributions in support of the Restorative Resolution Program since 1993. That has totalled approximately \$300,000 annually, and this has never been acknowledged in the newsletter. So, if you are going to say we have cut actual dollar funding but fail to mention the in-kind funding, we think that is unfair, and it leads to an inaccurate understanding of the true situation by the community.

I know that for the fiscal year, which they fail to recognize, in 1999-2000, an annual grant of the \$76,000 for the operating funds of the Restorative Resolution Program had been approved, further demonstrating our commitment to the restorative justice program. Also, in this fiscal year, the funding to Mediation Services has been increased from \$65,000 to \$136,000 annually. Again, this might not directly mean money in the hands of John Howard Society, but the Mediation Services, we think, is also a very important community organization. Also, the government of Manitoba, we pointed out in the letter, is allocating \$1.5 million in the Justice Initiatives Fund for such programs as Ganootamaage. In '98-99 that was \$200,000, and the Northern Justice Strategy, which is approximately \$200,000 in the current fiscal year.

Other initiatives include continuing support for the Hollow Water and the St. Theresa Point, and again these are alternative or diversion programs in our justice system. We also pointed out that funding is provided to justice committees in the amount of \$41,000, and this is in support of 70 justice committees. Just recently, government announced the additional funding of \$56,000 that was just announced. Again, this is money to organizations. It might not be to the John Howard Society or it might not be to the Elizabeth Fry, but it shows a continuing commitment to the idea of private after-care or other private organizations to play an important role.

The Urban Sports Camps are allocated \$1 million until March 31, 2001, with an additional \$2.5 million allocated through Winnipeg Development and Urban Safety to fund programs such as the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Club, the Salvation Army Weetamah program and the Circus and Magic Programs, CAMP. I know that our Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) is very supportive, as well.

The provincial crime prevention program is currently allocated at \$60,000 annually and will be increased to \$80,000 annually in this fiscal year, and these funds have supported organizations like Citizens on Patrol, Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Stoppers, as well as the recognitions of thousands, thousands of volunteers who participate in community-based crime prevention initiatives.

So the current level of funding to the John Howard Society is reflected as follows, including Brandon: \$119,000 annual grant, \$76,000 annual grant for Restorative Resolution, and \$224,000 in in-kind contributions.

Mr. Kowalski: Yes, that was interesting, but what I was talking about was the advocacy groups in particular, and because they are advocating for people who are not favoured by society, it is a tough road. If the service delivery, the funding of that service delivery can be held over the heads of these advocacy groups as pressure to dissuade them from bringing forward matters that maybe they should be doing in their role. A hypothetical situation, if the Department of Justice funds program delivery to Elizabeth

Fry, and they go into Portage Correctional facility and the person who is funded sees things that they have objections to that they feel in their role as an advocate. Does that mean that if that is brought forward, therefore, Elizabeth Fry will not be funded for that service delivery anymore because they bring it forward? Can that be used as a pressure tactic?

Mr. Toews: The issue that the member raises is a very, very difficult one. I acknowledge the difficulty and the importance that advocacy groups play in our society. It is always the relationship between government and private organizations who rely on government funding. To what extent do you take government money and then are beholden to the government and in a sense trapped by government. That is something I think each organization has to live with. I know that in the context, and I am bringing this up by way of analogy to perhaps explain some of my thinking in this area, is the independent schools.

Independent schools had advised that they have a constitutional right to a certain degree of funding. That was a position that was denied by the previous NDP administration. Our government, rather than dealing with the matter on that constitutional basis, attempted to arrive at an equitable settlement with independent schools, recognizing the very important role that these independent schools play in various provinces and communities across Canada. In speaking to some of the people, eventually what we agreed to was a 50 percent level of funding. So 50 percent of what the province pays for public schools, independent schools receive this. Partly, then, independent schools funding comes from government.

Generally speaking, I think, they are satisfied with the level of funding because, as one individual explained to me, the higher degree of level of funding and dependence upon the provincial government, the more the possibility that some of our religious principles can be compromised. That is the tension that any private organization, not just in a religious context, but any private organization has in coming to government and working to government with funding. Obviously it depends on what the good will of government is and the

Legislature is at any one particular time, because the Legislature could defeat this budget and Elizabeth Fry and John Howard Society receive nothing. It has nothing to do with their position with respect of advocacy or otherwise.

* (1620)

So relying on government funding is always something that should be a cautious thing. That is why many of the community organizations that we talk to in terms of funding, we say we will provide funding to a certain level or to a certain extent in terms of years, and after that you have got to have developed a plan to supplement that funding or in fact to replace that funding when government funding disappears.

Our position as a government vis-a-vis John Howard and Elizabeth Fry is that we contract for services. We want them to provide a service that we feel is necessary for prisoners in our provincial jails. We do not pay them any money for advocacy. That is their business, just in the same way as a minister whom we contract with to provide religious and other kinds of perhaps psychological services to a prisoner. We simply want that service provided in the jail, and the provision of those services is really the business then of the minister and the person that he performs those services to. We do not get involved in how those particular services are carried out provided the four corners of the contract are met. Again, we do not provide any money for advocacy. So if John Howard or Elizabeth Fry want money for the advocacy, they will have to go to some other agency. I know that they receive money from the United Way. They receive money from federal Corrections. Again, I do not know whether federal Corrections says a portion of your budget will be for advocacy, and so the federal government may well say that that is something that they think is important and that is a service they want to contract with or in fact pay for.

It is curious that the federal government would contract for those advocacy services in the sense of paying them to do advocacy, that organization, and yet with I know—what is it? LEAF, yes the advocacy group for Charter challenges and the like and the advocacy for that, they have basically stopped funding the

advocacy and simply allow on a project-by-project basis. They no longer provide just core funding. I believe it is LEAF that is the organization. I know that there has been some controversy and discussion between that organization and the federal government in that respect. But again, it is something that the federal government has said: we will not pay for any advocacy in that respect. So in this case they have in fact contracted for certain services. I think this has to be seen then in the context of what other safeguards exist.

So the member says, well, if they then granted, they do not receive any money for advocacy; what if they do advocate, will that impact negatively on the monies that they receive for delivering the services in other context? That question in itself raises two responses. Number one, let us say there was an organization—I am not suggesting that it is either John Howard or Elizabeth Fry—but that John Howard or a similar organization, not John Howard and not Elizabeth Fry, but this organization makes scurrilous accusations against members of a government department, let us say of a jail, and they provide services and work on a day-to-day basis with those people, work on a day-to-day basis, work together in the delivery of those services. Okay. Then in their advocacy they make scurrilous accusations about the conduct of certain government employees. And let us say that those accusations and those comments are totally without fact. That is hard to imagine, but let us just deal with the extreme kind of situation, that they are totally without fact. There is no basis for them making those accusations. In the end, when let us say the government people in the facility are cleared of the allegations, the same people then who have made the scurrilous accusations continue to provide services under contract. And yet they have to work with the same people that they have made accusations about.

What should the government's response be in that context? Should the government say, well, we are just looking at the provision of contracts or the provision of services pursuant to a contract and even though they were totally irresponsible in their advocacy and the making of accusations and we know that it has irreparably harmed the relationship between the

government staff and the advocate who also performs these services, we will continue working, insisting that these two groups go together. Now that makes for a fairly bad working environment. I think government, if that kind of situation should ever arise, certainly it would be incumbent upon government to say, look, they have not reneged in terms of the contract. They have carried out the contractual obligations, but their activities in other contexts have made the working relationship between that organization, and the regular government staff untenable and therefore we are going to have to look for these same services from another organization.

*(1630)

It is, I think, similar to the situation with Mr. Keegstra who as a teacher said, well, I did not bring my racist Nazi views into the classrooms, and if I continue with my racist Nazi views outside of the classroom that would be all right. Now, the school board in that situation said, we do not think that is all right. We think that the advocacy that you do outside of the classroom, even though we contract with you to provide certain types of education, we think that we have a right to examine our contractual relationship and deal with that issue.

Again, I am not suggesting in this context that John Howard or Elizabeth Fry are in any way involved in that kind of advocacy, but we do, I think, come to the situation then where, not the extreme, but, for example, assuming what I have said about John Howard in the letter to them is accurate, that while they have performed their services well and we are satisfied with their service and their performance, what about advocacy that puts them directly into conflict with the government by saying that government does not care about alternative mechanisms of resolving dispute, let us say if they deliberately withheld information that makes their newsletter misleading to the public. What should the government response be? I guess, on the extreme, one could say, well, the contract should be terminated. I think that there are much more effective ways of dealing with those kinds of situations, other than those kinds of extreme situations where there has been a gross misrepresentation by some organization where

the working relationship has just utterly broken down.

But I know that my staff, for example the assistant deputy minister, meets with the John Howard Society I believe on a quarterly basis. That is what they have agreed to, so that issues regarding their relationships can be worked out on I think a minimal basis.

I think, as well, that there has been a proposal that we deal with Elizabeth Fry in a similar way, that high-level government officials meet with Elizabeth Fry in order to resolve issues on an ongoing basis. I think what happens when you do not meet on an ongoing basis and you are funding, sometimes miscommunication develops, misunderstandings develop, and you do not have a regular path by which to air differences. I think that is truly an important aspect about these funding relationships and the broader relationship in terms of the various components of the organization, whether it is advocacy or otherwise.

I think that there are a number of other independent people or agencies that Elizabeth Fry or John Howard can work with in order to ensure that they are not being mistreated, or, let us say, dealt with in an arbitrary fashion; that is, in an unprincipled fashion.

I would just refer the member to people like the Ombudsman. I mean, Elizabeth Fry or John Howard, if it is somehow seen that there is an improper connection between funding and their advocacy, you know, that one is contingent upon the other, and there is no good basis for making that contingent, then they can go to the Ombudsman; then they can go to the Child Advocate; they can go to places like their MLA. As you know, an MLA has free access to jails on a regular basis. I believe it is virtually unimpeded access to our jails, with the exception of I think some emergency situations where there are issues of life. But in our correctional act there, in fact, is a very specific safeguard in that respect.

The other point that needs to be made is that our government is not worried about advocacy. There are a number of situations where we, in fact, do support the funding of advocates. We

see this as a very important part of a service delivery. For example, under our Victims' Rights Act, there is an important element that we have just introduced, and it relates to what is commonly referred to as O'Connor applications, where a witness wants to advocate her position in respect. This usually relates to sexual assault cases where the background of the victim has now become a legal issue. Counselling records then certainly are requested by defence counsel. Our concern, of course, is that these types of things not turn into fishing expeditions. So, in fact, under The Victims' Rights Act, the witness wants to advocate her position, and there is provision made available for counsel to advocate on her behalf. We see that as a very important role, given what has happened in the Criminal Code and the interpretation of the Criminal Code by the Supreme Court of Canada. The other very important aspect of advocacy that our government believes in is Legal Aid.

Under our Legal Aid program, and this is available to prisoners as well, is the protection of prisoners rights through the Legal Aid system and the accused rights through the legal aid system. We fight, you know, through Legal Aid, charges in the courts. Legal Aid, as the member knows, when it first came about was funded on a 50-50 basis by the federal and provincial governments. Now the federal government contributes about 25 percent of the net cost of Legal Aid. The total Legal Aid costs in Manitoba are about \$15 million on an annual basis. That is reduced by contributions from interests from lawyers trust funds and the Law Foundation, leaving a net cost of about \$12 million coming from government, \$3 million of which comes from the federal government and \$9 million coming from the provincial government. So we have continually backfilled the situation as the federal government has capped its contribution and indeed reduced its contribution, and we have continued to contribute to that. And so, very important.

Another advocacy point again is the Public Interest Law Centre, which I think is very, very important. The Public Interest Law Centre has been there, as the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) will know, for a number of years. Mr. Arne Peltz, who heads up that particular organization, has been very active working on

behalf of advocacy groups and interest groups in terms of ensuring that certain problems are addressed by the courts. I know that he just very recently won a recommendation.

My deputy minister advises me that the current Legal Aid bill is approximately \$16.5 million on an annual basis. Again, the federal government, I believe the contribution is being capped. The provincial government keeps on raising its contribution, and indeed as late as last week the provincial government increased certain domestic law tariffs in various categories from \$250 to \$270 and \$500 to \$540.

* (1640)

The other example that I could bring for the member for The Maples attention is the Egg Lake consultations. We in fact wanted to consult with communities and provided a certain measure of money, again on a specific per-case basis. These Egg Lake consultations dealt with the possibility of turning the Egg Lake correctional institute into a native healing centre or some other kind of correctional institute that would in fact be run by a First Nations organization, an aboriginal organization or the like, because we felt it was important that we continue to modernize our justice system to ensure that we continue to work together with aboriginal people. So we presented a cheque in the amount of \$66,000 to a First Nations organization to allow in fact the community to advocate for a particular position regarding the possibility of a correctional facility that might in fact be run by a native organization.

So again, this government has not been worried about advocacy and indeed has funded advocacy in a number of contexts. So the member's point, as he states, would the government somehow hold this threat over the John Howard Society that they might advocate certain positions that would be contrary to the government of Manitoba, our focus, as I have said, is to identify the services that we need to be provided. That is what we are contracting for. We do not contract for the provision of advocacy services with either Elizabeth Fry or indeed with the John Howard Society. So the issue still remains then to what extent would advocacy impact adversely on an agency's specific

contractual obligations that it carries out. I think I have indicated that in those cases where there would be an extreme situation, where the working relationship is simply no longer tenable, there would be a specific concern that the government would need to address from a labour relations point of view.

I know that the assistant deputy minister in respect of Corrections has committed to John Howard, has indicated that they will meet, if John Howard wants to meet, on a quarterly basis, and indeed I hope that that continues. It has been a remarkably successful format that this assistant deputy minister has been responsible for in the context of working together with the union on the one hand and management on the other in the context of the Headingley Correctional Institute. Many of the improvements made at Headingley have come, if not all of them, through that joint labour-management team that was chaired by John Scurfield, who chaired it and made numerous recommendations.

So I can see the John Howard Society working together with our department and trying to iron out any misunderstanding that might develop. The John Howard Society, when I read the newsletter, I cannot say that I was extremely happy with the letter because I thought it was inaccurate, and that is why we wrote the letter. It went out under my signature. I wrote the letter to—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I am interrupting the proceedings of this section of the Committee of Supply because the total time allowed for Estimates consideration has now expired. Our Rule 71.(1) provides in part that not more than 240 hours shall be allowed for the consideration in Committee of the Whole of Ways and Means and Supply resolutions respecting all types of Estimates and of relevant Supply bills.

Our Rule 71.(3) provides that where the time limit has expired, the Chairperson shall forthwith put all remaining questions necessary to dispose of the matter, and such questions shall not be subject to debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am therefore going to call in sequence the questions on the following matters, and I would

remind members that these questions may not be debated, amended or adjourned, according to the rules of the House.

Resolution 4.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,909,800 for Justice, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. Shall the resolution pass?

The honourable member for St. Johns, on a point of clarification.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Just for clarification, are we going through item by item? Is that what we have to do? Right now, we were on 4.2.(e). Is that what we are passing right now?

Mr. Chairperson: We are proceeding resolution by resolution and passing resolutions in order. We are dealing with Resolution 4.1. Shall the resolution pass?

An Honourable Member: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those against, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

An Honourable Member: Count-out, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been called for.

Point of Order

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): Maybe you could seek some clarifi-

cation. When the hours of Estimates are closed, I believe that you said that there was no further debate or challenge. So I believe, Mr. Chairperson, that the request for a vote may have been out of order, because it was my understanding that when Estimates are finished, there are no further questions, there is no further debate regarding the Estimates process, that the process has stopped.

It would appear that the proceedings were interrupted on a point of order, and the point of order then asked for a vote on the proceedings that you have asked for. I would think that maybe, Mr. Chairperson, it may possibly be an interpretation of the rules, that there is a seeking of clarification on that.

* (1650)

Mr. Mackintosh: Just on the same point, Mr. Chair, just as advice to the Chair, the Chair read out the rules of the House. There is no debate on this and there is no adjournment. There are no amendments that are possible, but, of course, the House always must and the committee must always have the final right of voting on any matter. I mean, that is the very basic fundamental operation of the Legislature and its committees.

In terms of points of order, too, if the minister was concerned about the point of order that was raised, I do not think there is any consequence to that, but, again, points of order must be available to be raised at any time on any matter of proceeding.

But this is a simple matter of calling a vote on a resolution. All the items have been passed on that resolution except the Minister's Salary and it is directed to the Minister's Salary for which the House must make a determination, yea or nay.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The only changes that can be made to this resolution, or the ones that I have mentioned here, a recorded vote has been called for.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The committee will go to the Chamber for that vote. We will recess for the vote.

The committee recessed at 4:52 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 5:41 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I will call the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 254, back to order to consider the resolutions of the Department of Justice. We will proceed with Resolution 4.2.

Resolution 4.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$74,700,600 for Justice, Criminal Justice, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 4.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,926,200 for Justice, Civil Justice, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 4.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$70,544,300 for Justice, Corrections, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Point of Order

Mr. Kowalski: I do not know if it is a point of order or a point of clarification. Once this department is passed, do we go into other departments? What happens at that point?

Mr. Chairperson: We will proceed with the passing of the resolutions of the other departments whose Estimates were not completed.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Resolution 4.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$32,747,000 for Justice, Courts, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 4.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,365,000 for Justice, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 8.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,960,400 for Government Services, Administration, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. Shall the resolution pass?

Mr. Kowalski: We are in the Ministry of Government Services now.

Mr. Chairperson: That is correct.

Mr. Kowalski: Okay, I would like a recorded vote on that.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the honourable member have support?

An Honourable Member: I do not think so.

An Honourable Member: What does he want to vote on?

An Honourable Member: Government Services.

Mr. Chairperson: Resolution 8.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,960,400 for Government Services, Administration, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000.

Mr. Kowalski: I am asking for a recorded vote on this budget line.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for The Maples must have support in order to. Does the honourable member have support?

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the resolution, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those against, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Kowalski: Could I have Yeas and Nays?

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been called.

The committee recessed at 5:46 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 6:08 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 254, please come to order.

The hour now being 6 p.m., committee rise.

FINANCE

Mr. Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Finance.

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

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Finance): Thank you, and I would invite my staff to come to the front.

Mr. Chairman, I am concerned that we have not passed any lines here. We have been debating for quite a number of days, and I know that there is agreement on the budget because one member after another on the other side stood up and voted for it. Their names were actually recorded voting for the budget. I just thought as an act of good faith, since this is our third or

fourth meeting, that perhaps we could pass a few lines and show some progress.

You know, staff from this office and from the Department of Finance have been here day after day after day, and it just seems that when we read Hansard we are not making any progress. I wondered if it is possible we could go line-by-line and show some support for the budget and the department and have some lines passed before we proceed.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Chairman, we have only an hour and 50 minutes left, and we will try to get as much done as we can in that period of time. If we do not finish it, we can deal with it in the concurrence. But the minister has his staff here for the next hour and a half, so let us proceed. I have quite a number of questions on some specific cases. I would like to proceed with them.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Chairman, I heard a long list of departments that have not been into Estimates yet, and that they have to be dealt with here and that the Speaker or the House leader read out. I am concerned that they are going to have to have a turn, too, and we have not passed any lines yet.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, I do not think the minister has to worry about it. At the end of the day, the department's Estimates will be passed. We simply have some more questions to ask on the IT area, and then we have some other questions to ask in some other areas. In an hour and 50 minutes we will be finished.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I know that there is support for the budget from members opposite, but I felt that they would want to have those other departments come in and go through some questions on that. But, if that is not the case, we are prepared to proceed.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, perhaps the minister has available the figures that he was going to obtain for me the other day, that is, the list of the expenses of the Y2K expenses, the computer hardware, software, consulting expenses for the Crown corporations, so that we can add to our total here and determine what the

final total is for the government for Y2K and computer-related expenses for year 2000.

* (1450)

Mr. Gilleshammer: As I recall, my commitment was to provide my honourable friend with some annual reports from those organizations so that he could have an opportunity to peruse them. I see we have even put notations in here so that he would easily be able to find year 2000 information. So, Mr. Chair, I table and I apologize, I have only got one copy. I am not sure if the Clerk would want me to just table one copy or whether we need to get—[interjection] We need three? So we will have to leave it until another day? [interjection] Well, these annual reports are lengthy. Anyway, I will table them here and you can look at them and see what you want to do, or perhaps we could just pass them on to my honourable friend.

There are the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Annual Report 1997-1998, the Manitoba Public Insurance Annual Report 1998, and the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board Forty-Seventh Annual Report for the year ended March 31, 1998. All of these organizations, of course, are concerned with year 2000 issues, and I table them at this time.

Mr. Chairperson: We want to thank the minister. These reports have been tabled in the House already, so there is no need for the minister to table two more copies.

Mr. Maloway: Since the minister is in a tabling mood, I wonder if he could provide copies of the studies that were done in the e-commerce area by the Gartner Group, the Giga Group, and the Hackett Benchmarking Group.

Mr. Gilleshammer: We have been working very diligently trying to get all of the information my honourable friend is looking for. He will appreciate that both the staff and myself have other duties to perform, and we have not been able to locate all of these at this time. He may be aware that we spent the morning in here on Public Accounts this morning, and I am pleased to report that we did pass six reports there, so we made substantial progress, but I do

have some of the reports from the Gartner Group.

The first is the Gartner Group search results. Again, it is a fairly lengthy document that I would table at this time. I have a second one here which deals with some of the key issues, and this, too, is from the Gartner Group. I just maybe would outline some of the issues that it deals with for the member's information. This is to do with the Internet. The first issue is what key trends will affect the role of the Internet? The second is how will Internet-driven technologies evolve? Thirdly, what will be the most effective strategies and tactics for users to exploit the Internet? Probably the word "exploit" is not a good term there, but it is not government's term, it is part of the information from the Gartner Group. Fourthly, how will Internet applications evolve, and which will generate a profit and which will continue to hemorrhage capital?

This information is readily available, so I would table this one copy here for the member. We are supplying it and not tabling it, okay? I think that is probably good for now.

Mr. Maloway: Presumably the minister has other studies then by the Giga Group and the Hackett Benchmarking. What is the status of those reports

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, certainly I know the member's voracious appetite for information of this nature. We just wanted to be sure that we were able to complete some of his requests and they will take a little more time. I know the member is pleased to receive those reports on such a timely manner, and we will do our best—I said the other day—before the Estimates would be finished, but it appears we are going to finish today, and we will just have to get them to the member in a timely fashion afterwards. I can assure him we will do that as soon as we can.

Mr. Maloway: Would the minister indicate roughly how much time he requires? Are we talking about days here, weeks, months, years, how long?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We will make an effort to get them to the member in a timely fashion. He

will appreciate that there are other issues that staff have to involve themselves in. In fact, today, I know they were doing some extremely important work. Unbeknownst to me this committee was going to call us back again, so we have had to call them away from their normal duties to appear again at committee and are pleased to do so. As soon as we possibly can, we will get that information for the member.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, have there been any pilot programs or tests done regarding e-commerce in the government at this point? Are there any contemplated at this point?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told the only department that is visiting this issue is the Department of Natural Resources. They are in the very preliminary stages of that.

Mr. Maloway: Have there been any plans to establish kiosks in shopping malls with the view to selling things like hunting licences and drivers' licences and a number of other items out of these kiosks?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told that the issues which the member is raising I think are all in the Department of Natural Resources, and they are in the early stages of talking about how they can best service their customers.

I know that, for instance, with hunting licences, there are many, many vendors out in the rural part of our province, and I would invite the member for Elmwood to come out into rural Manitoba sometime and visit. In fact, the Pan American Games may be a good opportunity for him to visit some of the sites. I know the sailing is going to be up at Gimli, and the rowing events are going to be held in western Manitoba. It might be a great opportunity for him to get out there and see how business is done. In fact, I was just reminded earlier today, someone needing to renew their driver's licence. In rural Manitoba, you can go to almost any Autopac dealer, have your picture taken and get your licence, and it is much, much more difficult to do that in the city of Winnipeg. I think the various departments need to look at how they can best service customers.

Getting back to the question, the Department of Natural Resources is a natural one to look at some of those ideas. I know that we have many foreign tourists that come to Manitoba, particularly for hunting and fishing. In the quest for better customer service, I know that department is looking at all sorts of ideas whereby they can better serve Manitobans and others who make use of our parks and are interested in wildlife.

In fact, I think that the department went through an exercise in terms of reserving camp spots that is now functioning smoothly whereby people can reserve these over the phone. I think truly that is the department that has a number of opportunities to look into using modern technology to service their customers.

I know the Estimates for the Department of Natural Resources have not been passed. Maybe my honourable friend would have time to sit in with Natural Resources and look in more detail into some of these ideas that are coming forward. I suspect that we could do some brainstorming here to think about ways in which customers and people who access services from that department may be better served in the future. That truly is the area that I think is going to best take advantage of technology in the future. I am told at the present time they are just at the very formative stages and really have not a lot of concrete data that we can share with the member. But again, I would offer him the opportunity to attend the Estimates of Natural Resources, which have only had very brief scrutiny by the opposition, and that is probably where he could get some more in-depth answer.

* (1500)

Mr. Maloway: I would like to draw the minister's attention to Minister Pitura's comments in Hansard in which he indicates the idea of purchasing hunting licences through kiosks. He said he would like to see a time when you can walk into a kiosk, that is, a provincial government kiosk in a shopping mall and be able to order your hunting licence or renew your driver's licence or maybe a copy of your birth certificate. He indicates that that one-stop shopping method would involve seven or eight government departments. Now, has this depart-

ment had any conversations with Minister Pitura regarding how this kiosk system would be set up and how it would work?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I noted that the quotation that the member for Elmwood made was from the other section of committee. Perhaps he would like to table that so we have a copy here in front of us to be able to review it. I noted that the partial excerpt that my honourable friend read started by saying, "I would like to see." I suppose in the future there is possibly many, many changes, and some of those we all may be around to see some day but they are not reality at this time.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, so is the minister saying that there have been no conversations with the Minister of Government Services as between the Government Services minister and his information department here on the concept of establishing kiosks in shopping malls in the city or around the province whereby seven or eight government departments would be offering services on an e-commerce basis? Is he saying that those conversations did not exist or did not happen?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I can say to the member that I have not had that conversation with the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pitura). I do accept that, within government, from time to time, there are people looking at new and better ways of doing things. Clearly the quotation that the member read into the record was something that may occur in the future, so there no doubt are discussions within departments on how services such as this may be provided in the future. At the present time, I am told that these are in the very early stages of discussion, and at the present time do not exist in kiosks in malls, I think the member was talking about.

Mr. Maloway: I wanted to ask the minister, in view of the fact that the 800 computers that are slated to go into the Family Services department in October are being rerouted for use during the Pan Am Games this summer, I am wondering whether the minister is making any provisions for how he is attributing the cost as far as the games are concerned, because the computers will be four months old. He is basically purchasing these computers four months earlier

than he has to. If he knows how computers depreciate, he will know that, if he waited four months, he would be saving the taxpayers some money. On the other hand, he is saving the Pan Am Games probably a tremendous amount of money, because now they do not have to go out and lease 800 computers for the games.

I am not arguing with the idea that they are doing this. This is probably a good idea. The question is: how are you accounting for this?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am pleased the member is supporting this initiative and the Pan Am Games, which, of course, will bring thousands and thousands of people to Manitoba. The member indicates that he is a ticket holder and will be participating as an observer—[interjection]

I think he said he tried to be a participant but did not make the cut. I understand that there is a private sector organization which is involved in covering off some of the costs of this initiative.

Mr. Maloway: Could the minister elaborate a little better and explain what he is talking about here with "private sector organization"?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, while all three levels of government are heavily involved in funding and supporting the Pan Am Games, the member will know that there are other groups and organizations within the province and within the country who are also participating. I understand that the costs of these machines to be used in the Pan Am Games is covered in the Pan Am Games budget and will not be seen as a cost to government.

Mr. Maloway: But the government is buying the machines. They are buying them four months earlier than they have to. They are lending them in effect to the Pan Am Games. What is he talking about that there is no cost to government? Of course, there is cost to government. The government is buying them in the first place.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, there is a depreciation—I think that is what the member is saying—and that depreciation is covered by one of the other supporters of the Pan Am Games.

Mr. Maloway: Which supporter is he referring to here?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That would be IBM.

Mr. Maloway: So the government is buying the computers. They are buying them actually from IBM. They are lending them to the Pan Am Games. So how is he accounting for the depreciation on the equipment? If he were to wait four months and if the equipment were to be bought four months later, it would be presumably at lower cost than when he is buying it right now. So this is really in essence a subsidy to the Pan Am Games. How does that show on the books?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think the simple answer is that we are not paying the full price for those machines.

Mr. Maloway: By not paying the full price you mean that they are being sold to you, you are taking title of the machines, and that because they are arriving in the government four months after they should be, that they are being sold to you at a discounted price?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is correct.

* (1510)

Mr. Maloway: I was wondering whether there were any studies being done or whether the Finance ministers across the country have been dealing with the whole area of taxation as it relates to e-commerce sales or as it relates to purchasing equipment on toll-free lines or purchasing products on toll-free lines. For example, at the present time, people can buy computers in Toronto on toll-free lines or computers in the States, and it is basically on the honour system as to whether or not the provincial taxes get paid on the purchase. Now, I would like to know what sort of mechanism you have for tracking down cases where people do not declare the taxation and pay the PST on those kind of sales. I am sure there are other kinds of sales, but those are ones that come to mind.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The question my honourable friends asks I think is an important one that is not under the purview of the Office of Information Technology. When we had staff from the Department of Finance deal with

taxation, I possibly could have gotten my honourable friend a more up-to-date answer. But the point is a valid one, that there is in existence in Canada something that some people call the underground economy whereby goods and services are exchanged and sometimes tax is not paid on that. Governments right across this country and nationally have to be concerned about that. Sometimes it is a bartering situation that takes place between various tradesmen. I know it is a very difficult issue to police, but we do have staff within the Department of Finance who spend a good deal of their time trying to prevent that kind of activity. Certainly, I think it has been shown in many jurisdictions, particularly where taxation is high, that people are more prone to try to beat the system. It is a cost to government everywhere when people do not honestly pay their fair share of taxation.

So we do have staff within the department who attempt to police this. I think they are successful a good deal of the time. If the member is saying, is it absolutely a hundred percent foolproof, the answer is no. It is, I guess, a judgment call that governments and departments have to make: how much time do you spend trying to enforce taxation law and getting people to comply? I guess there is not only that, but there is also the smuggling that takes place where product is brought in from other provinces or from other countries. This, of course, is mostly a federal issue.

I know that, if my honourable friend has been out of the country lately, customs officers will ask you to declare what you have bought or been given, what you are bringing into the country, and it is a constant concern. I think for the citizen, the citizen sometimes sees this as a victimless crime, that to beat the government is not as serious as perhaps taking something from a neighbour or a fellow citizen. But we do have staff that work in this area and, to a large extent, are successful.

I am told that within our Audit branch within Taxation they audit the records of tax collectors and taxpayers. They conduct investigations into the smuggling of tobacco and fuel, tax evasion and other violations of the acts and prosecute for offences under these acts. This can range from, I think, people who are selling

cigarettes by the single cigarette rather than by the package, to people burning coloured fuel in their vehicle when that fuel has been designated for farm use only. I am told there are even people who make their own beverages these days, some of them illegal. So this whole idea of getting everybody to pay taxes is an ongoing problem.

So the member is saying that perhaps there will be new issues. The whole idea of e-commerce is really, from a point of view of law enforcement, no different than people buying through a mail order catalogue or buying something over the phone. I sometimes see on television you can phone a 1-800 number and buy disks with music on it and records and tapes and that sort of thing. So, if you are saying, is government changing with the times, I think the answer is yes. We have to be aware of those things and try and be as vigilant as possible in enforcing taxation.

Now there is a balance, of course. How much money do you want to spend on that? I mean, if you want to put the taxation cops to work, sometimes you are spending more on enforcement than you are on collecting. I get to see from time to time something called write-offs that the department has to be involved in when people do not pay their bills. Often private tax collection agents are hired, and they are able to go out there and try and enforce what government officials have not been able to do. After a while of that endeavour, governments historically have written some of them off. So if you are saying there are new challenges out there, I agree.

Mr. Maloway: I guess, first of all, I am asking are there any studies in the area of e-commerce and taxation that you have? I have spoken to another Finance minister from a different province, and the information I got from him was that this had not really been a topic at the Finance ministers' meetings or level yet. It seems to me that rather than being ahead of the game you are probably behind the game if you have not started looking at how you are going to collect the taxes on e-commerce trades which can involve other countries. Unless you are going to tie it into customs checks at the border and you start sharing information with them,

which I do not know that you do on a consistent basis, then I do not know how you are going to police that.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am wondering if my honourable friend would identify the Finance minister he was talking to.

* (1520)

Mr. Maloway: I think there are probably a limited number of names that he could be dealing with here, but I do not think that that is of particular interest here. I think what I have asked is do you have any studies dealing with how you would collect taxes regarding e-commerce sales? Do you have any strategy, do you have any studies to deal with that problem?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I can tell the member that I do not have any studies at the table here today, but I would point out that the method of the transaction does not in any way change the objective of ensuring that appropriate retail sales tax compliance takes place. The audit group within taxation I think is responding with more sophisticated audit programs and investigative techniques. This is an ongoing review.

From the short time that I have been in the Department of Finance, I can tell you that the investigative processes tend to be held very closely. In all my tours of government departments and buildings, one of the memories that I have of going to meet some of the tax auditors is that they were working behind closed doors in a very, one might even say, clandestine fashion and interacting with colleagues from across the country and from the federal government.

I think that they are well aware that they need to improve the sophistication of their audits, so that they can keep up to speed on techniques and strategies to enforce the collection of taxes and ensure that there is tax compliance. So I do not have any studies with me today, in fact, because the opposition indicated they wanted to talk with us about year 2000 compliance. I will ensure that I check with other departmental staff in Finance to see if we have any studies that have taken place or if there is any off-the-shelf varieties that I can share with the member, and, if there indeed are studies, I

would be pleased to share them with my honourable friend.

Mr. Maloway: Does the minister or his department have any estimate as to how big a problem this is, as to how much uncollected revenue there might be out there in the area of the e-commerce sales; and the second thing is outside-of-Manitoba sellers selling products into Manitoba over toll-free lines?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Again, I have not seen any of that data in any of the briefing notes and briefing books that I have had the opportunity to read. I think I can say with some certainty that the Audit branch is increasingly moving into this area of computer-assisted audit techniques. They are doing that to address the ever-increasing use of electronic transaction data. I guess what my honourable friend is looking for is some hard data on how successful they are. I will raise that issue and see if there are any data that I can share with him.

I would say, and I think the member would agree, that this is a very difficult area to get hard data on because a lot of the activity that we are talking about takes place not only in what he calls e-commerce but also simply in bartering, where somebody does some work for somebody in return for something else. Now, I know that my honourable friend is a prominent businessman in the city of Winnipeg and he might have more information through his own sources on that than I do, but it is a concern to the Audit branch and something that they work on.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, it is certainly a concern on the part of local businesses. It does not matter what sort of businesses they are, but let us say computer sales companies in Manitoba. When they have to pay employees, they have buildings here in Manitoba; they have their operation in Manitoba, and they are faced with competitors who are not necessarily offering a better product but have a 7 percent advantage by virtue of the fact that they operate outside of Manitoba borders, just across the border.

I just want to know how big a problem it is because I know that while it is the requirement that people voluntarily pay the tax, I would like

to know how many, for example, computer products are sent here from Toronto every day and how many people actually go down to the tax department. I would like to know: when is the last time somebody walked into your tax department and said here is my bill of sale and I want to pay 7 percent on a \$5,000 computer? When is the last time that has happened?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I do not have that information here about when was the last time. It could have been earlier today, but we will try and find that out when people do come in to pay sales tax. I would point out though, that it is the federal customs officers who collect the provincial sales tax when it does come into the country. I think that the working relationship between these officers of both the federal and provincial governments and the working relationship is a positive one. They do not catch all of the people who choose to ignore the law. As I indicated, to a lot of people, it seems to them like a victimless crime that they are not in any way infringing on the property of fellow citizens; they simply are not paying the tax. I mean, my honourable friend probably has been on airplanes coming into the country where you have to fill out those forms and people are scrambling to make lists and talking about what you are going to report, and what you are going to let the government know that you have bought outside the country.

So it is not, by any means, foolproof, but my advice to anybody is just to tell the truth and then you do not have to worry about it. But there are parts of this province where we have very long, undefended borders, where in all seasons people attempt, I think, to bring product into the province in a clandestine way and avoid the paying of taxes, so it is a constant issue with tax collectors and auditors who try to enforce the laws of Canada and Manitoba.

When we have the Finance staff at committee at another time, we can maybe get more detailed answers for the member.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, so the minister seems to be saying that the problem should be not as big a problem at the border then, as the tax is collected as the products are shipped

across the border in trucks or whatever form they are using. The provincial tax is collected at the border. However, this problem is also across the country, province to province. Now, is there any recognition of the possibility of having reciprocal agreements whereby Manitoba would collect, companies would collect tax and send the money to the other province where the goods were sold to? Otherwise, what you do is you create a very unfair situation for local suppliers in Manitoba.

* (1530)

If you could purchase a product in Ontario, whether it is a car or a computer, and you had to pay the tax there and they were to remit the money to Manitoba, at a government level now, it might solve the problem. What is happening right now is that the companies are in Ontario, for example, when they sell to an Ontario resident they are collecting Ontario tax and sending them to the Ontario government. When they are selling it to a Manitoba resident, they are not collecting any tax and they are just leaving it up to you to go track the people down in Manitoba. Of course, the people when they get the product, they see a 7 percent saving here, and they are not too inclined to come and voluntarily remit to you.

So it would be much easier if that Ontario company just simply collected the tax based on the residency of the person who is buying the product, so if it is Alberta, zero tax, and if it is Manitoba, seven. I mean, they would have to deal with different percentages for each province, but would that not be an easier method of doing it? It would guarantee collection at the source and then you would simply have the monies sent off to the province where the person resided. It would save them paying it. I do not know, it just seemed to me some sort of reciprocal agreement. You know, we have had free trade in this country for 10 years now, and we are still not quite there yet with inter-provincial trade. I guess we are getting there, but it took us 10 years to do it. So I do not want to see local companies disadvantaged because consumers buy the products outside of Manitoba and can buy the identical product at 7 percent less, and then you do not end up with your taxation revenue out of it.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I thank the member for his comments, and I will be sure to share his comments in Hansard with my people in Taxation because I know that, if in any way they can learn something from our discussions here that will be of use, they will be very interested in that.

Mr. Maloway: I did want to get a list of tax arrears. I do not know whether you have those handy here, but maybe I could keep asking some questions. I know you are very interested in more questions on Y2K. You have all the top guns here to answer those questions, but I do want answers to the tax arrears question as well, but maybe we could finish off the questions on the computer side of things first, if that would be better for you.

When you purchased this new system, you made a decision to go with 150 servers, as opposed to a single-server approach. As you know, over the last couple of years, there is a debate in the industry about that idea and a lot of companies now are looking for a single server to do their worldwide operations. It is similar to the idea of the telephone. You have all the software. The expensive programs are down on Empress Street or wherever in the big telephone building. What you have in your house is just a dumb terminal. You just have a telephone, and you do not have to worry about software and so on.

Basically, the argument that the single-server people use is that by using a multiserver approach, what you are doing is making Bill Gates rich. You are ensuring that you have to buy in your case 9,000 copies of Windows, 9,000 copies of all these software programs, and then when you update them you have to update all these multiple machines, and of course, they rarely work all that well consistently over a long time anyway. So it would be much easier if you were simply to buy a single server, put all the data on that and then just have the workers work at their desks with dumb terminals. I ask for your comments about that, as to what your attitude is on that now?

I know that you went with the multiserver approach, but the question is whether you are now looking at perhaps reconsidering, when the

contract runs out in three or four years from now, at a single-server approach.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I thank my honourable friend for his question, and it is difficult to say what decisions will be made in three or four years. The member has referenced the changes in technology that take place every few months, but I am sure when we sit down to make those decisions three or four years from now, we will take into consideration the changes in technology. I can assure you that as a government we would always be looking at new approaches.

Mr. Maloway: At the time, I do not believe you even asked for a quotation on a single-server approach. It seems to me that at the time you simply went to market, and your specifications were drawn up in such a way that the only people that could apply were people that were going to sell you 150 servers. I do not even think you even offered that option to any possible bidder.

Mr. Gilleshammer: This would be a question better asked in Government Services where they were responsible for making those decisions there. I believe that the Government Services Estimates have not been passed yet, and it would be an appropriate place to put that question.

If the member does not get the opportunity to do that, I will be sure to share a copy of Hansard with my colleague in Government Services.

Mr. Maloway: If the minister does not know the answer to the question, he can simply say so. I have asked the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pitura) this question too, and they are not exactly sure of what the economics of that proposition are either. The point is, if you do not know what the answer is, just say so.

I am just asking: do you have any studies available right now that would indicate what the saving was in the beginning, two years ago, of going with this solution over a single-server approach? Do you have any idea whether you saved a lot of money by doing what you did or did it cost you money by doing what you did? What is your feeling at this point as to what you

might do a couple of years from now given the way the technology is changing?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Again, the member already asked this question. He said three or four years ago, and now he is saying a couple years from now. It is very difficult to make a decision today based on the technology environment that is going to exist down the road two years, three years or four years. In fact, there could be considerable change by that time, and I cannot prejudge what decision the Department of Government Services will make at that time.

Mr. Maloway: How much money did you save by going with the multiserver approach over going with the single-server approach? Do you have some estimate as to whether you saved thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told the suggestion of how things might have gone was not feasible at that time, so the question really is a hypothetical one. There is no answer to a hypothetical question.

* (1540)

Mr. Maloway: The minister is responsible for the Better Methods Initiative of the government, and the goal, as I understand it, is to eventually end in a paperless office, or that has been the goal of the whole computer industry over the years. As I had indicated before, it seems that that is a pretty elusive sort of target. But we have some evidence that Cisco Systems, I think, Dell Computer, probably a number of others, claim in an e-commerce environment to be down to a paperless office.

Now, I am sure you have heard these claims by these companies, but do you have any evidence to show that that has, in fact, happened with them? Has anybody from here volunteered to go down and check Dell or check at Cisco Systems and see how their system operates, because you have spent a considerable amount of money here and you have a far from paperless environment.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I know that I have seen a number of travel requests where staff do go to a number of national and international meetings to

keep current on issues around technology. It is an ever-changing environment and one that I feel we are attempting to keep up to date on. For sure, the Office of Information Technology has been largely centred on Y2K issues as we now are into the last half of 1999. Much of their attention and energy is going to be centred on being sure that we are compliant. Again, as we indicated the other day, every indication is that we are well positioned for the year 2000. Having said that, again, the technology is ever changing and the thought of a paperless office is something that is still in the future for government. There are companies, corporations, which are moving in that direction. With the number of staff within government and people who have to be informed about government policy, government decisions, we are some way away from achieving that target, if in fact it is one.

Mr. Maloway: Can the minister then tell us how much the government is spending on paper in this fiscal year?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I do not think I have seen that information lodged in the Estimates of any department. I am not sure that that is a question that has ever come forward during our Estimates process. If the member thinks that we can save some big dollars in that area, I think he is wrong. As we transition into more and more technology, I am sure we will be using less paper. I do not know whether the member is thinking that this is a big issue with government, that individuals who work within departments are too reliant on generating briefing notes. I know I have observed that the member writes the odd letter himself for his constituents and for others.

Probably the bigger cost is the postage that he is using rather than the paper, but we can, I suppose, check with the Public Accounts and see what the caucus offices are using in terms of paper and postage and perhaps report back to this committee at a later date. A valid question. I know that all the caucuses, one is not as active as the other sometimes and probably within the caucus there are people who write more letters to their constituents and use more postage. I do not know whether caucuses keep track on that. I know the member for Elmwood is probably at

the high end because I have seen him come in the House with box loads of letters, and he sits there signing one after the other. I wonder if within his own constituency he is finding that he can communicate more by using technology than he can with hard copies and using all this paper. I do not know whether he would care to answer that or not.

Mr. Maloway: I have no problem answering that at all. In my constituency it is not a rich constituency, but I do not know what percentage of people have computers. I do not suspect it is very high, so I have no choice but to mail them letters and tell them what I am doing down here. I cannot e-mail them memos, because they do not have computers.

Now that is not the case with you and the government. You just spent \$162 million to bring yourself out of the Stone Age, you said, into the new age to buy these fancy computers. You did not buy the computers from the lowest bidder to start with. You spent all this money, and now you are telling me you do not know how much money you spend on paper a year. You have no idea when you are going to become a paperless operation as Dell has done, as Cisco has done, as a lot of other companies have done. You have no plans whatsoever to do this, and you have state-of-the-art equipment here. There has to be some kind of a plan that the government has, and that is one of the reasons you went with this big system. So, surely, surely there has to be an overall plan in this government, and I think there is a plan. I think you are hiding the plan.

I think you have a plan here for e-commerce. You said in your throne speech that you are going to reduce the civil service by 10 percent. Now you are going to do that over five years. Presumably somebody is going to have to pick up the slack and do that work that these civil servants are doing right now; presumably, they are working right now. So how would you do that? Well, you do that when you buy a big new computer system like this by reducing—when you reduce the labour force, you are simply going to be making up the slack with this fancy new computer system. You are going to be doing internal e-commerce. You are going to be doing external e-commerce with the public.

I know you do not want to talk about that before an election because those are sensitive issues, but certainly the potential is there with the computer system you have right now. Part and parcel of that is the necessity, our desire, to reduce the amount of paper the government uses. If you cannot tell me how much you are spending right now and you have no plan, then what was the purpose of all of this? Was it only because of Y2K? I do not think so.

If you have plans that you do not want to tell me about them because of the election, well, just say so. I will wait till after the election then, and we will find out one way or the other, I guess.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The member does raise the issue of how technology, as it develops over the decades, does replace people. There was a time as a summer student I worked on the railroad, and we did a lot of manual labour. Now I see that they have developed a lot of machines that do that, and, as a result, they do not need as much manpower as they did at one time.

Is my honourable friend suggesting that he would prefer to live in an age, in an era, where a lot of this is done manually and that the use of technology and machines is a bad thing, because I do not think he is going to be able to stop that? The use of technology in government is a reality. It is part of the reason why I think telephone systems across this country are reducing staff members, because they have more up-to-date technology. They do a lot more things now in telecommunications than they ever did before.

I would point out that one of the points of technology is to increase the amount of service that can be provided. I think that is happening, and governments will continue to access technology as the years go by. Yes, in the throne speech, there was an indication of what we see in the future, that government will be able to operate quite effectively with fewer staff years. That has been shown over the last 10 years, and I think that is a trend that will continue to some extent into the future.

* (1550)

Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Maloway: Let us get back to Y2K now. The province has spent \$70 million in Y2K expenditures, and presumably with this new computer system that they have they could keep track of the expenditures. I find it really passing strange here, to use a phrase of the former, former Minister of Finance, that the minister does not seem to be able to put together information as fast as I think he should be with this new computer system that he has. For example, I would think that the breakdown of the \$70 million in Y2K expenditures, albeit over two or three years, should be something that should just be readily available. You simply put the parameters down in your program and you pull out the reports.

In a business, I can tell you, with the proper computer system you simply put down the parameters for the report you want, and you push the button and out it comes. I can get reports, all sorts of different reports, all sorts of different ways. With the current software you are working with and the hardware you are working with, I do not see why you should have a problem. Back in June, but I guess it was much earlier, I filed a Freedom of Information request for Y2K information. So what did I get back on June 25 of this year? I get a letter saying that if I want to pay \$520, I can get the information. I do not know why that should be such a difficult thing to do. I was simply asking for the amount of money that was allocated or to be spent on the testing of the system, it is Y2K testing, and asking for the costs by department. This is the kind of letter I get back.

Now why could that be so complicated? I find that hard to believe that this is what I would get. It just seems that the information should be available.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The Freedom of Information, a very important issue to our government. I know it was passed by the previous government I think in 1985. For some reason it sat there and sat there and it was never proclaimed. I suspect there was not much of a commitment to it. I know the member was in government then, and I am sure within his caucus he would have been urging them to put it on the agenda probably on a monthly basis and saying: let us talk about this Freedom of

Information Act we have passed. We need to get this proclaimed.

Probably he did send letters on it. I am sure he would have been hounding colleagues like the member for Brandon East (Mr. L. Evans) who was in cabinet at that time saying: we have passed this worthy legislation. We do not seem to have any commitment to it, so we did proclaim that. In fact, as I recall in the early days in the Legislature when I was first elected in 1988 and the member for Gimli joined me at that time. In fact there are not many of us here now from that class of 1988. A lot of them were in opposition at that time with the Liberal Party, and they have gone on to other things, but anyway, one of the first things we did was to proclaim that Freedom of Information legislation. It is there to assist opposition members and the members of the public to get information from government departments when they wish to have that.

Now, part of the legislation they passed also said it should not be there simply to do research for opposition members or students or anybody else, so that anything that is provided after some two hours of work should be something that members of the public are prepared to pay for because it does create work for staff within departments who rightly have other responsibilities and work that they need to do.

I have not read this letter yet. In fact, it is not even to the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). It is to somebody by the name of Shauna Martin. Anyway, after a certain amount of work is done, then it is expected if you are going to take people from their tasks and from their normal work to provide that information, then there should be a charge for it. I think that was part of the original legislation. That was not an amendment that has been put in.

So I presume the member supports that, as he was a member of that caucus that researched and structured and passed that legislation. If he is suggesting that we should have an amendment to the current legislation, that is probably something for another day. If this was something he debated and fought for within caucus and lost at the time, I guess so be it. I am sure that he takes an active role in debating these things.

At any rate, those are the rules, and we try and abide by them. But I understand that if you still are not satisfied that the act is being applied correctly, there is an appeal process. So I would urge him to use that appeal process to the Ombudsman if he feels he has not been well served.

Mr. Maloway: The minister has the information. The minister knows that he spent \$70 million on Y2K projects, 65 projects. He could provide me in minutes, I am sure, with a list of all the projects, who got them, the duration of the project, the nature of the project, what it was doing. He could provide that information with no problem at all. If he wished the information, he simply would have to ask his staff, and he would have it right away.

All I am pointing out to you is that when I send an information request like that under the Freedom of Information, that is the kind of response I get. That is how open this government is. It is not open at all. It is controlling the information. It does not want to give out information because it feels that the information that it gives out will be detrimental to its electoral fortunes perhaps in the next couple of months. So, I mean, if the minister wished to give this information, he certainly could. There is no question in my mind.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

I want to ask the minister, of the 65 Y2K projects, how many instances were there where you were dealing with a brand new system, where you bought a brand new system, but, in the meantime, you went and spent money on Y2K on the old system as a backup? How many instances were there? You do not have to be exact here. Is it two or three, a dozen, of the 65?

* (1600)

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am informed that there were a handful of systems that were sort of built in parallel while new technology was coming on stream. I do have some taxation information for my honourable friend that was just handed to me and I could share that with him, if he would like.

So, Mr. Chairman, I will go ahead with this taxation information. The collection of out-

standing accounts receivable and delinquent returns pursuant to The Retail Sales Tax Act, The Corporation Capital Tax Act and The Health and Post Secondary Education Tax Levy Act is as follows: these outstanding accounts receivable result from returns filed by businesses without paying the tax and from unpaid audit assessments. Delinquent accounts are the result of taxpayers not filing their returns by the due date. The collection of outstanding receivables and delinquent returns is performed by professional collection and field officer staff dedicated to fair, responsible enforcement.

It continues: improvement of audit effectiveness as a result of increased receivables arising from audit assessments. Many businesses are still experiencing cash flow problems where they simply close their doors. Bankruptcy and receiverships are still a fact of life out in the business world. Enhanced enforcement legislation, delegation of authority and continuous improvement of collection processes have resulted in a substantial increase in the amount collected, and a decrease in delinquent accounts under The Retail Sales Tax and the payroll tax.

Two collection officers were hired in the fall of 1998. The Collections section has invested time and resources to train and develop new staff in order to achieve quality resolution to the accounts receivable. Experience indicates that it will take the new staff upwards of a year to achieve this performance level.

At any rate, we have some retail sales tax arrears. This spans a number of years in fiscal year '97 ending on March 31, of course, there were 4,649 of those accounts. In fiscal year March 31, 1998, that had risen to 4,781. Year to date to December of 1998, there was 4,516. Now, the member is interested in the dollar amount. In March of 1997, there was \$13.9 million outstanding. That dropped in fiscal year 1998, March 31, to 13.2. The year to date as of December 31, 1998, was \$11,811,000 that was in arrears.

Now, there was a substantial amount collected every year, as well, so this is an ongoing process, and this refers just to the retail sales tax. The amount collected, I gather, that had been in arrears in fiscal year '97 was \$12

million. At the end of fiscal year March 31, '98, it was \$15.5 million, and year to date, December 31, '98, it was \$19.3 million that has been collected. Some of this would be in arrears for more than one year, so there is an ongoing activity there to measure the number of outstanding accounts, the number of delinquent accounts and the amount that is collected.

Now, I can go through the same for payroll tax. In the year up to March 31, '97 arrears, the number of accounts was 201, and the amount outstanding was \$1.1 million, and the amount collected in fiscal year '97 was \$2.1 million. In fiscal year March 31, '98, there were 170 accounts in arrears. The amount outstanding was almost \$900,000, and the amount collected was \$2.5 million. Year to date, as of December 31, '98, there were 196 accounts in arrears. The amount outstanding is \$1.3 million, and the amount collected was almost \$1.9 million.

Similarly with the corporation capital tax, the number of accounts in arrears as of March 31, '97, was 405 accounts. The amount outstanding was \$2.3 million, and the amount collected was \$1.9 million. Similarly, at the end of fiscal year March 31, '98, there were 623 accounts in arrears. The amount outstanding was \$2.4 million, and the amount collected was \$3.5 million. Year to date, as of December 31, 1998, there were 675 accounts in arrears, \$2.3 million outstanding, and \$1.7 million collected.

Mr. Maloway: Let us just take a look at the sales tax, the RST portion of it. How does this compare to, say, 10 years ago in terms of the arrears? Do we have improvement in the arrears position of the government, or are things pretty static, or have they gotten worse?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I do not have that information at hand here that goes back 10 years. It appears for the years that I have reported on that it is reasonably flat, that there continues to be people who get into arrears because they go out of business or their business is failing. I think the important thing is that we have collections officers who are on the job, and a substantial amount of this at the end of the day is collected.

Maybe further to that I could indicate some of the action presently being taken by Taxation

Division relative to the problems that we have been talking about.

First of all, out-of-province sellers are encouraged to voluntarily register and collect the tax. Some of them do and some of them do not. Secondly, Manitoba businesses bringing equipment and other goods or services from out-of-province sellers for their own use are provided with tax reporting forms and information for self-remitting the tax. However, many businesses fail to self-remit, resulting in a substantial loss of tax revenue, as just a small percentage of them are registered businesses, but they are audited and can be pursued that way.

Under an existing agreement with Revenue Canada, Revenue Canada collects Manitoba's retail sales tax on goods that individuals resident in the province bring through Customs or import by mail or courier. Taxation Division is exploring with Revenue Canada officials the possibility of expanding the process to include sales tax collection from businesses importing goods from outside of Canada.

* (1610)

Under the reciprocal information exchange agreements with the provinces and Revenue Canada, the Taxation Division receives audit listings of out-of-province purchases made by Manitoba businesses and individuals. These listings are generally of higher value goods or when specific projects are undertaken with another province. An interprovincial sales working group, including staff from provincial and federal Finance departments and Revenue Canada, is presently reviewing options to resolve this issue. Discussions to date indicate the likelihood that federal legislation will be required to enable the enforcement of provincial tax collection by out-of-province sellers.

There are currently other initiatives underway to revise the system for collecting taxes on interjurisdictional commercial trucks and buses. I think the member knows from practical experience that a lot of this is done on an honour system. We reference people returning to Canada from other jurisdictions, but we will continue to seek out the best practices that are taking place in other jurisdictions and

also work with other jurisdictions to make our tax collection as complete as possible.

Mr. Maloway: One of the most common complaints we get, particularly from businesses, is the fact that they do not understand how it is that businesses could get behind in the collection and remittance of the sales tax when there is a requirement that it be remitted, I believe, by the 20th of the next month, so there is certainly sufficient time for people to remit their sales tax. The question is: why are your people not making contact with them immediately? As soon as they see there is a problem in late filings, they should be on the case, I would think, at that point in time, rather than letting these arrears pile up.

Most businesses in town would not think of paying their RST a day late, let alone let arrears pile up for months and months and months. So the question is: how do you allow these clients, these customers accounts to get so far behind in the first place? One would think that if a business is properly run that as soon as an account starts getting a little bit late, you move in quickly to assess the exposure and try to work out some sort of arrangements and certainly impress upon them the fact that they are actually violating the law beyond a certain date.

We dealt with this issue a few years back with the Bombay Bicycle Club when they went out of business and left the taxpayer holding a lot of money. We have dealt with this matter in the Al Golden case, with the Transcona Club. You know, it borders on outright theft when businesses take money, when a customer goes to a restaurant or goes to a business and gives them the money, pays the bill, the 7 percent to the government is essentially trust funds, is what it is. It does not belong to the business. It is being collected on behalf of the government of Manitoba, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, so what right does the business have to basically direct this tax money into general revenues of the business and to be using it for other things like paying rent, salaries, trips and other things? Am I right or am I wrong about that?

I mean, this money should be segregated by the business, and it is the province's money. It is not to be spent on other things. It should not be

co-mingled with the general revenues of the business. Do you agree with that, Mr. Minister, or not?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, the member is essentially correct that most businesses are extremely conscientious in remitting their sales tax, and to divert those funds for any other purposes is a mistake. Our collection staff monitor these accounts and have a follow-up process. I see a list every month of those that are in arrears. There are all sorts of reasons, some people might call them excuses, for why this happens. Sometimes it is a long weekend. Sometimes it is human error in postage. The majority of the ones I see are resolved.

There are penalties put in place, and sometimes those penalties are waived because the reason seems plausible, and then time is spent on other cases to try and track this down. In some cases, the money does not get collected, and often it is because somebody has gone into bankruptcy or gone out of business or fled.

Now, when he says that the money should not be co-mingled, I am just curious whether he thinks that businesses maybe should have a separate cash register that tax money goes into, so that it does not touch any other money and that it would go directly to government. I would suggest that maybe he would be adding a burden. But the problem is that everybody, whatever their intentions, does not always get it right, and, as a result, there are people who fall into arrears, and we have a process to deal with that.

We audit these businesses and do assess interest and penalties. We screen applications for registration to ensure that only legitimate businesses receive a registration number. Appropriate instructions to businesses on the proper use of registration numbers are used. Communicating with registrants by mail, telephone and taxation workshops provide information on the correct use of registration numbers, including the cancellation of unnecessary numbers. There is the development of other administration options, including potential enhanced legislation measures to ensure the proper use of these registration numbers.

You end up with a delicate balance. Do you bring the hammer down on somebody in every case and put them out of business? Do you allow them a little latitude to get their business back into condition and the tax paid? You know, I think that the auditors do a reasonably good job in this area, and I am not sure if the member agrees with that or not, but, for sure, when you collect a tax, it should be remitted to government. It happens in most instances, but there are some cases where people run into difficulties. The majority of those cases are resolved, but there still are a few that do not get resolved appropriately.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to correct a misunderstanding that the minister might have. I know he has only been in the job for a few months, but he should be aware that for all of the 400 Autopac agencies, as an example in Manitoba, that his department actually has an account that the Minister of Finance sets up and all sales tax revenue on registered cars in Manitoba is remitted directly into his account, the Minister of Finance account. He should not think that co-mingling is a big deal. The fact of the matter is in that particular type of enterprise, in that particular type of business, 7 percent or whatever it happens to be, is separated off right at the point of sale, right at the very beginning, and it always has been.

I understand if you are in the restaurant business, of course that does not happen. They do not separate it off into a separate account for the government. The fact of the matter is that it is basically money being held in trust for the government, that is what it is. People just do not seem to understand that. Some people just do not seem to understand that. The department should be by way of written letters or face-to-face communications by the Collections staff, the people should be informed that that is not their money to be earning interest off of, investing, playing around with, diverting, using for other means, that it is the Province of Manitoba's money and the fact that they go bankrupt or have financial difficulties has nothing to do with this 7 percent. This money is held in trust and has to go to you by the 20th of every month, and that is the way the system should work. If you establish that, and I am sure

you are, I am sure that is being done, you should eliminate some of these problems.

* (1620)

I know that from having talked to people within your staff, there have been suggestions over the years that the staff goes easy or that the management shows some favouritism or goes easy on some businesses as opposed to others. That is an allegation that has been made, for example, in the case of the Bombay Bicycle Club and in the case of the Transcona Golf and Country Club and other such names that it operated under. Why was this person able to go, basically, take you people for a ride for so long? How did that happen? Clearly it had to be a problem at the top with a lack of direction as to being told to leave this account alone or do not go hard on that account. I am just giving you, that is the concern that was voiced to me by people working in the department. Now, that may be correct, it may not be correct; their interpretation may not be correct. The point is at the end of the day I see lists every year here where you people write off uncollected sales tax. We have to admit that does happen. The question is: why does it continue to happen? You can hire staff; you can train staff; you can have the best computer system and still we have an arrears. That is why I ask: how bad is it today versus what it was like, say, 10 years ago? Are we getting better or is it just carrying on the way it has?

I do not have any answers for the minister on this question. I just ask what the current status and update is of this arrears problem.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I get the sense that the member is saying we are not harsh enough. I am just wondering if he would think that maybe some jail terms would be appropriate and tougher punishment for people who run into trouble here.

Mr. Maloway: The minister is starting to play games again. This is the same kind of discussion and debate we had way back in 1991, when the government was caught with its pants down, when it was failing to take action against Bombay Bicycle Club and other companies that were in arrears, and suggested that it was being

deliberately politically motivated by friends of this government, they came back with the same line the minister is using right now: oh, well, we do not want to be pushing people into bankruptcy.

Well, in that case the place was bankrupt at the time anyway. The thing was already over the edge. I understand their sensitivities. I understand that you do not want to be pushing people into bankruptcy especially if the economy is bad. The economy is supposed to be good now, if you listen to this government in their daily announcements and forecasts and promises. The reality is that clearly there is a misunderstanding on the part of some businesses when they do not remit their sales tax at the proper times and they leave the taxpayers with unpaid sales taxes. I know that the average Manitoban would not agree with what the minister is saying, that people should be just allowed to pay their sales tax whenever they feel like paying it, because that is what he is saying.

Point of Order

Mr. Gilleshammer: The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) ought not to try and put words in my mouth. I did not say that at all. I said our staff are very vigilant in dealing with people who fall into arrears and that there is a process to deal with these people and that there are consequences. The member, in trying to characterize my comments, is dead wrong. It is an ongoing effort of taxation administration to ensure that the legislation and related regulations and procedures are effectively communicated and understood by individuals responsible for collecting the retail sales tax.

I think we have done a good job of that. The number of people that have uncollectible accounts, when you do an interprovincial comparison, Manitoba stacks up very well. I would offer that Manitoba has a better record than Ontario in this respect, and there are statistics which would show that.

If the member is going to bring specific issues, I do not intend to get into discussing specific businesses here other than to say that I think the department has done a very good job of dealing with this area. We have new staff. We

are doing more training. It is an ongoing process. There are always, there always have been people who are in arrears. They are dealt with. There are consequences.

I think what the member is saying is that we should take a zero-tolerance approach to this and put people out of business the first time that they fall into arrears. I do not think that is workable. The reasons I have seen for people failing to have their retail sales tax money in on time vary from month to month, and most of them are quite legitimate. The penalty is forgiven, and often it is the first time that they have ever been in arrears. I think they are dealt with in a responsible manner by the officials in the Taxation Division.

Mr. Chairperson: I believe that the point of order raised was simply a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: I wanted to ask the minister, when he said that there were a handful of systems that were built in parallel and Y2K, could he give me a list of those systems where the government basically bought brand-new Y2K compliant software and spent additional monies updating the old system that will die, I guess, on January 1?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I thank the honourable member for that question. I know that he wants a reasonably detailed answer, and I will commit to getting him that information in due course. As soon as we have an opportunity to compile it, we will pass it on to the honourable member.

Mr. Maloway: I have a final question for the minister, and it has to do with the whole business of payment of, well, say, sales tax or any type of taxes to the government. He knows that the income tax department has an e-filing system where your accountant can file your taxes by e-mail, and so can people individually. The question is where is the government at right now with regard to the Department of Finance and the ability to pay your different types of taxes to the government over the Internet in a form of Internet banking? I am referring here to sales tax, corporation capital, the whole range of provincial taxes.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told that a project of this nature is underway and that some time in the year 2000 that will be ready for rollout within government.

Mr. Maloway: I would like the minister to clarify his answer a little bit further. I mean, specifically, what types of taxes will be able to be paid, and what method will be used?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would get that information for my honourable friend.

* (1630)

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): As I understand, we have a limited amount of time, so I have three or four questions. Ten minutes is it, approximately?

Mr. Gilleshammer: What time do we finish?

An Honourable Member: 4:44 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: That is the final time, yes.

Mr. Gilleshammer: But before that, we have to pass these lines.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. What we have done in this committee, and in my committee in the past has been the agreement between the minister and the critics which was to say, yes, we will have far-reaching questions, we will not be following line by line, and so on, and for that, we are going to give you enough time to pass these lines at the end of our questioning.

That is up to you. [interjection] Well, if you want to run the full time, then I guess the— [interjection] Well, the point that I make to you now is as a Chairperson here, okay? I have allowed that to happen with the understanding that these lines would be passed prior to it being finished. Now, if you— [interjection] Before 4:44.

Point of Order

Mr. L. Evans: I seek clarification, but I think once you reach the deadline, then time is allowed to automatically pass them. That is my

understanding, so I do not think it is a problem. We are wasting all our time on this.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. As I have said, I gave that to the committee—

An Honourable Member: We understand; we understand.

Mr. Chairperson: No, I do not think you do quite, with this being that I said that indeed there would be time to pass these lines, and that was the understanding in these committees that I have chaired all along. Now, if this is going to be a change, that is fine, but then there would be a change down the line, too.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Might I suggest that we pass a number of the lines at this time, and we can still have this general discussion under the Minister's Salary?

Mr. L. Evans: Well, I am not clear. As I understand it, once we have run out of time, there are no further questions, and we still have to pass the resolutions. Normally, when you run out of time, then the Chair says we have run out of time, and now it is time we can pass resolutions.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I explained in these committees that I am chairing and have chaired for a number of years now what the practice has been. Simply being, that the minister and the critics agreed to have far-ranging questions, and with that they would have time to pass those lines prior to the time being called.

Now, if you are going to change that, that is fine. I can take that.

* * *

Mr. L. Evans: Well, I have a question for the minister on floating new bond issues. I wonder if he could update us.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The member for Brandon East is going to continue to ask questions until 4:44 p.m. Okay.

Mr. L. Evans: I wonder if the minister could update us on the situation of floating or selling

Manitoba bonds. What is the capital market like? What are the rates of interest that we are looking at now for any new bond issues?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend will appreciate that we were asked to bring staff here to deal with Y2K issues, and the staff from the Treasury Division are not present today because our understanding was we would be spending the day, the rest of the time, but I will take the question as notice and take it back to my staff and get him a reasonably definitive answer on that.

Mr. L. Evans: I would look forward to that information, particularly interest rates that we may be looking at right now.

I understood that we had a little more flexibility, realizing that the computer technology would take a lot of time, but I had hoped not all the time.

At any rate, another question, tobacco interdiction, this has been a burning question over the years as to whether it is even legal to do it or constitutional to do it. I do not disagree with the objectives. They are admirable objectives. But I was wondering again whether the minister could give us an update. I see there are 10 staff employed at doing this. I am wondering: to what extent are we successful? It may be difficult to measure that.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Again, we did have some wide-ranging discussions on smuggling earlier and the collection of taxes. The fact of the matter is, it does continue. There are staff that are dedicated specifically to the tobacco side of it.

The member will recall, I am sure, that when eastern provinces, to resolve some other issues that were prevalent in their provinces, they drastically reduced the taxation on tobacco. It is a delicate balance of what you are achieving. I think that while it may have stopped some smuggling into Ontario and Quebec, it also creates the problem where young people have cheaper access to tobacco. I do not agree with that.

I think what they should have done was resolve their problems with the smuggling that

was going on in Ontario and Quebec and maintain the taxation on their cigarettes, because I think there is a greater need and a greater challenge to keep tobacco out of the hands of young people.

I think in Manitoba there is fairly widespread agreement on that, that if you make that product readily available to young people—I mean, we all see young people who are smoking, and we know what the health risks are—I would argue that they may be trying to solve one problem, but they are creating a larger one.

* (1640)

Manitoba ended up being the focal point of this issue. I do believe I have heard that we get support from the other western provinces to try and stop this problem at the Ontario border. We do have a number of investigators who work near the Ontario border. I am told that to date Manitoba's investigative staff have conducted over 3,000 checks of retail businesses, and 346 of these have been noncompliant. Charges have been preferred in 276 instances, and 41 young offenders and 29 adults have been warned. Individual penalties assessed so far have ranged from absolute discharges to \$500 fines.

We have some experienced investigators who have been hired on a casual basis. They are funded through federal and provincial Health to implement a program to discourage minors from smoking. We have put in place investigators. They have seized a lot of product. I am told there are upwards of 10 additional staff that were hired in 1994 on a term basis and three investigators who were seconded from Revenue Canada excise to work and enforce The Tobacco Tax Act.

So this has been a major issue, and a lot of product has been seized. To date, this taxation special investigations have seized upwards of 50,000 cartons of smuggled cigarettes and a million and a half grams of fine-cut tobacco—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, I was just in the middle of it.

Mr. Chairperson: I am very sorry. Order, please. I am interrupting the proceedings of this

section of the Committee of Supply because the total time allowed for Estimates' consideration has now expired. Our Rule 71.(1) provides in part that not more than 240 hours shall be allowed for the consideration in Committee of the Whole of the Ways and Means and Supply resolutions respecting all types of Estimates and relevant Supply bills.

Our Rule 71.(3) provides that where the time limit has expired, the Chairperson shall forthwith put all remaining questions necessary to dispose of the matter, and all such questions shall not be subject to debate, amendment or adjournment. I am therefore going to call in sequence the questions on the following matters: Finance, Resolution 7.1 to 7.10; Enabling Appropriations, Resolutions 26.1 to 26.4; Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities, Resolution 27.4; Capital Investments, Resolutions, B.1 to B.8; Capital Initiatives, Resolutions 27.5; Millennium Fund, Resolution 27.6; Northern Affairs, Resolutions 19.1 to 19.4; Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Resolutions 5.1 to 5.4; Agriculture, Resolutions 3.1 to 3.2 and 3.4 to 3.9; Children and Youth Secretariat, Resolutions 34.1 to 34.3.

We will now proceed with calling each resolution.

Resolution 7.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,128,200 for Finance, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,831,600 for Finance, Treasury, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,706,900 for Finance, Comptroller, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$15,393,500 for Finance, Taxation, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,910,300 for Finance, Federal-Provincial Relations and Research, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$355,800 for Finance, Insurance and Risk Management, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,260,900 for Finance, Treasury Board Secretariat, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,549,800 for Finance, Office of Information Technology, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$785,800 for Finance, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.10: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$181,800,000 for Finance, Net Tax Credit Payments, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Enabling Resolutions.

Resolution 26.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$16,330,800 for Enabling Appropriations, Canada-Manitoba Enabling Vote, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution 26.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,400,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, for the

fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution 26.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,500,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Justice Initiatives, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution 26.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,000,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Other Appropriations.

Resolution 27.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$775,000 for Other Appropriations, Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Capital Investment.

Resolution B.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,000 for Capital Investment, Agriculture, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution B.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,710,000 for Capital Investment, Family Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution B.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,400,000 for Capital Investment, Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

* (1650)

Resolution B.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$40,700,000 for Capital Investment, Government Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution B.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,700,000 for the Capital Investment, Health, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution B.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,453,800 for Capital Investment, Highways and Transportation, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed]

Resolution B.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$280,000 for Capital Investment, Natural Resources, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March of 2000. [passed] [interjection]

Order, please. If you wish to carry on a conversation, do it over there, please.

Resolution B.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$34,000,000 for Capital Investment, Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Other Appropriations.

Resolution 27.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$55,000,000 for Other Appropriations, Capital Initiatives, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 27.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,000,000 for Other Appropriations, Millennium Fund, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Northern Affairs.

Resolution 19.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$511,400 for Northern Affairs Executive, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 19.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,987,200 for Northern Affairs Operations, for

the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 19.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,614,600 for Northern Affairs, Capital Grants, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Is it the will of the committee to carry on and finish these resolutions?

Mr. L. Evans: Yes, I agree we should quickly finish these resolutions.

Mr. Chairperson: Agreed? The committee has agreed. We shall continue.

Resolution 19.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$126,400 for Northern Affairs, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Resolution 5.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,162,300 for Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 5.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,577,600 for Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Consumer Affairs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 5.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,382,400 for Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Corporate Affairs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 5.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$206,600 for Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Agriculture.

Resolution 3.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$2,692,800 for Agriculture, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 3.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$53,412,600 for Agriculture, Risk Management and Income Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 3.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,214,600 for Agriculture, Agricultural Development and Marketing, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 3.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$14,244,100 for Agriculture, Regional Agricultural Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 3.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,297,200 for Agriculture, Policy and Economics, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 3.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,900,800 for Agriculture, Agriculture Research and Development, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 3.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,000,000 for Agriculture, Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 3.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$743,100 for Agriculture, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Children and Youth Secretariat.

Resolution 34.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$685,800 for Children and Youth Secretariat, Children and Youth Secretariat, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 34.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,388,000 for Children and Youth Secretariat, ChildrenFirst Initiatives, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 34.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$37,000 for Children and Youth Secretariat, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

This section of the committee only rise.

* * *

* (1740)

Mr. Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. As constituted in the House, we will reconvene here in this portion of the Committee of Supply to go through these resolutions, and we will start off with the Finance Resolutions 7.1 to 7.10.

Resolution 7.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,128,200 for Finance, Administration and Finance.

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): When you are talking, the resolution that you are talking about having passed right now, is that for the Department of Finance?

Mr. Chairperson: That is.

Mr. Lamoureux: Okay.

Mr. Chairperson: It is, but we have stopped all questions and everything. We were passing the resolutions now.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Resolution 7.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not

exceeding \$1,128,200 for Finance, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000.

Shall the resolution pass?

An Honourable Member: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of passing this resolution, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those against, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would ask for a recorded vote in the Chamber.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Inkster needs a second member to support it.

Mr. Lamoureux: It was indicated to me that we did not need a second person in the committee.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the honourable member for Inkster have a second member to support the request for a recorded vote? Seeing that the member does not have, his request is out of order.

The resolution stands as passed.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: I do know that in standing committees you can move a motion. Earlier this morning I moved a motion, and I did not require a seconder. I just want to be 100 percent certain that a seconder is not required, because I know the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) also wants this to be a recorded vote. It is important to both of us. I would ask that if there is any other member then that would be prepared to allow—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The request that he is talking about from before is definitely entirely different from this one. This particular recorded vote needs two members, which you do not have.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Resolution 7.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,831,600 for Finance, Treasury, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,706,900 for Finance, Comptroller, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,393,500 for Finance, Taxation, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,910,300 for Finance, Federal-Provincial Relations and Research, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$355,800 for Finance, Insurance and Risk Management, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,260,900 for Finance, Treasury Board Secretariat, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Resolution 7.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,549,800 for Finance, Office of Information Technology, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2000. [passed]

Point of Order

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): On a point of order. Just on a point of clarification, are these resolutions that we are going through right now resolutions that were passed while the bells were ringing?

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The Clerk and myself as the Chair are not 100 percent sure of where we were when the bells started to ring. So we are redoing them all to be sure that we have them. At this point I would say to everybody, I cannot or I am not supposed to go into any more discussion on this, so I will have to proceed with the resolutions.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Just then as a point of clarification then, the process is that you have to go through all of those that you passed while the bells were ringing, but then what happens with the rest of the resolutions that have not been dealt with? I guess the issue for me is the Children and Youth Secretariat which we have not had.

Mr. Chairperson: I will try and be more clear. I am going through the whole list of resolutions which includes those particular Estimates. I started at Finance and I am going through the whole works of them. So rest assured that I will be passing those particular Estimates.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And that is what you are doing right now.

Mr. Chairperson: That is what I am doing right now. We will recess for a recorded vote in the Assembly.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The time being six o'clock, committee rise.

* * *

* (1650)

Report

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in

Room 254): Mr. Chairman, in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254, the vote was called on Resolution 4.1. Justice, Administration and Finance. A voice vote was held, whereupon a count-out for a vote was requested.

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

* (1730)

Committee will come to order. In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254, the vote was called on Resolution 4.1, Justice, Administration and Finance. A voice vote was held, whereupon a recorded vote was requested.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 25, Nays 21.

Mr. Chairperson: The Yeas have it. The resolution is accordingly—

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Just on a point of order, I understand that there were resolutions that were still being passed while the bells were ringing. Can we just get clarification in terms of what committee is in which room?

Mr. Chairperson: I will do that in a minute.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Can I just finish this resolution, please? The resolution is accordingly passed.

* * *

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): On that same point of order, I will be seeking, and do at this time, leave for that committee. When we go back in the House, I will be seeking leave for committee in Room 255 to reconvene to reconsider those resolutions, given that there were concerns about—254?—in

254 for them to reconsider those resolutions because they were passed when the bells were, in fact, ringing.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On the point of order, I think the member for Inkster has a correct point of order. I would suggest that we have a ruling that those motions were passed improperly. The section of committee does not have the ability to override the rules. The House itself, by leave, can vary from the rules, but a section of committee. So what we have to do at this point in time, I think, is accept the point of order and then accept the proposal from the government House leader, just to be on the safe side.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, to be on the safe side, the committee in Room 254 is still constituted at this time, so 254 will go back. This committee will rise, and the House leader will then make the request to the House that committee 255 will resume.

An Honourable Member: What department have they started?

Mr. Chairperson: Room 255 is on Finance, I believe.

An Honourable Member: That is finished.

Mr. Chairperson: No, you are not finished. We are going to reconstitute it. You are not done yet, so 255 is going to be going back in.

Mr. Ashton: Those resolutions were not passed properly. We are going to redo them.

Mr. Chairperson: Because the bells were ringing at the time. So this committee is now rising. This section of the committee is rising. Committee rise.

Section 254, you can go back. Call in the Speaker. Section 255 will go back when she is done.

IN SESSION

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): On House business, given that this is a

rather unique situation, that it does not happen regularly, while we are sitting in the Chamber—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing difficulty hearing the honourable government House leader.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, because this is a rather unique situation, where we are sitting in the Chamber and Committee of Supply in two sections at the same time, I would ask, first of all, leave for committees to continue to sit in both 254 and 255 to continue their work on the consideration of Estimates.

I would ask, since we did have a ruling in committee, that the section in 255 will reconsider those resolutions that were put to it while the bells were ringing in committee.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the two sections of Committee of Supply that were previously sitting in Rooms 254 and 255 to reconvene at this time in those respective committee rooms? [agreed]

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I would ask as well that, first of all, Madam Speaker perhaps will not see the clock at this time, and rather than go into private members' hour, I would ask if we could continue with debate on second reading of Bill 38, The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act, and then I will have some announcements with respect to committee.

One right now is the Committee on Municipal Affairs. It was scheduled to meet at 5 p.m. If it could then meet following the completion of Estimates in Room 255.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the Speaker not to see the clock and to revert to Orders of the Day, specifically debate on second reading of Bill 38? [agreed]

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 38—The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on second reading of Bill 38, The Registered

Psychiatric Nurses Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières psychiatriques), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): My colleague the member for Kildonan has a number of comments with respect to this bill, and I would yield the floor to him at this time so that he might represent our viewpoints.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): As we suggested on the previous bills, of course, we are in support of this bill. We will look for expeditious passage of this bill because we basically see it as part of a three-part package.

I am very pleased that our discussion this afternoon has prompted debate in this Legislature. I cannot recall when Conservative members have got up to actually talk positively about health bills in my tenure in this Chamber because normally they have been on the defensive and normally they have been unwilling to defend the government's action as it relates to health care. So it is nice to see that we could all join and talk about something positive for a change with respect to health care, and subject, of course, to the caveats that, if re-elected, whether or not the government will fulfill its commitment or it will revert to its pattern of making promises during an election campaign to be followed by, if re-elected, conveniently forgetting those promises and then proceeding to act like the Conservative Party that has ruled this province, unfortunately, with difficulty in health care for the past 11 years.

As I indicated before, it is indeed a positive step when the Conservative government recognizes the role and function of nurses in this province. I am glad. It is the first time in four and a half years since the last election that the government has actually acknowledged the role and function of nurses, be it through the act relating to registered nurses, the act relating to LPNs, and now the act before us of The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act. As I said in the previous bills, there is no problem from this side of the House. We welcome this initiative. We have been pushing for these initiatives. We have been pushing for a number of years to try to somehow get the government to recognize the important role and function the nurses play in the health care field.

* (1740)

You know, Madam Speaker, I have to respond to some of the comments of the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), who, like government members opposite, illogically talks about and says, on the one hand, oh, all you New Democrats want to do is throw money at the problem, and then says in a week, look, we have thrown money at the problem. You know it is contradictory. The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) talked about all of the money going into home care, for example. You know the member for Emerson ought to know that only in the last two years, and after much prodding by members on this side of the House, has the actual caseloads in home care expanded. This, despite the fact that \$150 million a year was taken out of the health care, out of the hospital sector, and people were left with nowhere to go. And that has been part of the problem.

Part of the problem is, and it has been told from the very beginning, if you are going to cut acute care facilities, then you ought to expand the community-based facilities, and that has not happened. Not only did they cut acute care, they cut the community-based services. So we were faced in this province with the worst of all worlds, and on top of it and more to the point, dealing with this bill, nurses have been made unwelcome, unwanted in Manitoba. So I welcome the initiative on the part of the government to actually recognize the role and function of nurses. I hope that it is not just a conversion for purposes of re-election; I hope it is meaningful. I hope that, as I said in my previous comments, this goes a little way towards restoring confidence in the health care system and confidence amongst nurses and the nursing profession, that there is a place for them in Manitoba, that we welcome their input. I hope that it is not just that this will be forgotten by the government after the bill is passed.

Hope springs eternal from this side of the House. We have been supportive of these measures for some time. We welcome this act, and again I suspect and suggest that this will be unanimously passed by this Chamber. It will be a recognition to all nurses, be it LPNs, be it RNs, or be it RPNs, that finally after 11 years in Manitoba, after 11 years, there is the beginning

on the part of the government to recognize the importance of nurses, and that perhaps we can start to restore confidence amongst the nursing profession and ultimately amongst the public that the health care system, which has been in absolute chaos in this province, particularly the past five or six years, can begin to heal itself. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading, Bill 38, The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I would like to announce that Bills 36, 37 and 38 are being referred to the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations which is sitting tomorrow evening, Wednesday, at 7 p.m., and also hearing another bill as well, so that will put four bills into that committee.

I look to the Clerk's table. Has a recorded vote been requested?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

I will just make the announcement regarding the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations as scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday, July 7, 7 p.m., will also deal with Bills 36, 37 and 38.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I see the Chair of the committee arriving, and I have been informed by one of the pages that a recorded vote has been requested in committee.

Madam Speaker, I would then move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pitura), that the Chamber, by leave, resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Most Gracious Majesty.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**Report**

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254): Mr. Chairman, in the section of the Committee of Supply sitting in Room 254 the question was put on Resolution 8.1. Administration, Government Services. A voice vote was held whereupon a counted vote was requested and members were asked to proceed to the Chamber.

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): A recorded vote being requested, call in the members.

In the section of the Committee of Supply sitting in Room 254, the question was put on Resolution 8.1. Administration, Government Services. A voice vote was held whereupon a counted vote was requested and members were asked to proceed to the Chamber for the vote.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 39, Nays 2.

Mr. Chairperson: The Yeas have it. The resolution is accordingly passed.

The two committees will resume in their perspective until the hour being six o'clock.

So this committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION**House Business**

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs which was called for five o'clock, given the fact that now the hour is around 6 p.m., we will cancel that meeting for today and reschedule it for tomorrow afternoon, after I have had a chance to confer as to time with the opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton). So that is cancelled for this evening.

Madam Speaker, I believe you can now see the clock, it being 6 p.m.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, previously scheduled for 5 p.m. this evening, has been cancelled and will be rescheduled tomorrow.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 6, 1999

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