



First Session — Thirty-Fourth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

37 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fourth Legislature**

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIBERAL
ANGUS, John	St. Norbert	LIBERAL
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BURRELL, Parker	Swan River	PC
CARR, James	Fort Rouge	LIBERAL
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIBERAL
CHARLES, Gwen	Selkirk	LIBERAL
CHEEMA, Gulzar	Kildonan	LIBERAL
CHORNOPYSKI, William	Burrows	LIBERAL
CONNERY, Edward Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
COWAN, Jay	Churchill	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose du Lac	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James Hon.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Emerson	PC
DRIEDGER, Herold, L.	Niakwa	LIBERAL
DUCHARME, Gerald, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIBERAL
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Laurie	Fort Garry	LIBERAL
EVANS, Leonard	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen Hon.	Virten	PC
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIBERAL
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Ellice	LIBERAL
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HEMPHILL, Maureen	Logan	NDP
KOZAK, Richard, J.	Transcona	LIBERAL
LAMOUREUX, Kevin, M.	Inkster	LIBERAL
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANDRAKE, Ed	Assiniboia	LIBERAL
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
McCRAE, James Hon.	Brandon West	PC
MINENKO, Mark	Seven Oaks	LIBERAL
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
OLESON, Charlotte Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald Hon.	Pembina	PC
PANKRATZ, Helmut	La Verendrye	PC
PATTERSON, Allan	Radisson	LIBERAL
PENNER, Jack, Hon.	Rhineland	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
ROCH, Gilles	Springfield	LIBERAL
ROSE, Bob	St. Vital	LIBERAL
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
TAYLOR, Harold	Wolseley	LIBERAL
URUSKI, Bill	Interlake	NDP
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
YEO, Iva	Sturgeon Creek	LIBERAL

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 8, 1988.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs): I am pleased to table a review of the Native Affairs Secretariat for the Province of Manitoba.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the public gallery where we have from the St. John's High School, forty-four Grade 9 students under the direction of Pat Chelock. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Deficit Forecast Program Cuts

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Yesterday, the Minister of Finance tabled his Financial Report for the Second Quarter of this year. In it, we discovered that the deficit will now be reduced by another \$19 million. That should give them all the opportunity to clap, Mr. Speaker.

Now that we have that over with, Mr. Speaker, the Minister attributes his success of controlling the deficit with a sound sense of management. There is just one little minor problem and that is that of course good management implies the ability to project spending with some degree of certainty. The Minister's projections on expenditures are so far off the mark as to create a great deal of uncertainty as to whether vital programs and services are indeed being cut without the knowledge of the Members of this Legislative Assembly.

So my specific question then to the Minister is - (Interjection)- will you stop the giggling? Where exactly and from what specific departments, Mr. Minister, through the Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Which just proves, Mr. Speaker, the bigger they are the harder they fall.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

* (1335)

Mrs. Carstairs: Seriously now, Mr. Speaker, can the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) tell us today specifically what departments he anticipates the addition of \$14.5 million of savings will come from?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not quite know who is under attack here, myself or the Member from Osborne (Mr. Alcock). Let me say that a \$20 million forecasted reduction in deficit at this point in time is not a minor problem in our view. In our view, it is a recognition that we have been doing some good management on this side since we have been in Government. It is a recognition that the word "management" means something and that the people of Manitoba, we are sure, will be very happy with those results.

Mr. Speaker, again I indicate to the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) that these are unaudited figures, indeed that people should not read everything or nothing into them, because it represents a cut-off at a point in time—in this case, September 30. There were large payments made right thereafter, as a matter of fact, in some departments in the first week in October. So I would not read an awful lot into the numbers other than this, that certainly we are almost certain at this point in time that come the end of this fiscal year there will be a reduction in the forecasted deficit from the \$196 million that came in on August 8, during the Budget.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, we have a serious problem, because he is willing to be specific about the fact that we are going to have a \$20 million deficit reduction above and beyond what he projected, but he is not willing to tell us where it comes from. Now, we want some assurances today, Mr. Speaker, from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that the \$39 million reduction in the first six months in the Health budget are not coming from vital services required by the citizens of this particular province, particularly in the home care field.

Mr. Manness: Well, let me say the six-month saving, a reduction in spending, from that forecasted area of the Department of Health, of some \$39 million was almost taken up completely the first week in October by way of a major payment to the Health Services Commission.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can say I will tell the Member that the reason the deficit forecast is down is mainly in the area of debt payment costs. The Canadian dollar is strengthened and that is certainly going to help our situation accordingly. Also, there are revenues that are flowing in at a rate a little bit higher than expected.

Community Services Cuts

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, he cannot take credit for the financial, national and international money markets. We want to know where those deficits cuts are coming from and we want some assurances today that they are not coming from vital areas of community services which we have watched be cut from everything from provincial services to transportation services for seniors. We want to know why he can forecast a \$20 million deficit in saving and yet cannot tell us where it is coming from.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would have been happy to have forecasted a \$20 million deficit. I am forecasting a \$196 million deficit reduced today to a \$175 million deficit. I can tell the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) that certainly all of the Estimates that received ratification in this House, particularly in the Department of Community Services, will all be expended, and indeed there will probably be Supplementary Supply required for spending beyond the Estimates that have been supported and approved in this House.

* (1340)

Native Justice Inquiry Gag Orders

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, with a new question.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a new question, this time to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), on November 3, I expressed my grave concern and that of my Party regarding allegations to gag orders having been issued to both provincial and federal public servants warning them not to testify before the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. We were reassured by the First Minister that the provincial employees were free to testify openly and to express their opinions and for this I thank the Premier as did the people of this province.

The First Minister, however, on the same day also indicated that he believed that federal civil servants were also not inhibited from testifying. Did the First Minister on November 3 write, as he said he would, to the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and, if he did, what response did he get with regard to his inquiry that federal civil servants in no way be gagged from appearing before the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did as I indicated write to the federal Minister of Indian Affairs. The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that there was a federal election campaign on and that federal Ministers were not at their desks and were not carrying out their responsibilities. I will check into my files to see what response I received but I would assume that the response that I received would be from a staff member saying it would be brought to the Minister's attention after the election campaign was over and, under those circumstances, the Leader of the

Opposition would know full well that I have carried out my responsibilities and therefore it is the responsibility of the federal Department of Indian Affairs to clarify and ensure that all of their employees like all of our provincial employees have the right and the responsibility to share what information with the inquiry that is pertinent to the inquiry itself.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, will the First Minister today or tomorrow, but no later than tomorrow, contact the federal Minister and express in the gravest terms his objections to any form of gag order put on federal public servants in this province?

Mr. Filmon: I will follow through on that matter as quickly as possible because I believe that it is important to the ultimate outcome of the inquiry that all those who have a role to play, who have information and concerns to share with the inquiry be given full and complete jurisdiction and authority to go before that inquiry and make their views known. I will follow up as quickly as possible with the federal Minister to ensure that he is aware of my concerns that his staff not in any way be inhibited from appearing before that committee.

Civil Servant Discipline

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, with a final supplementary question to the First Minister, will he also at that time seek the written assurance from the federal Minister as he gave to our provincial employees—and for that we thank him—that no employees, no federal employees will be disciplined or reprimanded for expressing their personal opinions to the commission?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the federal Minister, made aware of the circumstances and being made aware of our concerns, will ensure that those people are encouraged to go before the committee. That, in and of itself I would think, implies that they have the full support of the federal Minister and his colleagues.

Ruttan Mine—Leaf Rapids Accountability

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery). The Minister yesterday had an on-site inspection of the Leaf Rapids site, of the site of the fire which he described on media as a very big one, I believe was the comment. It is a serious issue of course and the residents adjacent to the area are concerned about it. They are concerned about the change in the wind direction in the area. The travelling public are very concerned about that fire. The workers' pay may be affected in a negative way or may not. Certainly their health is at risk and 21 have already been to the hospital. I would ask the Minister, in light of his work in this area in the last three days, who does the Minister hold accountable for this tragic event that has taken place in Leaf Rapids?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, there is

no question as to who set the fire. The company does not quarrel that they set the fire. There is no question that it was set by the company.

* (1345)

Environment Act Breach—Ruttan Mine

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Yesterday, the Minister was quoted as saying the company did nothing wrong and The Environment Act, Section 98(88)(r), the regulations passed February 20, 1988, prescribed that liquid waste under The Environment Act must be locked and under the control of an operator. Under The Dangerous Goods and Transportation Act passed regulations May 25, 1985, require that PCBs, cyanide and other chemicals that are classified as dangerous goods and cannot be disposed of in a dump site. Can the Minister please inform this House if in his opinion the company has breached the Act in two places in terms of their action in this regard?

Hon. Edward Connerly (Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, I had very intensive discussions with many groups of people up at Leaf Rapids and at the mine yesterday. Of course the current company just took over the mine in July of this year. They did peruse their records and they will admit that there are something like 21 capacitors over previous years and before that PCBs were considered to be a hazardous good and were disposed of in landfill areas.

Yes, there are 21 capacitors containing somewhere between one and two litres of—and they do not even know what level of contamination with PCBs is in the 80 million tonnes of rock that is there and is not accessible to the fire. The company will also admit that there could be a few ballasts from lighting fixtures that have maybe an ounce of oil in them and the degree of PCB contamination is not known.

Charges—Ruttan Mine

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Environment. He has the power under the Act to proceed with charges if a company does break the law. Is the Minister satisfied or is he confident as we are that the company did break the law, and is he going to proceed with charges pursuant to the powers that he has in both Acts that I quoted?

Hon. Edward Connerly (Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, whether the company broke the law or not would be subject to some debate. According to the regulations, the site is a Class 3 site, and at a Class 3 site burning is allowed. After November 16, they may start a fire up in the North and it can burn until some time in mid-March where that is allowed. The company contacted two Government departments as far as the regulations are concerned, and as far as the departments that were

concerned is that they were within their right to do it. I can assure you if the company could go back and stop that fire or not have started it they would. They recognize the error of having done it but to this point we have no way of determining whether this is an illegal fire.

When I was up there I requested that our Environment staff take samples of the material around the intake fan for the ventilation of the mine so that we would have samples. They are at the Ward Lab. They came in last night on the plane with us and they went straight to the Ward Lab. We have asked our people at the lab to give us the quickest information on what could be in the smoke that is coming out of that fire. Hopefully some time tomorrow we will have the results of maybe two things that they are looking at initially, cyanide and PCBs, to see if they were in that smoke.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, under the same regulation, I quoted under The Environment Act it is illegal to burn any material that contains rubber tires. Under that regulation and under the other section of the Act dealing with the dangerous goods, it is illegal to dispose of materials that the Minister has mentioned and that we have confirmed in a dump at this site.

My question to the Minister is, what legal action will his department proceed with given the fact that the law is very strong in this regard, and what action will he take given the fact that it is a precedent that sends out a dangerous signal to other companies if there is not strong and consistent and accountable action taken on behalf of the Government dealing with these very serious issues that are facing our citizens?

Mr. Connerly: Mr. Speaker, until all of the tests and investigations are conducted, we do not know if there is a requirement to lay charges under the Act. If something has been done that is not in conjunction with the Act then we would examine laying charges. Allegations of what is in that dump can be made. The Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) made the allegation that there was anywhere from 500 to 1,000 gallons of PCB laden oil put into that dump site. Mr. Speaker, the company has gone back through all of their records. The only PCB oil was in the capacitors, in the big buckets, that were digging. I had a long discussion with the company officials. They went back through their records to check and that is what they told me, and I have no reason to believe otherwise, but there were only 21 capacitors that were put within the 80 million tons of rock.

* (1350)

City of Winnipeg Urban Limit Line

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): We have seen this Government's concern regarding urban sprawl particularly as it applies to Headingley. After analyzing the request from the City of Winnipeg, the Government decided to reject the city's request to expand the urban development line and we, on this side of the House, applaud that decision. That is on the one hand, Mr. Speaker.

On the other hand, we see another department within the Government allowing expansion within a very short distance of the Perimeter Highway. We see hundreds of houses being built a few minutes from the Perimeter Highway in La Salle, Manitoba, not very far from my constituency.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): In mine.

Mr. Angus: Thank you. My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings)—and it is quite a legitimate question; I do not see any need for heckling. My question, Mr. Speaker, is how does the Minister square the continued building of houses so close to the city with the apparent policy containment of urban sprawls from Urban Affairs, and what information does the Minister have concerning the City of Winnipeg's continued concerns about the additional zone and the green belt around the Perimeter?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): Any development outside of the Perimeter, whether it is within 10 or 15 miles, or 150 miles, has to meet the restrictions of development in those areas.

The Member opposite questions what are the concerns regarding the green belt and the add zone around—I believe he is referring to the add zone around the edges of the city—and, frankly, that is a serious concern that planning is in fact very difficult to get coordinated in those areas. In fact, it has been part of discussions between the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) and myself. If he is indicating that he supports the removal or further control in that zone, I would be interested in his comments.

Rural Development Required Services Costs

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Will the Minister advise the House of the results of cost justification studies that have identified required police services, library schools, garbage collections and so forth for the up to 200 houses that are being proposed within seven or eight miles from the border of the City of Winnipeg?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): If the Member opposite is indicating that any municipality that is within driving distance of the City of Winnipeg is not entitled to some growth and expansion, then I think he is on the wrong side of the issue. All of the development is subject to the planning controls that are in place in that district and they are in fact very strict. The Department of Municipal Affairs is under constant pressure to restrict development in many areas where there is agricultural property, where there are flood-prone districts, and I am quite surprised at the approach that the Member is taking.

* (1355)

Headingley Development Study

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): I appreciate what the Minister is saying, Mr. Speaker. My concerns are that this Government does not seem to have a handle on the additional zone or the construction or the cost of development, his vis-a-vis planning and whatnot.

Will the Minister advise us how he is going to get and balance the right to farm legislation, the urban sprawl and the cost to the taxpayers of Manitoba to provide the required services that go with a development of that nature?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Member is demonstrating a very severe lack of understanding of what the people of rural Manitoba want. They would like some opportunity to participate in growth and expansion of this province. If he thinks the planning department in my department is somehow acting in a weak-wristed manner, he should see the letters that we get regarding the restriction of development that we have outside of the Perimeter. It is consistently under pressure for opportunities to build.

Mr. Speaker, the question that arose in Springfield, when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and I sat down with the Springfield Council, was a first in what we anticipate will be many circumstances where we will have to mediate a proper and reasonable agreement between urban centres—towns outside of the city centre of this province—and the agricultural community. The PLUC Committee of Cabinet has made every effort to assure that agricultural land is conserved.

Mr. Angus: Earlier this year, we received a rather detailed report on Headingley. The Headingley Study took a serious look at the legitimate concerns of those taxpayers in Headingley who are quasi-rural and quasi-city and who are paying astronomical property taxes in return for negligible services. They do not have such things as water or sewer for their property taxes and yet they are paying high water services. There are serious concerns and many uncertainties in relation to how the city is going to make the decision. What are they going to do? Are both North Headingley and South Headingley going to be considered?

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, there are many unanswered questions from the Headingley Study and the report, and silence from this Government does not help. My question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). Will the Minister please advise this House what his intentions are in relation to the Headingley Study, and what does the future hold for the residents of Headingley?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to answer that for the Honourable Member across the way. We have met with the people from Headingley. We will listen to the people of Headingley of what they want. We have asked the city just recently for a commitment on what they would like in that particular area. We have agreed to a meeting with the Headingley people some time in January after we have heard from the city and their intentions.

I can assure the Member across the way that we are here to listen to the people. They have suggested a

referendum in that area, the people of Headingley. The study was carried on by the previous Government. We extended the study and that is what we will do. Unlike the Member across the way, we will listen to the people of Headingley.

Referendum

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): The Minister indicated during the Estimates process that a referendum will be held. Will he tell this House what the wording of the referendum will be? When will it be held? Who will participate? Will the decision of the people be binding?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Municipal Affairs): Gladly, Mr. Speaker. First of all, as he knows, there are many issues. He sat on City Council. There are issues in regard to the boundaries of where the City of Winnipeg will end. There are issues on where the people of Headingley want those divisions to end. In consultation with the City of Winnipeg and with the residents of Headingley, we will decide what will go on that referendum through that careful consideration on behalf of both these parties. That will be our job, as a province, to set up that referendum with those conditions as applied for by the City of Winnipeg and by the people of Headingley.

Mr. Angus: The process sounds like it might be a long one and I would like to know what action plans and what time frame does this Minister have in relation to providing the much needed referendum and/or the services to the Headingley area that are required.

Mr. Ducharme: I would like to mention that we have been often criticized of consultation. I can assure the Member that the City of Winnipeg has not given us a definite commitment on whether they are against Headingley pulling away from the city. Headingley people have recommended that a referendum be held. To be fair to both the City of Winnipeg and the people of Headingley, we will consult both of them and there will be a referendum very, very shortly.

I would like to ask the Member, when he was a member of City Council, how many developments did he approve or did he agree with on the other side of the Perimeter Highway?

Mr. Angus: All of them, Mr. Speaker.

* (1400)

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): My question is to the Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health (Mr. Connery). Yesterday the Minister took the Government jet to Leaf Rapids to examine the site of the Ruttan Mine waste disposal fire. I would ask the Minister if he can indicate to the House today why it is he chose not to take myself and other representatives—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Acting Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Acting Government House Leader): I believe that is a Matter of Privilege. I believe that you have taken that under advisement and will be ruling accordingly. I do not believe it is proper that the Member pose that question at this time.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Churchill, on the same point of order.

Mr. Cowan: The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) from his seat says I should know the rules and indeed I know enough of the rules to know, Mr. Speaker, that yesterday the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) stood in his place and said that the reason that he did not want the matter proceeded with was because the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) was not here to defend himself.

The Minister of Labour is now here to explain why it is he chose—

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Sit down, Jay.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that when people's lives and their health are at risk we have to put up with this sort of—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Churchill, addressing the point of order raised by the Honourable Acting Government House Leader.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, I am addressing the point of order. I want to not let their statements from their seats go unanswered when a matter of this importance—

Mr. Orchard: Sit down, Jay.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to use your authority to try to contain the Minister of Health who is so defensive and sensitive about this issue that he cannot sit in his seat for more than 45 seconds without chirping away, trying to distract attention away from very important issues. That is a responsibility of all Members—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. On the point of order, please.

Mr. Cowan: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Specifically.

Mr. Cowan: We had asked for this matter to be dealt with. The Government said they felt it was important for the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) to be here to be able to present why it is he chose not to take MLAs along on that trip. I believe that—(Interjection)—Perhaps the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) would like to stand in his place, show a little courage or a little courtesy and put those comments on the record.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Mr. Orchard: No, I am just acceding to the request of my honourable friend.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

Mr. Cowan: I am not asking the Minister to defend his actions or to explain the law or to in any way deal with the Matter of Privilege. I am asking him to explain why it is he chose not to take individuals, MLAs, on that trip who had asked to be taken on that trip. Mr. Speaker, if he wants he can stand and explain that at any particular time. I hope he would take this opportunity to do so.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Acting Government House Leader, a very valid point. This matter, I have to take it under advisement and we are reviewing the rules and the precedents so, therefore, I have to rule the Honourable Member for Churchill's questions out of order.

Ruttan Mine—Leaf Rapids Workers' Rights

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Workplace Safety, Health and Environment (Mr. Connery). He has indicated that he is sympathetic to the concerns of the workers who are now without pay as the result of a fire at the Ruttan Mine Waste Disposal Site which was started by the company.

The Workplace Safety and Health Act very clearly provides for workers to refuse to work in situations which they consider to be unsafe and unhealthy without fear of reprisal, without fear of penalty, without any loss of wages. Will the Minister of Workplace Safety and Health now directly answer that question and not suggest that it is a matter for collective bargaining, not suggest it is a matter to be held over at another time because these workers are exercising that right right now? Will he indicate what it is that his Government is going to do to ensure The Workplace Safety and Health Act and the protections that accrue to workers under that Act to ensure they do not have to work in unhealthy and unsafe workplaces are being abided by to the fullest extent?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, the

Member for Churchill, I believe, is asking me to maybe break the law. I hope that is not what he is intending.

We will defend the workers and the workers' rights to the letter of the law and to the letter of the agreement. I have gone beyond that in discussions with the company, asking them to be considerate in the concern that is there. I went up to Leaf Rapids to the Ruttan Mine to ensure for myself the safety of those workers. I wanted to see first-hand the situation that was before the workers at Ruttan Mine. I have come back a lot wiser and with a lot more information, that when we have to make the decisions and as we make those decisions I will be an informed Minister and those decisions will be made in the best interests of the workers at that mine.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, the Minister did not answer the question directly and I understand the rules that he does not have to answer the question directly, but I believe he has the responsibility to do so on behalf of those workers who may in fact be forced back into an unsafe situation because of his lack of ability to directly answer that question.

Medical Tests

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): My question to the Minister of Workplace Safety, Health and Environment (Mr. Connery), given that his own publications suggest that combustion at landfill sites usually produces toxic fumes—we know that this landfill site did contain toxic substances—is the Minister now prepared to use his authority under The Workplace Safety and Health Act to order medical tests to ensure that we know fully what effects that exposure may have created on those individuals who have been exposed to toxic smoke and toxic fumes as a result of this fire?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, after very lengthy discussions with the Workplace Safety Committee at the mine, the Workplace Safety Committee came forward with what they considered a safe method for the miners to go down into the mine with having people watching the direction that the smoke would take, being in constant touch with the weather office to see if there was any change, possible change, in the climate. Mr. Speaker, between our department and the Safety Committee, including employees and employer, they came up with a plan that they were prepared to recommend to the workers. The union leader was not prepared to take that to the employees at the mine.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible, I will not lift that stop work order until those miners who have to go 2,500 feet down into that mine are satisfied that their lives and their health are not at risk. When they agree that they are safe to go down, at that point I will lift that stop work order.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, the question to the Minister was is he prepared to order medical tests, so that workers can know if in fact they were exposed to toxic fumes? That is an important question, given his own

departmental publications that say that toxic fumes result from fires of this sort. I had asked the Minister if he is prepared at this time to use his authority to order those tests so that workers in the area who have expressed concern about a lack of information on this subject—and I am no further ahead by the answers of the Minister today—can be more fully aware just to exactly what it may have been that they were exposed to and what effects that might have had on their own health.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Speaker there will be no stone left unturned in our efforts to ensure the safety of those workers at the mine.

I instructed our staff yesterday, the Environment staff—Mr. Speaker, if they want to hear the answer, I would like to give it to them. I instructed our Environment staff to take samples of the material around the intake to the ventilation system because that would be the smoke that would have gone into the mine. We brought those samples back in the airplane with us. They went right to the Ward Lab immediately and the lab was instructed to give every haste to, careful haste—not in doing it haphazardly, but as quickly and safely as possible—to analyze what is in that material.

Once that has been determined and if there is any concern—and we will share that information with the union, then we will, yes, ask those employees to take all of the medical tests. We will ensure the safety and the health of those workers who may have been exposed.

* (1410)

Fire Investigation

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): The Minister indicated the other day that he believes it will take a couple of days to put this fire out. Yesterday at the site he indicated that it was a big fire, one larger than he had anticipated. Can he now give some indication to the House and to others as to how long he expects it will take for this fire to be put out by the company?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health): Now it is quite obvious to all Members of this Legislature and to the people of Manitoba why I thought it was so important that I would take a first-hand look at that fire.

It is a fairly large fire, probably stretching in the area of 400, 500, 600 feet long around the edge of the 80 million tons of rock. The company suggested it could take anywhere from four, eight, ten days but they are not sure, as they have to push stone over to bury it. Then they are going to haul in sand to smother the fire. The company, until they have had a few days working at it, will not be able to tell us exactly when the fire is out, and until that fire is totally out and/or the workers are prepared to go down into that mine shaft feeling that their health is not at risk, the stop-work order will still be in place.

Contract Awarding Untendered

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): My question is to the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Albert Driedger). We understand that the Manitoba Government Employees' Association is going to be picketing the Manitoba Legislature, the reason being that the Minister has decided to contract out certain building services at the Highway Services Building. Could the Minister tell this House why he has taken the decision to contract out these jobs?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Government Services): First of all, I would like to indicate to the Members here that we feel very confident in the performance of the staff servicing all our Government buildings. However, what we are doing, we are undertaking a pilot project at 1075 Portage Avenue where we have very precise records as to what our costs of maintenance and operations are. What we are doing is the same thing that other provinces are doing, is basically to see whether we are performing as well as we believe that we are performing versus the private sector. What we are doing on a pilot project is, we are going to be tendering out the services for 1075 Portage. In the meantime, no employee is going to be losing a job. We are transferring the employees to other buildings and we are asking for proposals. If the proposals are not acceptable we will not proceed with it.

Office Renovations Records Security

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): The MGEA is also concerned that once that kind of contract has been privatized that there are, as a matter of fact, confidential and sensitive public records that are contained within this building. How can the Minister assure us that the sensitivity of those documents will be well assured once outside contractors have been appointed to the job?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Government Services): We have consulted with the people at 1075 Portage, both the people who are affected by this as well as the staff, and we feel that there is no problem in terms of security with the papers that are there. We have the confidence, but we have allowed ourselves the option that if there are going to be any problems developing that we have a pull-out clause in that contract. So we are going to make sure that the aspects of the jobs are protected, that the place is protected, the records are protected. We are just trying this out as a pilot project.

Tender Process Woodsworth Building

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): We understand that the Minister asked for quotations for the repair and painting of the cafeteria and the kitchen area in the Woodsworth Building and that of the five quotations the highest was the successful bidder, and the lowest

was from Government employees. Could the Minister explain his decision?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that question as notice.

Guidelines

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, just following up on this issue, the question to the Minister of Government Services, this present Government and this Premier like to pride themselves on their business expertise. They just gave themselves a hand—there they go again—on how great they are with their business acumen, and they allege that they know how to manage the taxpayers' dollars efficiently, that they are above the waste of taxpayers dollars, and they do not engage in Mulroney-Turner patronage kinds of appointments in this Government.

We have learned, Mr. Speaker, of wasteful patronage contracts over the last week, untendered, in the last few days to a former Mulroney speech writer calling himself "Government Policy Consultants," for \$50,000 from Executive Council, for what purpose we do not know, to Merv McKay for \$100,000 by the Minister of Northern Affairs who said August 2, 1988, that this company, Resource Initiatives, were close friends of the Tory Party.

In view of this waste of taxpayers' money through untendered contracts and patronage contracts, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Government Services indicate what guidelines he has in place for tendering of contracts versus work done in-house by Civil Service personnel; the guidelines used by his staff in the preparation of work estimates and whether he follows the principle of awarding contracts to the lowest bidder?

Mr. Albert Driedger (Minister of Government Services): First of all, I think the economic performance of this Government was just illustrated by the Minister of Finance in his report. In response to the question, I might indicate that the Member well knows the process that is in place in terms of the various contracts that we are undertaking and that I have no qualms about the process that we are following because that is the one that he was following at the time. There has been no change. In fact, Mr. Speaker, because of the many contracts that Government Services and Highways go into, we have a process in place where we take certain consultants on a rotating basis, and that is a process that was followed before and is still being followed.

Mr. Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I have a matter of privilege for the House.

I rise on this matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker, and I will follow my remarks with a substantive motion on

the grounds that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) has misled this House and has attributed specific actions to the former Government, and to me personally that were not true.

This is the first opportunity that I have had to raise this matter, Mr. Speaker, since it relates partially to statements made yesterday, or Tuesday, pardon me, in the Committee of Supply for which we have just received Hansard. As well, I have just received Hansard and I think, Mr. Speaker, there are some rulings that establish precedent that when Hansard is delayed it constitutes a reason for delaying a matter of privilege. I can quote from Mr. Speaker Walding's ruling, pages 81 and 82 of the 1982-83-84 Journals, March 10, 1983, in which he said: "When a matter of privilege is moved in the House there are, as the Member noted, two facts to be satisfied." One of them being that it is the first available opportunity, and it clearly is, since there was a slight delay in Hansard over the last few days, so clearly this is the first opportunity that I have had to raise this matter because it is the first opportunity that I have had to peruse Hansard.

* (1420)

On Wednesday, November 2 and Thursday, November 3, I asked a series of questions of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) regarding the Garrison Diversion project. The Minister, in answering on November 2, stated that I, and I quote: "Mr. Deputy Speaker, the agreement that was signed and the former NDP administration were signators to the Garrison Agreement, simply stops the transfer of water in any way, shape or form except the way that the previous NDP administration had agreed to."

On November 3, 1988, the Minister said, and I quote, in answer to a question from me: "It is the NDP, it is John Plohman who have indicated that they are willing to flow waters out of the Garrison into the Cheyenne and into the Red River."

On Tuesday, December 6, in committee dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources, I asked the Minister to table the agreement he referred to on November 2. He had no agreement to table and admitted he was referring to the Garrison Diversion Unit Reformulation Act of 1896, an Act of the U.S. Congress House of Representatives. As a matter of fact—1986 that was passed—his statement in the Legislature was, "I was referring, Mr. Chairman, to the Reformulations Act."

It is, therefore, not an agreement in any way, shape or form. Clearly, in the long and difficult fight over Garrison our Government never agreed to Garrison or promoted the Garrison project, and even though the current Reformulation Act allows for the transfer of a limited amount of treated water by pipeline for community use, this is a far cry from the transfer of raw, untreated water in the large quantities via canal and reservoir for irrigation purposes in the Hudson Bay watershed, as was asked for and is still being sought by interests in North Dakota. But despite the safeguards, Manitoba did not sign any agreement on a revised Garrison project as this Minister has stated.

Therefore, he clearly misled this House and admitted it when he said that what he was referring to was the Reformulation Act which of course does not have any signatures and of course it never would from another Government of another country.

When this Minister referenced the 1984 alleged submission which he promised to table, and has not to my knowledge, by the then Minister of Natural Resources, Al Mackling, to the Garrison Diversion Unit Commission, he alleges, it does not constitute proof in any way, shape or form that I personally indicated a willingness or support to flow water from the Missouri watershed to the Hudson Bay basin, nor does it provide proof, Mr. Speaker, that our Government was a signator to any agreement on Garrison as alleged by that Minister in this House.

It is my opinion that this Minister seldom answers questions in this House and tends to provide irrelevant and inaccurate information. In my opinion, he seems to have little concern for factual detail, he generalizes at the expense of the facts, and presents a closed mind in the potentially hazardous and detrimental implications of actions he either supports or seeks to implement. In my opinion, he tends to think he understands the issues better than anyone and dismisses Opposition suggestions out of hand.

In this instance, I believe I have presented a prima facie case of this Minister misleading the House with false and misleading statements that violate my privilege as a Member and the privileges of all Members of this House.

I therefore regretfully move, seconded by the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski), that this Legislative Assembly direct the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) to withdraw the offending remarks unconditionally and apologize to this House.

Hon. Clayton Manness (The Acting Government House Leader): Responding to the matter of privilege as raised by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), two points, Mr. Speaker.

Firstly, in the Government's view, the matter has not been raised at the first opportunity. The Member is correct. I can remember November 2. I was in the House that day when the statement was made by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) at which time, I believe, if the Member for Dauphin had a concern it was his responsibility at that time, indeed the next day, to demand of the Minister that particular documentation in question.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that when the Member waited for the best part of a month, indeed over a month, to request that detailed information, that says to me and it says to all Members of this House that it was not a matter of great importance to him and, therefore, it should not be raised as a matter of privilege.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe that there is some dispute as to the facts—they are historical in nature—and that this is not the time or the place in which to discuss the historical facts surrounding some of the statement.

The Member may feel that a wrong statement has been made, but in my view no prima facie case has been made for him, under the rules that we have, to bring forward a matter of privilege; and secondly, he has neglected to do so, as stated by the rules, in a manner as quickly as he possibly could have because he should have done so in early November. In my view, there is no matter of privilege.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, on the matter of privilege—(Interjection)—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), in his—(Interjection)—Do I have the floor, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance—

An Honourable Member: He has not recognized you yet.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, I have recognized the Honourable Member for Flin Flon, on a point of order.

Mr. Storie: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), in his defence of the matter of privilege, indicates that the prima facie case that was made by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) should be ruled out of order because of the lack of immediacy.

The Member for Dauphin made the case that he subsequently, as a responsible Member should, attempted to elicit from the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) the facts the way that the Minister was interpreting them. Clearly, as a result of the latest committee meeting, the Hansard of which was not available to the Member for Dauphin until yesterday could not verify the intention of the Minister. It was verified by the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon does not have a point of order. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

I would like to thank Honourable Members for bringing this matter to my attention, both the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and the Honourable Acting Government House Leader (Mr. Manness). I will have no other option but to take this matter under advisement to peruse Hansard as specifically to the clauses so mentioned by the Honourable Member for Dauphin. I just thank Honourable Members.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented.

* (1430)

MATTER OF GRIEVANCE

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of grievance, according to the rules of this House.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Kildonan, on a grievance.

Mr. Cheema: My grievance is that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has failed to recognize the needs of our various population which have the right to necessary services in the health care in the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this Minister has failed to provide capital and program expenditures, thus the funds for replacement of the Municipal Hospital, the Clinic facility, which is a community-based clinic, and a further expansion of the St. Boniface Hospital obstetrical floor.

As well, the Minister of Health has failed in a number of other areas. He has failed to provide the program expansion for our AIDS campaign. He has failed in the mental health area in a number of specific problems. He has failed to provide the mental health care both at Brandon and Selkirk.

I believe that this Minister has not paid attention to the renovation of the Municipal Hospital. The Municipal Hospital was built in 1911 and it has served the City of Winnipeg for almost 78 years. This hospital is owned by the City of Winnipeg and is located on the banks of the Red River.

Mr. Speaker, it has essentially two distinct missions which overlapped in the middle years. The temporary hospital opened in 1911, King Edward Memorial Hospital, and the King George Hospital opened in response to the critical health needs arising from the prevalence of tuberculosis and many other communicable diseases in the early 1900s. However, in the late 1940s, with the advance in knowledge, vast improvements in public health practices and massive immunization programs, the problems associated with the spread and care of infectious diseases came under control. Concurrently, with these trends, the Hospital Commission began to plan for the impact these changes would have in the declining need for the hospital's services and prepared for the end of one era and the beginning of another one.

Health needs associated with an increasing aged population were predicted, and by 1945 the new mission of the extended treatment for that population was defined. From 1950, with the opening of Princess Elizabeth Hospital, and through 1965, the hospital had a dual purpose. After 1965, the phasing-out of the communicable disease services was completed. Geriatric rehabilitation, extended treatment and care became the primary services to remain and they are playing an important role today.

This hospital is providing essential services in Winnipeg. It is providing services in the area of medicine associated with nursing, social work, physiotherapy, respiratory therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and recreational therapy. This hospital also provides day hospital services, the first for this kind of facility as of 1983.

This hospital is almost now 78 years old and the funding for the renovation was supposed to start this year. This new building has two phases. The two-phase building program is proposed to replace the existing time-expired structures. The powerhouse addition recently completed at a construction cost of approximately \$3.3 million was designed to meet the energy requirements of the new facilities.

Phase 1 has developed to a point where tenders can be called pending approval of the provincial Government. This phase is to be of 203 beds, 19,600 square metres, a four-storey facility, complete with all support service areas to meet the requirements of both phases of the Municipal Hospitals. Additionally, Phase 1 included renovation to the lower level of the Princess Elizabeth Hospital for administration space.

The budget for Phase 1 is \$41.5 million. The total number of beds at the completion of Phase 1 will be 355 beds, including 152 which will remain in the Princess Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, long-range planning for the second-phase development provides for possible phasing-out of the Princess Elizabeth Hospital and an additional 205 beds, bringing the total beds complement to 408.

Mr. Speaker, this facility is outdated. This facility needs renovation and the Minister has failed to provide the funds for this year and we do not see any planning for the next years also. This is a matter of grave concern because this is serving the senior population in all the areas and it should have been included in the capital expenditure. We are disappointed that the Minister has failed time after time to address this issue.

Even though the fire safety standards are within the law, it would be very difficult for people to jump and to escape if there is a fire. Most of the people who are residing in the services there are in the elderly age group and they need more services. They deserve better than what they have right now. The renovation is required at the present state and I do not think we can postpone it further more than what has been done to date.

The other area of their concern is the community health centre. The Clinic was supposed to have its renovation started this year. The Clinic is a community health centre located in downtown Winnipeg. This provides medical services and also provides outreach and counselling programs. This includes 24-hour suicidal prevention line; 24-hour sexual assault counselling; and a variety of services offering support to seniors and other citizens of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the centre was founded in 1971 and has grown steadily to meet the needs of a wide diversity of clients. As staff and services increased, it became clear that the Clinic building at 544 Broadway was no longer adequate. There was approval for a new facility that was given by the Government in 1984. Land was purchased at Sherbrook Street and the architectural plans were completed. However, in the Capital Program tabled on November 22 by the Honourable Health Minister (Mr. Orchard), plans were put on hold pending completion of the Health Advisory Network.

Today we have the announcement of the Health Advisory Network. We sincerely hope that we will have this facility in place. This is an extremely important facility and this community clinic concept is so important and the increasing cost at the present health care we should even build more community-based clinics and at least we should update this clinic which is playing a most vital part in the City of Winnipeg. We are disappointed that the Minister failed to recognize the importance of such a clinic, even though he has talked that he has in favour of more community-based clinics concepts.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mark Minenko, in the Chair.)

The other area of major concern is the St. Boniface Obstetrical floor. We have addressed this issue a number of times. We have given enough time to the Minister to look at the various options. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you are probably aware, this obstetrical floor was initially built to accommodate 3,000 deliveries and now it is accommodating almost up to 4,000 and the number is growing every year. This year it is expected that there will be at least 4,200 to 4,300 deliveries minimum.

The point I am trying to make is that for the last seven months, starting from the end of March until the end of September, almost 18 times this floor was closed. The floor was closed for very simple reasons, that there are not enough obstetrical delivery beds; and No. 2 there are not enough post-partum beds. So what happens, the post-partum were occupied so we cannot have patients who will be delivered at that place and these patients are being transferred from St. Boniface to other hospitals. We do not even have the exact number of how many other patients are being told not even to come to St. Boniface Hospital because they cannot accommodate those patients. When these patients are transferred to other hospitals, it does cause distress to the patient and their families. Nevertheless, it also causes a great concern for the risk to the unborn child. To date, we have not had any disasters so far, but why should we wait for a disaster before we act? Our simple request has been, let us expand a few beds at St. Boniface Hospital and give enough space for delivery so that patients do not have to be transferred. That will give confidence not only to the staff, but to the patient and, most importantly, to the—we are talking about the unborn child.— (Interjection)—

The Minister has said that they are not at risk. That is not true. Even out of normal deliveries there is a chance of 10 percent newborn children who could have some form of difficulty. You are transferring this patient from St. Boniface to Misericordia or Grace Hospital, they are excellent hospitals but they do not have on-call, 24-hour services to cover the intensive care which could be required to treat this newborn child. At Misericordia Hospital they do not have on-site, 24-hour anesthesia recovery. That exposes the newborn at a greater risk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and some of those patients are being transferred back again to the St. Boniface Hospital because St. Boniface Hospital and Health Sciences are the only two hospitals which have intensive care nurseries and they have good staff, they have excellent units. They work very well, but we are putting extra pressure on them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I am trying to make is that by providing X-number of few beds at the present time would have saved us money in the long run; would have definitely saved time; and the undue wastage of professional time; the families stress; and, above all, any possible risk to the unborn child. This is the most important thing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, also we should not forget that, as the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) indicated, that he believes in centres of excellence. This would have been a good opportunity to expand those two systems. At the same time keeping the Grace Hospital, Misericordia Hospital, those hospitals do still provide good obstetrical care, we are not denying that. We think that is an important service and they should continue to provide that service.

* (1440)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me tell you a few facts. Victoria Hospital has provided in 1986 about 1,429 deliveries, and that hospital is designed to provide almost 1,000 deliveries; St. Boniface Hospital in 1986 provided 4,086 deliveries, that was supposed to provide 4,000 deliveries; Health Sciences provided 3,561, that is about 400 above their allocated delivery space. The point is let us not wait, let us expand St. Boniface Hospital Obstetrical Unit and make use of the people who are ready to serve, who are doing a good service and, above all, let us not waste money, let us not transfer a patient from one end to another.

Also, if we are transferring patients, and those people who provide obstetrical and gynecology, they will require operating time at a different hospital. That will again cost more money. Let us save some money, and provide the good services, because these two hospitals, St. Boniface as well as Health Sciences, have every aspect to provide good obstetrical care in the advanced stages, and let us not lose that opportunity. We will still request the Minister to change his mind and come up with some explanation of the funds here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other area of concern to us has been the AIDS issue. This issue has such importance, and I am sure all the Parties agree that this issue has to be tackled and there is no cure and we all know it. The only thing we can do is prevention. Prevention can be only done by educating; education at all levels starting from the school to the elderly age group. There has been some improvement for AIDS but we have failed definitely to provide the Street Worker Program; the Street Worker Program to teach the kids who would need some more information to prevent further spread of disease and time after time the Minister has failed to do that. In view of the recent Beazley Study, which is an important document, it must be read and understood. It relates to the high-risk population, the street youth.

This issue is not an issue of one person or another, it is an issue of not one Party or the other Party, it is an issue of the general public. If we do not attack AIDS in the right way we will end up spending more money and, above all, we will prolong the suffering for the patient and their families. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that issue must be addressed.

For this year, it took seven months, we have an AIDS brochure. It is a good brochure, it has very good information and we applaud the Minister for doing that, but why does this Minister have to wait for a translation, they should have produced brochures in both languages from the beginning.

Second thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, last year the information for AIDS was sent with the telephone bills, and this year the Minister was not prepared but, on our suggestion, he agreed and we are looking forward for that kind of information to go out to the general public. However, the major AIDS campaign will not start until next year. Why so? Why do we have to wait for next year to start such an important thing? Every day is important for this issue.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me point it out here very clearly. As the information on AIDS changes quite frequently, how can we satisfy ourselves saying that we will have one brochure once a year and then say we are doing a good job? No, the brochure must be updated, there must be a mechanism so that we do not have to ask questions time after time for this important issue. It should be done; it should be the priority of this Government. We will ask questions if that is not being done in the future.

The other area of concern which has not been dealt with in a more right way, this solving the problem of mental health care, still we have a major crisis in different areas. We still have a shortage of psychiatrists; we still have not solved the problem at Brandon. Brandon is still without a psychiatrist. Selkirk is going to have almost two psychiatrists as of January 3. We started with six at Selkirk and zero at Brandon. That was about six weeks ago, and today we have zero at Brandon and we are going to have two at Selkirk. That is just how this Honourable Minister has tackled the issue. He has failed in this issue definitely. There is no doubt about that.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, I wonder, since my honourable friend is once again revisiting the Selkirk psychiatrist situation, if he is now prepared, on behalf of the Liberal Party, to tell Manitobans what they supported in terms of salary and monetary demands by those psychiatrists. Is he prepared to put that on the record now or is he going to hide like he has in the last three weeks?

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Member is speaking on a matter of grievance and it is his right to do so. If the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) wishes to respond, he also can speak on a grievance. He has not used his.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Health did not have a point of order.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we still have the same problem at Selkirk as I was saying. The problem has even gotten worse. There are going to be two psychiatrists who are going to serve at least 450 patients.

Mr. Orchard: It is the same old story—

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Minister wants to put some things on the record he should stand up and say something rather than saying things from the chair and trying to interrupt me. That is not going to be helpful. We will waste the time of the House as happened a few weeks ago that we have discussed a few things which were just unrelated because of this Minister's approach.

I will continue with my comments. As I was saying, we are going to have two full-time psychiatrists, equalling to two full-time psychiatrists at Selkirk, and zero at Brandon. This definitely has been the approach of this Government. That is the end result of the approach of this Government.

In this new so-called mental health reorganization, there were a lot of good things, a lot of good initiatives, and we definitely applaud the Minister for that, but he still has failed to set a tone in the whole system. The cooperation thing is still lacking. That has sent a message right across Canada. This Government does not care to work with the professionals and that is the message he has sent. That message, I think eventually he may regret it because this will not help to attract more psychiatrists to come to Manitoba.

The other question we asked the Minister during the Estimates was the School of Nursing at Selkirk, and we did not get either a positive or negative response. We were told to wait until the next year now. That is still causing a lot of distress to the nursing staff, to their families and definitely to the whole Selkirk Mental Health Centre. They are in a state of almost shock about what is going to happen there. They have two psychiatrists, there is a questionable Selkirk School of Nursing, but this Minister has failed to give them clear guidance. I think that does not speak very good of this Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, other areas of grave concern, we have heard from this Minister of the new initiatives for ambulatory care. Nothing has been done, not even a single word was said how they are going to have a new ambulatory care system in Manitoba.—(Interjection)—The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) maybe wants to put some words then if he wants to stand up on his chair and put something on the record. As I was saying, there are no new initiatives in terms of ambulatory care. That is the best thing to do to translate the inpatient to the outpatient clinics and that Minister has failed to give any guidance so far.

We still have a problem in emergency rooms. As you will recall, six or seven weeks ago, there was a patient waiting for seven days at St. Boniface Hospital just to be placed somewhere. That patient was eighth on the list to be placed at Health Sciences Centre. That tells what kind of a system we have and they have failed to provide any new initiatives in that area. It takes hours and hours for patients to be seen at various emergencies in Winnipeg. If you recall, in the press, there was major news that patients were lying on mattresses on the floor at Health Sciences Centre. That is not acceptable.—(Interjection)—The Minister of

Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is saying that was several months ago. I think probably he should read the paper. That was not more than a few weeks ago.

* (1450)

What I am trying to say is that there have not been any provisions to expand the emergency services. Still we are continuing to have delays in cardiac surgery. We were told this summer it would be over and we are going to have, you know, right away about two to three weeks of delay, but still we have a problem. We were told even that the delay in the hip replacement surgery is still a few months and that has not improved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this administration has failed. Particularly this Minister has failed to address the needs for the seniors. On our continuous insistence in this House, they acquired a few programs for psychogeriatric care, but that is only if we have pressed them, otherwise I do not think they would have done it.

We have not heard of an extension for the day hospitals. Today we have this new Advisory Network, and we are pleased to see there are good members on that committee, but we did not see any members from the rural communities. We do not have a member from the mental health care community on that committee. That is a shame for that is such an important committee, it should have members from all the areas. This Minister has failed in a lot of areas and still he does not like to admit that, but I think eventually time will tell. The public of Manitoba will see that there are a lot of deficiencies.

We did not hear anything from this Minister in terms of long-term planning for personal care homes. Well, still the waiting period for a personal care home is anywhere from 8 months to 18 months. Some of the hospitals are still being occupied by chronic care patients and they could be placed in community-based either personal care homes or some other sources. This Minister has failed to provide any direction in that respect. That is costing a lot of money. It costs more than \$200,000 to care for a patient to occupy an acute care bed in the hospital. That patient could be placed in a personal care home that will not cost more than \$33,000 approximately. This Minister has failed.

They have failed to address the issue of, as I said earlier, the aging population, the 65 and above. The population at present is about 11.8 percent and by the year 2000, it is going to be about 13 percent, but they have failed to provide any specific programs. They have failed to address their needs to provide more day care spaces—sorry, not day care but the day hospital spaces in Winnipeg as well as in the rural communities. During Estimates, most of the programs that were discussed do not have any follow-up, they do not have any evaluation studies, and we are hoping that next year there may be some of the suggestions, maybe for what we suggested during the Estimates process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, overall we are disappointed with this Minister's performance and we hope that next year or in time to come we may see some improvement, but we will keep on pressing from this side, and I regret

to say that he should have at least provided some funds for the Winnipeg Municipal Hospitals, Clinic, and the St. Boniface Hospital. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to exercise a grievance. Well, the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mrs. Hammond) asks, "What am I grieving?" Oh, I am sorry. Well, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) talks about his Leader. It was not too long ago, this year as a matter of fact, that he wanted to dump his, was preparing for it in November. Well, he wants to make smart remarks. The facts are that he has never had any love for his Leader. I have digressed from my notes, but I cannot help but answer those comments. I mean, if he wishes to make those kinds of comments, I am perfectly happy to respond to them.

The Member opposite says, "Take the high road," but I think that they, being the Government, should lead by example. It has not happened. If anyone has been taking the high road in this Legislature, it has been the Liberal Party. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must say that on the night that the Government fell, one of the most unhappiest members on the Opposition was the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) because all of his plans to take over the leadership went astray. It was—well, the Member says, "Gilles." Over half the Cabinet and the caucus over there was willing to dump that Leader. That is not a secret; it was well reported in the press. I did not want to get on to this subject but you should have talked to the Minister of Health first, and I am happy to say that at that time I was part of it, but let it be clear that for now, now that I am not on the same side, I hope that the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) remains the Leader of the Conservative Party for a very, very long time. It certainly is an asset to the Liberal Party, that is for sure.

Well, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings), who often contradicts his Premier publicly in press statements, makes comments from his seat. Maybe he wishes to get up on a grievance later on. It makes you wonder who is on first when it comes to Autopac rates, and when they broke their promise of not increasing rates, on one hand one said they would go to the Public Utilities Board, on the other hand the Deputy Premier has said they would not, and then they finally met together one time in the hallway or maybe in an elevator like the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery), and they finally tried to get their act together. We are not really sure yet.

* (1500)

But the fact remains that last spring the Conservative Party campaigned on the two main issues which were: the atrocious rates brought upon by the New Democratic Party, the former New Democratic Party Government in Manitoba; as well as the atrocious 2 percent tax on net income. Now, once in power—and the other day the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) mentioned a few selective comments from my speech on the Budget. He neglected to mention where I took the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to task for not addressing the 2 percent tax on net income, and I was sitting on the Government side at the time, when I gave

what is—I mean there is nothing wrong with Government Members giving constructive criticism.

I am digressing from my original grievance, but I am actually starting to enjoy it, really. If the Members opposite wish me to keep on I will certainly go on in this subject. Well, the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) says, certainly, go right ahead, and the Minister, who of course was part of the club who wanted to get rid of Mr. Filmon and not that I blame her. When you go into an election with 26 seats and you come out with 25, having lost five in the City, it says something. So possibly she was right back then. I do not know what her feelings are today. I suppose we often refer to one of our Members here as having a sock in his mouth. They must have bought out the sale at one of the department stores for a lot of socks for the mouths of the Members opposite because they are sure muted these days, very muted. I do not know what is happening but they are very quiet.

But in any case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and these are not just allegations because, you know, there were polls commissioned by Members opposite to test the leadership of Mr. Filmon, to find out who would be the best Leader. They were getting all set for this and that is not exactly a secret. It was reported in the press. They sometimes send barbs around about a Free Trade forum that was held at the International Peace Garden. We all know that the purpose of that forum was to undermine the leadership of the now Premier. As the Minister of Health has often said in the past, he says the man is a failure as an Opposition Leader; he will be a disaster as a Premier. How prophetic! How prophetic the Minister of Health was! I mean I am only quoting a couple of Members. I will not quote the many others because they have had the good sense to bite their tongues and I respect that. If they treat me civilly, I will do likewise. If they want to make taunts in their seats and chirp in their seats I will respond in kind and expose them as to what they really are.

Two-thirds of that caucus in Cabinet was ready to hang him and when he loses the next election very shortly, they will, figuratively speaking, not the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), you know, he was one of the chief—well, you know when the nose gets a little darker there.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Roch: Well, Glen, he sat on the fence and watched to see which way the wind was blowing, but I recall he even had to push and to demonstrate through Autopac. He was reluctant to hold a demonstration while the Premier was out of town. He did not know if the Premier would approve but—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Roch: Well, he does, and we still have lunch together and he has also—well, I will not say what he said about you.

Anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to get back to the grievance, the purpose of my grievance is to point out—I pointed out back on September 8 the major reasons

why I crossed the floor and I also said in a letter to be sent out to my constituents that, as events unfold, it will become more apparent as to why. And why? Well there has been, so it appears despite the grandstanding that goes on and the little bits and pieces, the old wars being fought between the NDP and the Conservatives, that out of necessity there is an informal alliance there. I mean neither one of those two Parties wants an election right now. That is obvious.

But what really galls me, and one thing I could not go back to my constituency with was the fact that now that they have been in power for just a few months, it is already a litany of broken promises.

I mentioned Autopac. It is very difficult to go back and face your constituents after having said, as did other candidates in the Progressive Conservative Party, that we would get a handle on Autopac. We have had atrocious rate increases this year. The NDP imposed 24 percent rate increases on average. Some were much higher or some a little lower, but on average, 24 percent.

None other than Angela Welch was very disappointed when this Minister announced, this Minister who had stood beside her at the rally last winter, and announced that there would be further increases. Well, that in itself would not have been such a bad thing had it been said during the election campaign that it may be necessary to increase them some more, but that was never said.

I recall sending out, as did the other then Members of the Opposition, a pamphlet entitled "The Tax Grab of the Century." But yet none of those issues have been addressed. True, the deficit has been reduced but there were many other factors apart from those taxes. The point that I am getting at is, if we have criticized a Government for having done certain items, it is incumbent upon the Government which is replacing them to rectify or at least attempt to rectify that situation; and I realize that it is not always easy when you are in a minority position. But if something is right, it will generally get support from Opposition Members, at least some of them. As has often been said by the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), you need two out of three Parties to get anything through this House and, by and large, this has been happening. It is in the area of regulations, regulatory bodies, where the other items have been not properly dealt with.

One which is very close to my heart and affects my constituency, as well as several others surrounding the City of Winnipeg and the City of Brandon, is the whole area of telephone service. Individual line service has been a significant improvement, and I have given the Minister credit for that, one of the few Ministers out there who actually gives you straightforward responses. I have to admit that watching the process here in Question Period, on a daily basis, and watching the numerous non-answers being given, it was a pleasure to be in committee with the Minister responsible for the Telephone System (Mr. Findlay) answering questions, and where he could not, even though at times we disagreed in specific issues, he would at least attempt to get the technical information from his staff and get them to do it contrary to the previous Government who were completely opposed to improvements in telephone service as was recently pointed out in speeches by the

Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact is that there is another broken promise. In Opposition, it came up over and over again that the people living within the commutersheds would be eventually getting access to the exchanges of the major urban centres close to them, i.e., Winnipeg and Brandon. Now what do they get? A token 50-percent discount on long distance rates to those two urban calling areas to a maximum of \$50.00. It is rubbing salt in the wound. It is a long-standing complaint out there, a long-standing concern. It was not addressed by the previous Minister and the previous Government. It was not addressed by the previous MLA who was also a Minister in that Government and now is not being addressed by this Government. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is another one of the broken promises.

In the area of Highways, in 1986, the budget of 1986, the Department of Highways cut the budget by \$12 million, 1986 dollars, the most drastic cut ever that I am aware of for a cutback such as this. Our whole infrastructure in rural Manitoba is deteriorating. Now I have to admit that the current Minister, the current Government, has increased the Highway's spending by approximately \$7 million. So it is a far cry from what it was cut back—and these are 7 million 1988 dollars—but still more needs to be done and I am willing to give them the benefit of the doubt and wait to see their next budget and see what comes into the Highways budget.

* (1510)

There seems to be a reluctance to move on rural issues. Yet this is a Government which is dominated by rural Members. Is there a possibility that rural Manitoba is being neglected so they can still attempt to make their elusive inroads so far into major areas of the City of Winnipeg? I hope not. Certainly, the City of Winnipeg is entitled to the services from Government as are any other regions of the province, but in a desperate attempt to make those inroads, one must not neglect those areas which have suffered far too long under the previous Government.

The Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) has sent out, to his credit, twice so far, requests for priorities in individual Members' ridings. I was pleased with that. I did it last spring; I did it again this fall. I have not received any responses as to whether there will be action on it. I can cite a few examples which are not only personal priorities of mine, but of which I have since sent letters to the Minister, including the Seine River School Division, including the R.M. of Springfield, including the Local Government District of Reynolds, the R.M. of East St. Paul, asking about what is happening to certain road projects in their particular areas.

The 405, which is between the Village of Lorette, where I live, and the Village of Ile des Chenes, which is in the Minister of Highway's constituency, is in deplorable condition. It is bad enough for the citizens to use on a daily basis, but it is even worse for those

people who need to use school buses. It is a role which has been a long-standing commitment of the previous Government and now I would assume that this Government would look after it, but so far no action.

There are several others. The Provincial Trunk Highway No. 11, between Elma and Hadashville, is in such bad shape that one has to slow down to 60 kilometres an hour from time to time because it is literally falling apart. And these are just some of them. I am happy to see that the highway going through Seven Sisters to the Whiteshell, at least there are survey stakes up. I hope that it leads to action. I believe that it will. The Minister has assured me that it will.

The 306 between Hazelridge and Highway 15 in the spring is virtually impassable. It is a sad state and I realize that it reflects most on the previous Government but still I would strongly hope and urge, and I certainly hope that rural Manitobans, in their infrastructure needs, are not once again betrayed, because come the springtime, some of those roads—come the springtime?—come year round!—very often the municipal roads are in far better shape.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all know where some of the money went before. It went into the constituency of the then Minister of Highways looking over potential projects. I hope the new Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) does not start doing the same thing and building only roads in his constituency. This is certainly a strong suggestion I would give him. Appearances so far seem to be that this will be the case once again. I hope not. I realize one cannot do much about the \$20 million white elephant which was built in East Selkirk; however, that is gone now but I would hate to see more of these coming out.

Unfortunately, what is needed is strong leadership by the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger), not one which capitulates to the whims and desires of other potentially stronger Ministers or one who tries to emulate his Leader who is, as we are all aware, not the strongest of Leaders. Indeed, he is quite a weak Leader. It appears that so far this Government is proceeding along like a ship without a rudder.

In other areas such as in constitutional matters, especially when it comes to the Meech Lake Accord, this is the Party which at one time fought entrenchment in Manitoba. Now we see another form of entrenchment coming in. Because it is their federal colleagues, it appears that they are willing to give in. Yet when the then First Minister of the Province came back from Meech Lake with a document which he had signed and which the third Opposition Party is now seeming to have second thoughts about—

Mr. Orchard: It is the one you used to belong to.

Mr. Roch: What?

Mr. Orchard: The one you used to belong to.

Mr. Roch: The one I used to belong to about 15 years ago.

An Honourable Member: You are a triple agent.

Mr. Roch: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) makes comments. In the last federal election, his federal Leader said only donkeys never ever changed their minds. I would suspect that he is admitting that he is a donkey. I would say that he is a donkey because he refused to change his mind. He is stuck back in a bygone era refusing to keep up with the times.

An Honourable Member: I know, he is going to run for the Rhinoceros Party.

Mr. Roch: The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says he is a member of the Rhinoceros Party. I am not quite sure of that. I would say he is more a member of the Dinosaur Party. I mean it is his views. I am sure he is quite frustrated that he is in a minority position because I am sure there is nothing more he would like to do than to slash even further in health spending. I mean it is kind of ludicrous that when it was brought up in the Winnipeg Municipal Hospitals some time ago, that he said from his seat, or maybe he said when questioned, he went back in the days of Doug Campbell. Now he is trying to blame Doug Campbell for situations which are prevalent today. I think that is grasping at straws.

Mr. Orchard: What party did you belong to then? Is that when you were an NDPer then in those days, or what Party did you belong to then?

Mr. Roch: The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is still chirping from his seat. He is good at that. When he is under attack and you touch a raw nerve now and then, he starts chirping.

Mr. Orchard: I have to have you say something intelligent. So far you have not been doing too well.

Mr. Roch: He is good at that. When he is under attack and you touch a wrong nerve now and then, he starts chirping. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he says that he is not doing very well at saying intelligent things. Well, I think there is concurrence in the House that that is often the case. It is not too often that I agree with him, but I agree with him on that statement, as I agree with his views on the leadership of the First Minister, I agree with him.

The only part where I now disagree with him is that I will not support his desires to dump the First Minister as their Leader. As I said a while ago—as one member says, they will have to cancel all the orders for the buttons that they were getting ready for. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a serious situation. I realize that they were hoping, I suppose, that last spring was a fluke. Although the support in rural Manitoba for the Conservatives at that time was fairly strong, in many areas where they came in, many still had reduced majorities. In my case, I did not. I went from a 55-vote majority to a 2000-vote majority.

Back in '86, many of the Members who had good majorities beat COR Party candidates which have become insignificant. In '88 they were running over Liberal candidates which had not run second in rural

Manitoba in a long time. But, they tried to pooh-pooh that. But the last federal election—and one can say that it is almost poetic justice—when the Liberals made the major gains that it did in Manitoba, they took equally from the NDP, as from the Conservatives. That says something right there.

Well, the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) says something about the electorate of Manitoba. I happen to believe in the wisdom of people and their collective will. Although I am often taken to task for having changed my mind, the fact remains that the people of Manitoba, the voters, change their minds every election. If they did not, there would be no need for elections. As the federal Leader has said, only donkeys never ever change their minds. I suspect there are a lot of donkeys over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What was that? The Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) is just one of the few people out here who is still reasonable and does not take these matters personally. As one of the—I will not mention his name because I am sure some of them do not want to—their Leader or others to know that we still kibitz from time to time on a friendly basis.

Well, I said, you are now a political enemy but still a personal friend. Unfortunately there have been—and they are not very many—two or three who have taken it very personally and are very bitter on my decision. Well, I suppose that is politics and one has to accept that. I have accepted it. I hope that some day they will get over it. There is one ex-Liberal who became a Conservative and was my campaign manager last time. He is taking it that way, as some Members of my former caucus. But again, like I say, over time maybe they may—I do not expect them all to agree with me, but they can at least accept the fact that it has happened. No matter how much you rant and scream and rave, it is a fact of life. I am not the first one who has done it, and will not be the last.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not often that a Member, as a matter of fact it is only once per Session that a Member has an opportunity to grieve. I have to say in all sincerity, when I ran for the Progressive Conservative Party, I really believed, I really hoped that they would institute these changes. I think that they have been forced to prostitute their principles in order to get NDP support to keep in power.

As some have said in the past, they said, the real enemy are the Liberals. The NDP have said it too. The real enemy are the Liberals. We were treated to the unusual spectacle the other day of the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) and the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) attacking, and even questioning—the Member from Churchill (Mr. Cowan) was questioning our Labour critic. It is as if they are getting ready to question for the time when the Liberals will be in power.

* (1520)

The fact remains, in the last election, Manitobans sent two clear messages. No. 1, they said they do not want the NDP running this province any more. Given the fact that the federal election results—(interjection)—I will let him speak for himself, unless he forces me to

put more on the record. He used to speak kindly of me but he does not any more. When he was fired as deputy leader, I stuck by him, I did. I did not think it was right. That is why it amused me that one time when somebody made a comment about the First Minister, the Minister for Health says from his seat, fine Leader. I never thought I would hear those words, that is for sure. He must have felt awfully bad inside when he said it. Anyhow, I am sure he is saying much worse about me these days.

As I was saying earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were treated to the unusual spectacle of having Members of the Second Opposition Party questioning Members on this side. It is obvious that both sides have targeted their dozen Liberals. Again, I can understand the New Democrats doing that because they lost most of their seats to people who are now occupying Liberal benches. But the fact remains, and I cannot for the life of me understand why Members of the Government opposite, unless they are being very narrowly partisan, feel that we need a strong New Democratic Party in Manitoba so that they remain in power. I disagree with that.

I think in order to have a healthy economic climate which will produce jobs, prosperity and indeed attract people to Manitoba, one needs to get rid of the burden of, well, they like to use the term "social democratic," but in fact they are essentially, in the bottom of their hearts, socialists. Although Conservatives and Liberals may have different priorities on different programs, may have different ways, take a different direction on where to go, the fact still remains that both believe in the system, the democratic free enterprise system.

I think that when people look to move to Manitoba, they will look at this. They will say, well, we have a Government here with a minority position. It looks that the possibility may exist that they may be defeated. Who will replace them? The alternative is the Liberal Party, another non-socialist Party. Therefore, if you are an investor, if you are a person looking for a job, even if you are just a person planning to live here and not want to have all your money being eaten in taxes, one will look at this province and say Manitoba is not a bad place to go, not a bad place to come to.

As I said, when I was still sitting on the Government side, in my contribution to the Throne Speech Debate, I said it was a happy day for Manitoba that 45 non-socialists had been elected to this Chamber. Now some say that the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) may not qualify as a socialist, he is often referred to as the conservative Leader of the New Democratic Party, because it is not exactly a secret that he wanted to run for the Conservatives in River Heights in 1986. He did not get the opportunity so he went to the—

An Honourable Member: You just let the cat out of the bag. You just let the secret out.

Mr. Roch: Oh, no, I let the secret out.

An Honourable Member: That is called switch and tell.

Mr. Roch: Switch and tell.

An Honourable Member: Now where was Sharon Carstairs when this happened?

Mr. Roch: I hear somebody ask where was Sharon Carstairs when this happened.

Mr. Orchard: What Party would he have crossed the floor to, if Gary had not won for us?

Mr. Roch: I do not know. You will have to ask him when he is in the House. I know I am not supposed to reflect on the presence or absence of any Members. Let us just say that he is not answering the remark from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

In any case, given all the comments that I have been making, I decided to put my notes away and just address the remarks being made. But the point is - (Interjection)- What?

Mr. Orchard: I am conferring upon you the honour of C.A.

Mr. Roch: Well, he wants to make me a chartered accountant.

An Honourable Member: Oh, I do not think so.

Mr. Roch: Well, I kind of know what he is referring to but maybe he wants to put it on the record, but the Minister is referring to unparliamentary words which in the past he saved for his Leader. If he wants to put those on the record, that is his business.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me just say that Manitoba is in the best possible situation right now. We have put the socialists back in third place. It is unfortunate that Government Members at times are too narrowly partisan. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), being from the farming background, should be aware that when our caucus has agreed to support his caucus in regard to both cattle producers' Bills, I think that is a good sign for Manitoba and I think that there is a lot of room for cooperation. Like I said earlier, from time to time there will be differences of opinion on some other matters, but the fact is we still have faith in Manitobans' ability to invest here, faith in Manitobans to be able to work here, and faith in the system as a whole.

Churchill once said that the democratic system is possibly one of the worst systems in the world except that there is none better. I am glad they are all attentive now because maybe—with the exception of the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), he is still in his tunnel vision.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Urban Affairs, on a point of order.

Mr. Ducharme: On a point of order.

Mr. Roch: Is a dispute over the facts a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Ducharme: I would like the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) to kindly take note of the twig of mistletoe attached to the tailcoat of my jacket.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Springfield, to the point of order.

Mr. Roch: I am continuing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister does not have a point of order.

Mr. Roch: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Urban Affairs has said that he has a twig of mistletoe attached—

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): A point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Wolseley.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I might suggest that—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Is the Honourable Member for Wolseley standing on a point of order?

Mr. Taylor: I have a new point of order, and I would request that given the lack of taste in that last point of order that the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) be requested to withdraw his remarks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Acting Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the same point of order. I heard the comment, it was figurative in nature. It certainly had no direct meaning to the Member and if somebody took some greater meaning out of it, I would say that that would have to be their problem. There is no point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Wolseley does not have a point of order. The Honourable Member for Springfield.

Mr. Roch: Well, did the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) say something to the effect that he had a piece of mistletoe attached to the back of his jacket? It must make for very interesting Cabinet meetings, I am sure. But he must not be the only one because I have noticed in recent times, since the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has become much more docile, that he often comes out of Cabinet meetings with a bit of a brown nose. Anyhow I am just keeping the same spirit as the Minister of Urban Affairs. I hate to make comments like this but one must respond in kind.

* (1530)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I keep digressing because of the comments coming from the benches opposite. They

seem to be on edge a little bit and I can always tell when they are on edge, they start playing with their earphones and twirling and-twitching and some stare at the ceiling, go into their pockets, touch their mike and everything, but that is fine.

To get back to my original point, my original grievance of the broken promises, I would just hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this Government refers back to the policy manuals, to the pamphlets that they had in the last election to the promises they made.

One of the most recent ones, which I have failed to mention that was broken, was the one which they have broken twice so far on the minimum price of milk, another contradiction. We noticed at one point earlier this year the contradictions between the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) over Autopac rates, over approval by the Public Utilities Board.

Now we have the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) who, I said earlier, is pretty well a straight shooter most of the time, but in this case he did contradict his First Minister and mention the fact that no such promise was made. Maybe he believed that no such promise was made but the fact remains that it was made, it was made right in front of Cantor's grocery.

Milk producers need not be concerned. No one is saying that they cannot be guaranteed a price for their product, but if a businessman, a retailer wishes to sell a product for less than he pays for it in order to make— It is a well-known thing that in business you often have loss leaders that draw in customers, they should have the freedom to do so. I would say that the Party which pretends to be a free enterprise Party should give businesspeople that leeway.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I notice my light is flashing. I have touched on but a few of the broken promises that this Government has not lived up to. As I said in the past when I crossed and as I said in writing, too, many people were wondering what else there was besides Meech Lake, besides the incompetent leadership of the First Minister and, as I said, as events unfold and happen more and more people would agree with the move I made. I have attempted to outline a few of them today. I am sure that a year from now, by the next Session, I will have much more ammunition against this Government. It is unfortunate but it was their choice.

Mr. Manness: I move, Mr. Deputy Speaker doth leave the Chair—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that Mr. Deputy 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.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Speaker, before we go into Supply, I would ask the House Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Alcock) whether or not there is a will to possibly waive Private Members' Hour. I am sorry, I

had not discussed this with him.- (Interjection)- We are in Supply, okay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Finance is out of order, we are into Supply.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the Chair for the Seniors Directorate; and the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) in the Chair for the Department of Employment Services and Economic Development.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—SENIORS DIRECTORATE

Mr. Chairman, Harold Gilleshammer: I would like to call the committee to order to consider the Estimates of the Seniors Directorate. We will start with a opening statement from the Minister.

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister responsible for Seniors): I would like to begin my remarks today with a brief statement on the initiative of this administration to appoint for the first time in Manitoba's history a Minister responsible for Seniors. This initiative is in response to the importance of Manitoba's growing senior population. I believe that as a society we must become more aware of the process of aging. Everybody experiences this process in his own unique way. The process is a life-long process of personal development and learning.

We must respect that most persons want to live independent and interdependent lives. This means that people are willing to help others as well as accept help themselves. To reflect this condition, Government Services Programs are designed to support both independence and interdependence with the community.

Within the Government of Manitoba, there needs to be a recognition of the talent and resources within the various departments who deliver services to seniors. In fact, Manitoba is recognized as a national leader in the provision of services to its elderly. It has become apparent that there has become a need for more formal coordination of these programs and services.

To coordinate the delivery of services to seniors, this administration has appointed a Minister responsible for Seniors. The Seniors Directorate was established to assist and support the Minister responsible for Seniors. The directorate will have two major functions: to provide a central point of contact with Government for seniors and seniors organizations; and to provide a mechanism for systematic and coordinated strategic policy and program planning related to senior citizens among the various parts of Government.

In recognition of the importance of our senior citizens, this Government has established a Cabinet Committee for Senior Citizens. This Cabinet Committee will be comprised of four permanent Members which will

include the Minister Responsible for Seniors, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs. Other Ministers will be asked to attend meetings of the committee to discuss and provide information on activities of their department that affect senior citizens. This Cabinet Committee will ensure that cooperation and coordination of Government programs and issues that concern seniors are dealt with at the highest level.

One of the priorities of the Cabinet Committee will be to deal with the issue of elder abuse. The Cabinet Committee will ensure that consultation with all relevant groups and agencies will take place in the development of a strategy to deal with this problem.

Those are my introductory remarks, Mr. Chairman, and I am now open to questions from the Members.

Mr. Chairman: We will at this time have an opening statement from the critic of the Official Opposition.

Mr. William Chornopyski (Burrows): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My opening remarks and my statement is not nearly as lengthy as the Minister's, of course, but let me just say in the outset that I want to commend the Government for having the visions of establishing this Directorate for Seniors. Seniors are a part of our population that is on an increase by leaps and bounds, and certainly that particular population is aging and they require special attention.

Again, as I said, I am very pleased that the Government had those visions and recognized the fact that there is a need out there. Not all seniors are wealthy and not all seniors are healthy and not all seniors are as active as they should be or perhaps could be.

* (1600)

Mr. Chairman: Excuse me, they are not picking up on Hansard. Do you want to speak into the mike? No. 7.

Mr. Chornopyski: So I say, Mr. Chairman, that the special department for Seniors is a very necessary department and I commend the Government. With that, I am going to be ready to fire some questions.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. We would invite any of the Minister's staff who are going to join him to come to the table at this time. Perhaps the Minister would like to introduce his staff for us.

Mr. Neufeld: We have Eric Lubosch, we have Timothy Nyhof and we have Mr. Garry Barnes.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Chornopyski: In the Speech from the Throne, the Government said they were planning specific measures to meet the challenges of an aging society, including delivery of health care services to seniors, and they also talked about the White Paper for Elder Abuse. My question, Mr. Chairman, is when they speak of health care services for the aging society—we already have Medicare and health care services—what does that

mean then? Is there some special kind of health care services that the Minister has in mind?

Mr. Neufeld: No, there is nothing special we have in mind at this point, but we have to keep in mind that in changing times you may have changing needs and as our population ages there may be again changing needs and for that reason, we have to monitor the delivery of our health care system. If we do find that there are areas that may be improved, we will contact the Minister of Health and for that reason, in fact, he is on the Seniors Directorate Cabinet Committee.

Mr. Chornopyski: The White Paper on Elder Abuse that was mentioned in the Throne Speech, what exactly did the Minister have in mind as far as this White Paper is concerned?

Mr. Neufeld: The White Paper on Elder Abuse is something that has been talked of for many years and I do believe that there was one written back as far as 1982. There was one, we know, in 1984. There was another one in 1986. They contain many of the problems that our elders face today but we are not certain that all the difficulties and problems contained therein are all the difficulties and problems of our elders today that are contained in that report. For this reason, we want to discuss with the seniors organizations, and individual seniors who wish to talk to us, to pick up with them their concerns and what they see their needs to be and then write the paper. Only after that will we write the paper.

Mr. Chairman: Excuse me. Just for clarification for the Members who just joined us, we are considering Resolution 1, The Seniors Directorate, the total for Seniors Directorate \$200,000.00.

Mr. Chornopyski: The \$200,000 is probably a good question to ask. What is that \$200,000 specifically for? Is it designated for any particular purpose or is it just to decorate this page here?

Mr. Neufeld: The \$200,000 is comprised of, I believe—and I am speaking from memory—\$130,000 for salaries, and we do expect salaries and benefits to equal, over a one-year period, approximately \$130,000, and the 70,000 is for—the other way around, pardon me—\$70,000 for salaries and \$130,000 for other expenses. The other expenses are expected to be things like transportation, communication, supplies and other operating.

I think it should be clear that before we get started, we have to guess and we are estimating these to be our costs. We will not spend that money in the first year for sure because we are feeling our way and we do not want to go into any programs or any expenditures until we are certain it is the direction we wish to take. That was our best guess at the time that in the first year we would spend about \$200,000.00. We will not spend anywhere near that.

Mr. Chornopyski: I want to get back to the Salaries, \$70,000.00. What kind of staff would that provide?

Mr. Neufeld: We expect there to be two people. At the present time, we have no permanent staff. We have one on secondment and one on temporary.

We expect the people to deal with seniors' organizations. We expect the people to deal with requests that come in by telephone. We expect people to deal with requests that come in by letter. We expect them to respond wherever there is a need. Until such a time as we find out what those needs really are and where we fit into the picture, because we have to remember that health has a number of services that they deliver—we have a Council of Aging in that department that delivers services—we have to find out exactly where we fit into the overall picture and until we do, we are going to move slowly.

Mr. Chornopyski: Is the Minister considering perhaps, in the not too distant future, some sort of an outreach program or outreach person? There are many seniors out there that are secluded that people are not aware of. They are perhaps the ones that need help more than anybody. I am specifically thinking of places like the Main Street hotels, some of the older hotels, and they are secluded in a room and nobody knows that they are there, nobody knows whether they get the kind of health care attention that they probably need. Is the Minister considering anything of that nature?

Mr. Neufeld: I do believe that the organizations servicing seniors in this city and indeed in the whole province are probably not reaching the people you refer to. It is quite possible we may have to look at encouraging the Government to develop programs.

Whether or not those programs will be developed by the Seniors Directorate or whether we will encourage another department, say the Department of Health, to deliver those programs, that is still up in the air. It is the kind of things, I believe, that you mentioned, the seniors who are not now being reached that we want to reach eventually. It is a matter of how to do that. If that means getting additional staff to do that, we will consider it.

(The Acting Chairman, Mr. Darren Praznik, in the Chair.)

Mr. Chornopyski: Let me go back to the White Paper, if I may, for a moment. I know the Minister has explained to some extent what that White Paper is about. Is such a White Paper being prepared or is it not yet in that stage? When does the Minister hope to begin work on this White Paper?

* (1610)

Mr. Neufeld: Discussions are being held with various organizations of various people in trying to get the information or obtaining the information, assembling the information that is needed to write the White Paper. I would not want to put a date on it. As I mentioned earlier, we have White Papers or partial papers dating back quite a number of years that are gathering dust on shelves. We do not want our paper to gather dust. We want our paper to be so complete that we can deal with it and have it form part of Government policy.

Mr. Chornopyski: Mr. Acting Chairman, through you to the Minister, what in your opinion should be the priorities as far as the White Paper is concerned?

Mr. Neufeld: I have talked to enough people now to realize or recognize that the priorities differ with the people you talk to. There are those who think that abuse by the care giver should be the first priority and those who believe that abuse by other elements should be the first priority. There are those who believe that the victim, him or herself, could indeed be at times the abuser, so there are any number of priorities, depending on how many people you talk to. This is one of the problems we have run into, is where do you set the priorities and how do we set the priorities. They are all areas that we must come to grips with.

Mr. Chornopyski: Mr. Acting Chairman, I agree with the Minister. There are a number of ways that the seniors are abused, and many times by themselves. That brings me to the question of chemical dependency. Is the Minister considering looking into this very serious matter of chemical dependency and alcohol as well? Most seniors are lonely seniors, or a lot of them. Some are fortunate that there is perhaps a mate still alive but those that are alone rely to a large extent on some sort of chemical or alcohol. Does the Minister see anything in that particular respect that can be done for these people?

Mr. Neufeld: We have to first of all find out what programs are available through Government and from without Government for those who abuse alcohol or other chemicals. I do believe that there is an incidence of alcohol abuse and there is an incidence of chemical abuse, drug abuse among seniors. We need only to check with our own parents. Every time they go to their doctor it seems they come back with another medication to take. It is a problem and I do believe it is something we have to look at. But I would not want to rush into a program for either chemical or alcohol abuse until I have seen what programs are available today and how they should be delivered.

Mr. Chornopyski: Mr. Acting Chairman, through you to the Minister, you mentioned that you are going to look at what programs are available. I do not, to my knowledge—and I may be wrong—but to my knowledge the only programs there are available are provincial programs. I do not think there are any federal senior citizen programs available. So what you are saying is that you are going to look at these programs that are available now and evaluate them, and perhaps change them, or is that what you are really saying?

Mr. Neufeld: I think that neither chemical abuse or alcohol abuse are restricted to seniors, and there are programs available outside of Government for people who abuse alcohol or chemicals. It is a matter of us determining whether these are properly delivered to seniors and whether there should be changes in that. We have to find people, first of all, who are qualified to tell us whether or not they are properly delivered. I do not pretend to have the answers to that. I do expect that I will find the answers to that.

Mr. Chornopyski: I want to touch on something that is very dear to my heart, and I want to say here and now, the thing I want to touch on is something that was introduced by the Liberal Party, and that is the Pharmacard. I wondered if the Minister—

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Order.

Mr. Chornopyski: That is right. Jay must have been shy on good ideas that day.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): I would remind the Members of the Committee that this is an opportunity to discuss policies related to seniors and not the finances of the agricultural community.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs): There are several farmers who are somewhat elderly and senior, and I think you should show the respect for them as well.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): The Committee certainly wishes to acknowledge the importance of seniors to the community who are farmers and I would recognize the Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) to carry on with his question.

Mr. Chornopyski: Thank you, Mr. Acting Chairman. As I said, I wondered if the Minister has had the time to give this Pharmacard some consideration in the past—I think it was the 29th of July, that I brought it to the Chamber during Question Period. So, we have had three or four months now. Has the Minister thought about it at all? Has he at the same time discussed the Pharmacard program with his counterpart or his colleague, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)?

Mr. Neufeld: I may not have indicated today, but I have indicated in the past that we will not be delivering services. We will be advocating services to be delivered by other Departments. This is clearly a service, if it comes into being, should be delivered by the Health Department. We have that on our agenda to discuss with the Minister of Health when we first meet with our Cabinet Committee. It will be discussed with them. I will not pretend to know what the problems of bringing in a Pharmacard, but I expect that the people in the Department of Health have looked at it and will know the answers to the questions I might have. But, yes, in answer to your question, we will be taking it up with the Minister for Health (Mr. Orchard). We will find out whether it is a practical solution to the problem of Pharmacare and, if not, what the problems are?

Mr. Chornopyski: Thank you, Mr. Acting Chairman. On the 29th of July when the Pharmacard, as I say, was introduced in the House during Question Period the Minister of Health, at that time, seemed quite receptive to the idea. Could you support that program or do you support it in your own mind? I know you just finished telling me that you are going to have to perhaps discuss the matter with the health services delivery people but, on your own as an individual, as a Minister, could you support such a program?

- * (1620)

Mr. Neufeld: I would say that I support the concept. It is a matter of somebody coming to tell me how it can be implemented and what the difficulties of implementation might be and I have been around long enough to know nothing comes easy. I do believe that if they have good reason why it cannot be implemented then they would come and tell me. As I said earlier, it is something that we will be bringing into the committee and we will get answers for you on it.

Mr. Chornopyski: I have to ask this question and I know that I came very close to asking it before and I may be repeating myself, but can the Minister give us some idea when this White Paper will be produced?

Mr. Neufeld: I would be in a position to tell you if we had time to talk about it at times. We have been in the House since July 21 and we have very little time to discuss with our own people. I made the mistake once of putting a date on the completion of this White Paper and I do not wish to make that mistake again.

Mr. Chornopyski: I certainly did not mean to trap you into any of that kind of situation. One of the very controversial things pertaining to seniors, Mr. Acting Chairman, is transportation, and I guess the reason it is controversial is because it was already there, into communities of our city, and then it has all the appearances of disappearing and so I guess it became very controversial.

My question is, would the Minister, in concert with the Urban Affairs Department, look into this matter of transportation for seniors, but not only for Fort Garry and St. Vital but for the entire City of Winnipeg? - (Interjection)- Well, they are all taxpayers and I keep hearing from time to time that - (Interjection)-

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Order.

Mr. Chornopyski: —they are being discriminated against for some reason and I think it is a very valid question—why not us?

Mr. Neufeld: I have no problem with discussing with the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) the possibilities of setting up a transit for, I would like to think, the disabled, whether or not they are seniors. Many seniors are quite capable of taking our street transportation system and some are not and it is not a matter of age frequently, it is matter of physical ability. And yes, I favour a kind of transportation that helps those who are unable to take advantage of the street transportation system. But I have to say this, my mother is coming up 88 and she takes Transit Tom on a regular basis. Having said that, however, yes, I will take it up.

Mr. Chornopyski: Seniors are perhaps the most vulnerable people, especially those on a very fixed income. These are the seniors who are not able to secure Blue Cross basically for financial reasons. Yet these are the likely people to need ambulance service which Blue Cross would cover. Has the Minister ever considered some means of providing this ambulance service for people who are in dire straits, people on, as I say, a very, very fixed income?

Mr. Neufeld: I would have to take up with the Minister for Health (Mr. Orchard), the coverage now for ambulance services.

I had thought the ambulance service was available for any of those who have the Blue Cross coverage. It is a matter then of those who do not have the Blue Cross coverage that you are concerned with. We always have to concern ourselves as well with the cost of those services. I also believe that an ambulance service will not be denied somebody just because he has not got the funds. I do believe the ambulance service is available to everyone. It is a matter of paying for that after. It is unlike in some jurisdictions, in other countries, that you have to—we are not asked to pay for this in advance. We get the bill after is my experience.

I have again no problem discussing with the Minister of Health the extension of services where they are not now available. I would think it would be a matter of cost in a lot of instances and it is a matter of priorities. The priorities I will not set for the Minister of Health. I will encourage him wherever seniors are involved to set priorities for seniors. I cannot set his priorities for him.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): The Minister perhaps introduced his staff before I came. I was wondering if he would reintroduce the people with him and give their positions. I am assuming one of them is the Director of the Directorate, or whatever. Could the Minister introduce his staff?

Mr. Neufeld: We have Eric Lubosch who is seconded from Health. We have Timothy Nyhof who is temporary. We have Garry Barnes of course who you know is the administrative officer.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Lubosch, from Health, is seconded to fill temporarily the position of executive director manager of the Seniors Directorate?

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Lubosch is brought in to help in the setting up of the Directorate, yes.

Mr. Storie: And Mr. Nyhof is temporarily what?

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Nyhof is working with us in liaising with seniors' organizations. Everybody fills every duty in this department. We are very lean. We cannot have specific duties assigned to any one person. Everyone does whatever has to be done at any one time.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Nyhof has been negotiating for Manitoba Hydro? Seriously, is Mr. Nyhof not your special assistant? Was he not?

Mr. Neufeld: No. Mr. Nyhof has never been my special assistant. Mr. Huebert is my special assistant.

Mr. Storie: Okay. These two people currently assume the two staff years that were provided for for the Seniors Directorate? Is that correct.

Mr. Neufeld: That is correct. They are the only two people presently working in the Directorate.

* (1630)

Mr. Storie: Mr. Acting Chairperson, it is very difficult for us and in having listened to the excellent questioning by the Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski), it is difficult to understand really what has been accomplished thus far by this Minister and this priority of Government.

It seems rather strange that the Minister and this Government continue to reference the priority they are placing on the concerns that seniors have and continue to reference the establishment of the Seniors Directorate when we have no firm staffing in place at the Directorate, when we have no mandate. We have the Minister confirming today that they are still in the process of setting up the Directorate. Certainly, there is every appearance from the Minister's answers that he in his own mind has not decided any direction, has not concluded that any specific actions need to be taken on the part of Government, either with respect to transportation, or with respect to the Pharmacare card or perhaps any other matter.

Is there any specific action the Minister can point to which he has undertaken as Minister responsible for Seniors which I can relate to my constituents as an initiative of this Government?

Mr. Neufeld: We have to recognize when you start from ground zero, it is going to take a while to set things up and it is not something that you do overnight. You have to feel your way and we are not prepared to spend the taxpayers' money setting up a large department and then finding out we do not need them or then finding out that we are heading in the wrong direction. We want to make certain that the direction we head into is the one that we wish to stay on. We have had numerous consultations with seniors organizations and with seniors. We have had consultations with Health. We are moving in the direction, I think, that we wish to move in. We have set up the Cabinet Committee. We believe that we are heading in the right direction and I recognize that the Member for Flin Flon has to find ways to criticize or things to criticize, so I will accept it as being his political agenda. I will take it at that.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I do not find a great deal of satisfaction in criticizing. What I would like to be able to do is to—

An Honourable Member: Praise him.

Mr. Storie: I come here to praise Caesar not to—

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Storie: I would like to be able to tell my constituents that something constructive has been done. The Minister has not been able to enunciate one clear initiative of the Government, other than to say he is trying to get the Directorate going. It is not even clear that the Minister has in his possession an understanding of or an outline of what is being offered to seniors in the various departments.

I would like to spend some time talking about one problem in particular that faces a lot of remote Northern communities, and that is the problem of housing. Has the Minister had an opportunity to discuss with his colleague, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), senior housing projects, senior housing initiative in the North? Can the Minister indicate whether there are any new programs that we might expect in terms of addressing the seniors housing problem in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Neufeld: There is a need for housing for seniors, not only in the North—

An Honourable Member: He hit Me.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Order; order. Is there a point of order being raised?

Mr. Neufeld: Hit him back.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): I would caution the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) to refrain from personal physical attacks on the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Needless to say, the health system is overstressed enough to add a patient to it today from this Assembly. I would caution the Member for Flin Flon and recognize the Honourable Minister to continue his answer to the Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Neufeld: Thank you again, Mr. Acting Chairman, there is a need for seniors' housing, not only in the North but there is a need for seniors' housing in the south in urban and in rural areas. We will as time goes on be addressing those with the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme). Nothing happens overnight and the Member for Flin Flon should recognize that. The development of programs for housing as an example takes several years. You have to have your plans. You have to have your locations and you have to have your budgets. He was in Government. He must recognize that monies are not that readily available and they must be planned well in advance. As we go into the matter of housing we will be planning for seniors in both northern and southern areas.

Mr. Storie: The Minister keeps referring to the old saw, well you cannot do everything overnight. Unfortunately even assuming this Government were to go a normal term of Government 25 percent of their term is practically over, so overnight I think is stretching the expectations that we have. Sooner or later would be more like it.

The Minister referenced the Cabinet Committee. Can the Minister indicate how many times this Cabinet Committee has met, what the agenda of those Cabinet Committees were and whether there has been any concrete results of any of those meetings, if there have been any in fact?

Mr. Neufeld: The Cabinet Committee, Mr. Acting Chairman, was set up about a month ago. We have not yet met. We will be meeting when we have time, once you let us out of the House.

Mr. Storie: So, Mr. Acting Chairperson, if we can put it in perspective, we have a Seniors' Directorate that was announced in the Throne Speech amidst much hoopla which has done nothing to date. There is no staff in place in the Directorate. We have in addition to that the announcement of a Cabinet Committee responsible for Seniors which has not met seven, eight months into the mandate of the Government, and yet we are to believe that somehow there is a commitment to these issues. I think it is strange credulity to say the least to have the Minister continue to say, yes, we are going to do something.

I would like to go back to the question of priorities. The Minister said that he has found that every time he meets with a group that group's priorities are different from the previous group. I am wondering whether this Minister can share any of his priorities with this committee. The Minister has been responsible for seniors, says that he has been meeting with seniors' groups, has officials around him who I assume are providing him with input on important issues and concerns in the field. Can the Minister tell us what initiatives he thinks or what initiatives he will be bringing forward as Minister responsible?

Mr. Neufeld: The Member for Flin Flon should understand and I do think he does that the budget for the Seniors' Directorate does not allow the delivery of any programs. The Seniors' Directorate will be discussing with the various departments of Government for the delivery of programs. As we go along the need for programs may become evident, but as the Member for Flin Flon should also know inasmuch as he was in Cabinet that budgets are struck months in advance and we have to bring new programs into Government or into Cabinet at the time when budgets are struck and not midway through a term.

Mr. Storie: Is the Minister saying that as Minister responsible for Seniors, and I assume the Minister is chairing the Cabinet Committee on Seniors, is the Minister saying that he has not met with or staff have not met with each of the departments in an attempt to understand what programs are being offered and what the shortcomings of those programs might be? Has none of even that basic research into the scope of the problems that face him been done?

* (1640)

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Acting Chairman, numerous meetings have been held with the various departments. I am sure that the Member for Flin Flon does not expect us to go into a money spending spree for the sake of coming to this table and discussing with him what money we may have spent. I rather believe it is the programs we will deliver we should be discussing, not the amount of money he wishes us to spend.

Mr. Storie: The Minister just reminded me that they are not into delivering programs. I assume that if they are not into delivering programs then their other logical function would be to assess programs that are being delivered by other departments and determine whether there are some shortcomings.

Can the Minister indicate which programs have been evaluated by him or his staff and whether they have come to any conclusion about additional supports, revamping of programs that need to have taken place? Has there been any of that evaluation done?

Mr. Neufeld: I am sure that the Member does not expect us to evaluate a program with one or two discussions.

We have to have many discussions. We have to discuss the programs that are delivered with seniors or seniors organizations and we have to come back and discuss it with those people who are in the delivery of those programs. I am sure he does not expect this to happen overnight. As I said earlier, we are not here to satisfy the Member for Flin Flon on the delivery of programs. We are here to satisfy the seniors of Manitoba.

Mr. Storie: I assume that if the Minister was doing something that some seniors would in fact be satisfied. It seems to me the Minister either is chasing his own tail, in terms of what he is accomplishing, or he has no intention of accomplishing anything.

Perhaps we should ask him specific questions. Has the Minister met or discussed with the Department of Housing the Critical Home Repair Program and particularly that portion of it which is applicable to seniors?

Mr. Neufeld: The Member should know that within our own department, the department he once headed, there is a program for repairs for seniors.

Yes, I have discussed with the Minister of Housing that there may be a need for a repair program. As I said earlier, nothing happens overnight in Government. He, of all people, should know that. As we put programs into being, we have to find out first of all how we want to deliver the program. We have to find out who is going to deliver the programs. We have to find out who is going to pay for the program. That is something else you might bear in mind. We must find out what budget it comes out of. Until we do all of those things, I do not think we can come up with any new programs at this point.

Mr. Storie: I have long given up hope that we are not going to see any new programs in this Government but I am wondering whether we are actually going to see an attempt to improve the programs that exist and the delivery of programs and I refer back to the Critical Home Repair Program.

There is no doubt in the last few years that because of the static nature of the income cutoff for seniors that fewer and fewer seniors are able to use the Critical Home Repair Program. Consequently, we are seeing a reduction in the use of the program. There is no doubt in my community and I am sure in virtually every community around the province, there is an increasing need for that type of assistance. Is the Minister going to move on that problem or are we going to wait until there is some grandiose plan available to attack all fronts at once?

Mr. Neufeld: We are moving on the problems as we come to them. We discussed them with the other Ministers. But I think we must also remember, and I remind the Member again, that until we have a budget for a change of a program or an addition to a program regardless of whether it is a new one or existing one, we cannot move on it until we have that budget approved.

Mr. Storie: One final question, the Minister says that he is moving on problems as we come across them. I am not convinced the Minister has been very diligent in looking for problems. I am assuming that he is sincere, that if he comes across a problem, he will attempt to rectify it. The proof, of course, is in the pudding. I am assuming over eight months they have identified some problems and some programs, or some problems that are not currently being addressed that may need to be addressed.

So my question is has the Minister through the Estimates process made any recommendations whatsoever to improve, to change, to alter programs that serve seniors in this province? Has there been a single recommendation through the Estimates process? We all know, any of us who have been in Government, that the Estimates are being finalized within the next six weeks, in all likelihood, and the fact of the matter is if there had been no programs initiated at this point, then seniors can forget 1989-90 in terms of any additional programming or any additional support. Is there a single initiative that we are going to see in the next Budget year?

Mr. Neufeld: Yes, the Member said it well. He said the proof is in the pudding and when the pudding is done, you may well enjoy it.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): I do not have the Supplementary Estimates in front of me, but I think I can recall exactly what was on the page. - (Interjection)- Yes, it is written as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says, it is written in my head. There are two SYs indicated in the Seniors Directorate. Can the Minister indicate to us, I am assuming from previous answers these two SYs are not filled but there is a dollar allocation to them, so I am also assuming that there is some indication or knowledge on the part of the Minister and his staff as to what those two SYs will be for and are they to be the entire directorate?

Mr. Neufeld: At the present time, it is the intention of that to be our entire directorate, yes.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate what the two positions will be?

Mr. Neufeld: There will be no such thing as a specific job description for each one of them. Each will do everything. We do not have the kind of staff where we can set it up and each one work only on specific jobs. Everyone will work on every job.

Ms. Gray: Again, if the Minister could clarify, if there are no specific job descriptions, how then does the

Minister determine even what salaries would be given since most job descriptions have to be classified and a salary attached?

Mr. Neufeld: Trust me.

Ms. Gray: I did not get his answer.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): The Honourable Minister, if he could repeat his answer.

Mr. Neufeld: I said, trust me.

Ms. Gray: Well, I have some difficulty in trusting and I am sure the Civil Service Commission and personnel would have the same difficulties if there is going to be no job descriptions. It is a little hard to ask a person to come and do a job when they do not know what their job is. There also seems to be a fair transportation budget attached to this directorate. Could the Minister indicate why the amount of dollars seems to be quite high for only two staff?

Mr. Neufeld: I believe the amount is \$10,000.00. It was mentioned earlier, the Member may not have been here, but when you start from ground zero, it is difficult to estimate what your cost might be. I have also indicated that in the first year, that being the year ended March 31, 1989, we will not come anywhere near in spending our budget. We will move along and move along slowly and spend monies only as it is necessary.

Ms. Gray: Can this Minister indicate, these two positions which have no job descriptions, when will they be bulletined and will there be a competition where the job, whatever it may be, will be open to individuals who might be interested?

Mr. Neufeld: I am not certain we are going to bulletin those jobs. I expect we will take that up with the Civil Service Commission and we will follow the instructions that they have for us on it.

Ms. Gray: I will say to the Minister in response to his answer, he can trust me, because I will tell you the Civil Service Commission will certainly indicate that you will need job descriptions if you are going to be hiring individuals. Could the Minister tell us, has it been determined who will be writing or working on the White Paper or a paper on elder abuse?

Mr. Neufeld: We are in the process of gathering the information now, Mr. Acting Chairman, and the actual writing, the physical writing, we have not yet decided who will be doing that.

* (1650)

Ms. Gray: I do recall that there is only one activity that has been identified under the Seniors Directorate and, if I recall that activity it talks about, there will be coordination of the fragmented reporting functions for continuing care, home care, personal care homes and the Well Elderly Program. Could the Minister please explain to me what exactly that activity involves?

Mr. Neufeld: In the first place, we will have a committee of Cabinet that will be getting together to discuss the various areas of delivery of programs to seniors, and that is the first start; that is the start of bringing together a reporting system and as we go along we will find out what we have to do. We can not, as I said earlier, you can not start off going at full speed. You have got to crawl before you can walk, and you have to walk before you can run. And we have no intention of spending the taxpayers' money for the sake of coming here and saying we have a program fully in place. We will develop that program as we go on and no amount of hassle is going to change that.

Ms. Gray: I am surprised, or I am implying by the Minister's comments he feels we are hassling him. I feel that our questions by all three Members that have been questioning today have been very direct, upfront, and expressed concerns of Oppositions and of Manitobans who have talked to us. Again, in regard to this particular activity, I am assuming there must have been some data or rationale or need that was expressed by someone in regard to this need to coordinate the fragmented reporting functions. Could the Minister tell us where that need was identified or by whom, and how it came to be the one and only activity for the Seniors Directorate?

Mr. Neufeld: That paper was written a long time ago and it was an activity that was identified. It was a need that was identified that there are numerous departments that deliver programs to seniors. And there is no reporting system, central reporting system at this time. I recognize that if the Department of Energy and Mines delivers programs to seniors, then every department of Government must deliver programs to seniors. There are programs delivered by the federal Government. We have no idea of how many there are. And there is no central reporting system for that. In order for us to determine what the needs out there may be, we must first find out what programs are given and what, and the type of programs are given.

Ms. Gray: Again, for the Minister, your answer talked about a number of programs throughout a number of departments, but I beg the Minister to again look at his Supplements as he has tabled them in the House and those supplements refer specifically to one activity and that activity specifically relates to three programs, continuing care and home care, one and the same, specifically relates to three program areas which are all under the purview of the Department of Health. Again, I am just asking for some rationale as to why it was decided that that is the particular activity that the Seniors Directorate or staff would assume or is the Minister indicating from his answers, and I am not quite sure, if in fact because that paper's Supplements were written a long time ago that in fact that will not be the activities of the Seniors Directorate.

Mr. Neufeld: I do not think we will be restricted, Mr. Acting Chairman, to the activities written on that, whatever it was. What was that, the Supplementary information? We are not restricted to those activities. We will be coordinating and working with the other

departments in any program that they may deliver for seniors. We will be advocating changes to programs as they become obvious to us and as they become obvious to the people to whom the services or the programs are delivered. We do not know today what all will be included in the work of the Seniors Directorate. And I do not think anybody does, but as we go along we do expect that we will learn more and more about it and we will find out where the shortcomings of programs are, where changes might be made, where programs indeed might be unnecessary and where new programs should be put in. It is a development process.

Ms. Gray: Maybe I can backtrack a bit. Given that the Seniors Directorate is a new thrust by this Government, and it would appear by our questioning that there maybe have not been a lot of initiatives started, perhaps the Minister could tell us or table for us—I would assume that one of the first steps of this particular Minister and his Directorate, or his staff who are working with him at this time, would be to develop some short-term objectives between now and the end of the fiscal year as to what the Minister would like to see accomplished. Perhaps the Minister could very succinctly tell us, are there two or three specific objectives as to what the Minister would like to see accomplished between now and the end of the fiscal year?

Mr. Neufeld: Specifically, we would like to see—and I can table this for you—a number of our agenda items laid down, but primarily what we would like to see by the end of this fiscal year is the way we expect this department to operate, the way we expect this directorate to operate. We have an awful lot to learn about the process of aging; we have an awful lot to learn about seniors; we have an awful lot to learn about the needs. I am not going to sit here and try to tell you that we know everything and have a final program ready at this point. We do not have. If we have a program ready by the end of March, we will be quite happy.

Ms. Gray: Would the Minister—he said he would table that information. Could he table that information? I think we would all appreciate it.

The Minister had indicated earlier today that his "directorate would be moving on problems as we come across them." There have been a number of concerns that have been identified throughout previous Estimates in other departments of this Government which, in answer to questions, it has been indicated that responsibility of dealing with those problems would be assumed or undertaken by the Seniors Minister (Mr. Neufeld) and his directorate. Could the Minister indicate to us, have these particular problems come to his attention from other Ministers, and could he tell us what they are and what initial steps have been undertaken to address these problems?

Mr. Neufeld: Those assumptions were made by the Liberal Party and not by other Ministers in the Government. At the same time, we do meet with other Ministers and, if there are problems that directly affect seniors, we are made aware of it. But the programs are all being delivered by other departments and not by our department, nor will they be delivered by our department.

Ms. Gray: I do not think the Minister understood my question. He is saying this assumption was made by the Liberal Party. The record will show that in the Community Services Estimates it was made very clear by the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson), and I have no reason to doubt her, that the whole area of the aged and infirm residential care facilities, that this was a very grave problem that had been identified between the Department of Health and Community Services. The Minister of Community Services at that time, which would be now some two months ago, made it very clear that it would be the Seniors Minister and his staff who would be assuming responsibility for dealing with this problem. In reference to that particular example, could the Minister then indicate for us today what initial meetings have been undertaken and how this problem is going to be addressed?

Mr. Neufeld: I cannot understand how the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) would expect a \$200,000 budget to look after the services now being provided by Community Services to seniors. We will work with the Minister of Community Services and identify what we believe to be shortcomings in programs they deliver and what we believe to be a program that might be delivered, but we will not be taking over the responsibility of delivering services.

* (1700)

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, it is not myself and the Liberal Party who has suggested that a \$200,000 budget will deal with these problems. It is in fact on the record that the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) herself has stated that the Seniors' Minister (Mr. Neufeld) will be responsible for dealing with the problems that are associated with the aged and infirm residential care facilities. This statement was made some two months ago during the course of questioning in Estimates. I am assuming that the Minister of Community Services has, since she has had a break from Estimates, talked to the Minister for Seniors. I am asking the question. I am not saying that the Seniors Directorate will solely do that. I am asking, what has your staff initiated in regard to dealing with this particular problem?

Mr. Neufeld: At this point in time, we have not initiated anything at all to deal with that particular problem. We are discussing with the Minister of Community Services in a general way the needs of seniors and seniors' programs under her direction.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate if the review committee, which was mentioned by the Minister of Community Services and she had indicated who would be part of that review committee, could the Minister for Seniors, since he would be involved or her staff would be involved, indicate whether that review committee has met to even discuss this particular issue?

Mr. Neufeld: Is this a review committee of Cabinet? If I am on the committee, we have not met, no.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the Minister has asked if it is a review committee of Cabinet. Well I do

not mind answering some of the questions for the Ministers, but perhaps this particular question he should ask his own Minister of Community Services who is to be on the committee, since she appeared to be very knowledgeable about the issues and what would happen.

I would ask the Minister if he could—and I know from the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) and the Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornypyski) that these questions have been asked, but could he indicate exactly what has been accomplished to date by the Directorate? I do not want to infer that we feel that wonderful new programs and that everything should happen overnight, but it has been seven months, and I think there should at least be some well-established plans and some beginnings of programs or looking at programs. I am wondering if the Minister could tell us what has been started in this particular Directorate.

Mr. Neufeld: We have been assembling information on the various programs that are being delivered by both the federal and the provincial Governments. When we have all that information available, we will put it down and look at the overlaps. We will look at the needs for the programs. We will have to set priorities on them and then deal with the Ministers responsible for delivering those programs.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, as the Minister has indicated himself, he only has two staff years. Perhaps he could tell us how, with the number of programs that are certainly involved for seniors, possibly two staffpeople could evaluate every program that is federally and provincially funded or available for seniors, and how two staffpeople could actually do that in detail and come back with information?

Mr. Neufeld: We had no illusions about being able to put into place a directorate overnight or even within the first year to do all the work that is necessary for the seniors of this province. We do believe that we have to move slowly on it and not put into place too many people because we feel that, if we have too many people in place, we will not know what they are doing. You are suggesting to us even now that we do not know what the people we now have in place are doing. But, believe us, we are moving on our agenda. We are moving in the direction we wish to move. We will by the end of our fiscal year, hopefully, have an overview of the programs that are in place. We will then be discussing with the Ministers of the various departments the programs that they are delivering. We will start discussing at that point areas in which we feel there are shortcomings, and the areas in which we feel there are perhaps overlaps.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): The hour being 5 p.m., this committee shall rise.

SUPPLY—EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

Mr. Chairman, Mark Minenko: I call the Committee of Supply to order, please. We are continuing to consider

the Estimates of the Department of Employment Services and Economic Security.

We are presently considering item 2. Economic Security, (a) Administration: (1) Salaries—pass; 2.(a)(2) Other Expenditures—pass; 2.(a)(3)—pass.

2.(b) Social Allowances Programs: (1) Social Allowances—the Honourable Member for St. Vital.

* (1540)

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): I have a number of questions in this regard. In 1986, the Minister was very critical of the Government at that time for not allowing people on social assistance to get such grants as 55-Plus and SAFER and CRISP and what have you. As a matter of fact, there must have been some concurrence in their caucus at that time, because there was a subsequent letter from the now Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) assuring them that their side, when in Opposition, would keep pressing for such a change for people under social assistance to particularly bring their income for rentals up more closely in line with the practical realization at the marketplace.

(The Acting Chairman, Mr. Neil Gaudry, in the Chair.)

I wonder if the Minister could explain if that is still her philosophy or indeed whether she has had a change of heart, whether she studied it deep enough to think that was foolhardy at that time to suggest such a course or whether indeed she plans on reverting back to her previous position in 1986.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Employment Services and Economic Security): Being the Minister, I have taken the opportunity to study that question. I had been approached by a group who were asking about these particular programs and could they qualify for them. They were suggesting that they could and asked me, at that time of the meeting, to get a legal opinion on the matter, which I subsequently did. The legal opinion was from the Attorney-General's (Mr. McCrae) people in the Attorney-General's Department. They believed that this did not contravene The Human Rights Act. In a subsequent meeting with them, I indicated that. I have never indicated—definitely never, never—there would be any changes, but I indicated to them what they asked me to find out, was whether or not it contravened The Human Rights Act.

We must remember, when these programs were initiated, they were initiated for low-income families that are not on social assistance. Since I have become the Minister, I have had an opportunity, which I did not have in Opposition, which the Member of course does not have an opportunity either to look at the financial situation of the whole thing. It has been indicated to me by staff that this would—for instance, putting in the CRISP payments to social assistance recipients would be in the neighborhood of some \$7.3 million. In the 55-Plus, it would mean another \$1.6 million. So that has to be considered when you are considering these programs. The intent of the program is to serve people who are on low income, who are employed but are still having difficulty, and it is based on their income.

It is not every program that is instituted by Government does not automatically become available to everyone. I think, if the Member stops and thinks about it, he will realize that is the case.

Mr. Rose: It is unfortunate that in questioning both here and elsewhere that the Minister, even with her staff, is so ill-prepared to answer questions and bounces way off of the subject. In the interests of the people of Manitoba and particularly those people who she serves, I would suggest that the Minister start sitting down and talking to some of these organizations, really listening to them, finding out what their problems are and start realizing what goes on in her department. I think, as I suggested, she should take a page from my book and maybe spend some time.

I think she does anyway. She come from Gladstone and I think things are a little different there than they are in the core of Winnipeg. I would suggest some visits to the North End with those organizations with individuals to find out what really exists there and to get the grass-roots problems. The Minister indicates that now that she is in Government that she can examine the financial situation of the whole thing. I do not know exactly what that means, but I am also prepared and can look at the financial situation. It seems to me the difference between she and I perhaps is that when I see them that I can understand them. She probably does not or at least the knowledge that she is putting forth to this House, Mr. Acting Chairman, would indicate so.

We have a very limited length of time and we would like some more forthright answers. If the Minister indeed cannot answer them, to ask her staff for the answers or indeed I would be prepared to take the answers some time later on. But just to get non-answers like we have been getting, I think is a waste of time for all of us.

I have one other question. The Minister in 1986 was hellbent on election to have these programs given to social allowance people. Now she has obviously changed her mind. She says that she has a legal opinion. When did she get that legal opinion? What prompted her to get that legal opinion? Did she get it while she was in Opposition, before she put her and her Party's commitment, and before the now Minister from Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) put his position on the record, or is this something that she has now come to because of pressure from perhaps some advocacy group? At what time did she discover that she should start getting legal opinions rather than just make it a political gesture?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Acting Chairman, I guess I should not be, but I am just a little annoyed with the Member. I just stood up in this House and I gave him an answer about people who came to me, who raised this issue and then I responded to them. I met with them twice in order to first have the initial request from them and then to give them the answer. Now, they did not like the answer obviously, but an answer was given.

That particular group whose initials are SACOM, Social Assistance Coalition, initiated the request for

me to get a legal opinion on. I did that. The Member somehow suggests that I never talked to anybody. It would sound as if I sat in my office in some sort of a vacuum. I have met with North End Women's Centre and we have discussed social allowances. I have met with MAPO and we have discussed social allowances. I met with SACOM, we discussed social allowances. I have met with others who have discussed that. It is not for lack of meeting with people. It is not lack of studying the department because I know that I have spent considerable amount of time studying this issue. If the Member—he can be as derogatory as he likes to me, I really do not care. If you are trying to aggravate me and get through my skin, that is fine. That is what I suppose you are here for, if you really think an Opposition is only to be nasty to the Minister, but I have tried very hard to address the subject of social assistance.

We spent a considerable amount of money on social assistance in this province. We have raised it by 3.9 percent just in the last while effective the 1st of January. The Member I am sure, if he ever does be on the Government side, it will be interesting when he reads back in Hansard and says things that he has said, perhaps he may change his mind about them too. You have to be adaptable. I did not know that cost \$7 million when I asked the question. I did not berate the Minister for hours about it. I simply asked a question and got an answer. In light of the facts, I think it would be very difficult for this province to comply.

* (1550)

If we were to comply with the 55-Plus and the CRISP, and then of course in Housing there are two other programs that they are asking about, some people would be discriminated against twice because, in 55-Plus for instance, you have to be 55 to get it. Is that discrimination? I mean, if you are going to have a 55-Plus Program, is somebody 25 then going to go to the Human Rights Commission and say they are being discriminated against? I am not quite sure what the Member is trying to prove by all these remarks, but I assure him that I have studied the issue and I will continue to study the issue.

Mr. Rose: I can understand what is going here and we have tried over several months now to cooperate with the department, tried to cooperate with the Government so that what they have said in their promises before and what policies they have for it to give them a chance to put them forward. In fact, I would not even understand why the Minister would have a legal opinion because, Mr. Acting Chairman, that is not the point, the legal opinion. She did not question legal opinion when she was in Opposition. It is whether the Minister is prepared to now give these programs that she said she was in favour of when she was in Opposition.

The legal opinion is only that. They are not compelled to give these programs to the people by the Human Rights, not whether shall they or can they or would they, and it is a real joke. I wish she had gone to the North End and seen how some of these people tried to get their rent payments made and what conditions

they live under. I can see quite clearly, Mr. Acting Chairman. The problem here is not the lack of meeting with the people. It is a lack of listening to the people and understanding what they are saying about these programs and problems.

I have read over a couple of years of Estimates and I am prepared to go to the people at any time with any remarks she can take out of the Estimates in context or outside of them because, generally speaking, when I get up to speak, I only would try to be fair and equitable. In this case, it may not be fair to the Minister and it may not be equitable to the Government, but I am trying to be fair and equitable to those people who are trying to get back into the mainstream of society. We, as a Government on this side anyway as Liberals with a social conscience, feel that if the money is in the budget and if it is available, then we should be doing that, particularly if we made some promise in the future that this would be the case.

I can see the inequities in the Minister because, in going over these previous Estimates, I can see that at that point she needed a lot of help from other Ministers and other Members and certainly during the crisis on the foster parents she needed to get bailed out. I am saying and I find no problems in going to other people to get that assistance but do not stand up here and be holier than thou without answers and be critical of us because in Opposition we are trying to extract the answers to assist the Government and to assist the people in Manitoba in the programs that you have already put plainly on the record in previous years.

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Acting Chairman, I do not believe I detected any questions in that, but I would like to remark that there was no promise on my part to include 55-Plus and CRISP in payments to people on social assistance, and it was not in the budget. So when the Member indicates that it is in the budget, well then pay it. That is not the case; it is not in the budget.

Mr. Rose: When is a promise a promise, Mr. Acting Chairman? When you are in Opposition and you go to the pains—two people are now Ministers on that side. When they go to the pains to be highly critical of the New Democratic Party for their lack of action on something and then some few months later they come back and completely deny it or completely walk away from the commitment, that to me is fooling not only the people who need that money but fooling all of the people of Manitoba because it could—

An Honourable Member: Does this mean their ag policy includes retroactive insurance?

Mr. Rose: It could be, it could be. Yes, we will accept this program retroactive to when you people went into power, if that is what you choose to do. The money is in the budget. We can see it. You have windfall profits and you still will not live up to the financial promises that you made.

In regard to these, I wonder if the Minister could give us an answer as to why a program that is similar and funded by the Province of Manitoba, why similar

payments to welfare recipients, social assistance recipients are being allowed in the City of Winnipeg, but yet there is a difference in the programs here. I say this without a lot of knowledge and whether this is not true but we have heard allegations in this House and elsewhere this is true. Could the Minister confirm whether such a practice goes on in the City of Winnipeg and, if so, why would it differ from the provincial programs?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Acting Chairman, yes, to the Member, there are many differences in the social assistance system in the City of Winnipeg, and this is one of the reasons that we will be discussing with the Urban Association and the Union of Municipalities about delivery of welfare. I should mention to the Member though that whereas the City of Winnipeg does allow the 55-Plus and the CRISP benefits to city welfare recipients that their caseload is a much different type of caseload than the province. The City of Winnipeg is the short term, mostly younger people who are on social assistance, so their bill would not be anywhere near as high if we were to take that over.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Acting Chairman, it does not matter whether the bill is small or big. That is not the point. The principle is what the point is. I would just like to go back. This Minister seems to be very sensitive about what goes on Hansard. All I would say is that as far as coming back I would certainly rather have these remarks that I have given now than any that might refer to mistletoe anyway.

The Minister when she was in Opposition, Mr. Acting Chairman, had some thoughts about the inequities between social allowance given in Winnipeg and not given to rural parts of Manitoba and other municipalities. At that time—and I am sorry that I do not have too much of the details—but she went to the trouble, and I congratulate her for that, of making a survey of people in this field. One of the things that she said after that survey, if I am correct, is that the underlying problem seemed to be when you looked over all the letters of the need by municipal officials for some training, something to help them in the delivery of social assistance. They lacked experience because in some cases they might have one case a year. That is not very much. They have not got the staff nor the resources to investigate in many cases. It seems contradictory, but we will put on record the reason for that.

Again, I commend her for making this study but nowhere in here does she seem to address the fact that what we have heard is that people flock into Winnipeg. They are worried on their side, being principally rural Members, about the people leaving the municipalities. One of the reasons they leave is because, if they are unemployed or on social assistance, they get a much better deal in the City of Winnipeg, so it almost causes a forced migration. I would like it if the Minister could briefly tell us what her thoughts are on that program right now and, since she is in Government, what sort of training and alterations she has made for the delivery of social assistance in those places where she said they needed training?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Acting Chairman, I should remark before, I should not let it go unnoted before I address

the question that was asked. The Member indicated that it does not really matter what it costs. That is an interesting observation. Obviously, he has never sat on Treasury Board. It does matter what things cost, it does matter a great deal what they cost. Unfortunately, we want to help people, but we have to address the cost. We have to get the money from somewhere and we all know where it comes from is the taxpayer.

* (1600)

The Member had indicated some remarks I had made last year about rural municipalities and rural towns having problems with social assistance. Yes, I did do some considerable work in looking into that and, no, I have not initiated a training program. As I have indicated several times in the House, I am going to be meeting with those rural organizations and municipalities and with the Urban Association to discuss this and formulate plans. Until we get a plan, I will not put anything in place.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Acting Chairman, those remarks about it does matter what it costs. I hope those are original thoughts of the Minister and not notes that have been passed to her.

If she were listening, she would know clearly what I meant and not play games with little words. The record will clearly show that. If it does not clearly show it, anybody who knows me knows that I am not a spendthrift. In fact, if I have a fault, it is the opposite. I realize better than anybody on that side of the House where money comes from and where it goes to. I never had any gifts in my life and I do not expect that the Government should squander our money. I never would want to be on record that I am that type of a person, because nobody would believe it anyway.

What I am saying to you that our principle is that when a person goes out to promise something to somebody, no matter what the promise is, whether it be seniors' transport that you renege on or whether the deal we are talking about right now or anything else, it is important, especially when you are dealing with people who are in need, the most needy people in our society, that when you make a promise that you keep it. You should have figured out the cost when you made the promise.

Mrs. Oleson: I indicate to the Member, if he reads Hansard carefully, I never did make a promise. I did not promise to do that. I asked about it. I received an answer from the Minister. I may have berated him a little for not doing it, which you are doing to me, but I did not promise to do it. I had no way of knowing when I was in Opposition—I could have asked the Minister, I guess, but he did not volunteer that information when he answered my question either. I had no way of knowing what the cost implications would be to that program.

Mr. Rose: Absolutely my point, that before politicians go out making promises and criticizing Government, they should know what the costs are. I guess it is very surprising to the Minister that the point she was making

or implying these promises, at least—it was not a direct promise, I agree. There was certainly a strong implication there of where this Government would go.

I guess it came as a surprise to her that they did get slightly more seats than this Party after the election was over on April 26. Hopefully, she should have taken that into account in all the things that she advocated for, rather than just playing politics with them at the time.

I think I only have one small question more in this department, then I will concur to the critic from the Second Opposition Party. There has been, I think it is called excess special needs. I recall it was one of the first items we brought in here. It seemed to be a well-kept secret from the people that such a program was available to people on social assistance. We practically had to, and Hansard will show this to be correct, pry it out of the Minister until she was able to pry out of her staff that such a thing was available. I repeat, it was amongst the people who need this and that is what it is there for is people who are in dire straits and need another \$100 or \$200.00. In this particular case, it came to light because of a drastic cutback by this Government from the previous year on allowances for school supplies. This gave an opportunity for the Government to make up this shortfall and make sure that people who had one or two or three or more children going to school would not have to take food off the table to buy them the required supplies for school.

I am wondering if the Minister could tell us if indeed her staff has been advised to make this excess special needs available and the information available to it, so that people—and the money is in the budget. It is not something we are asking for extra in the budget—if her department is making as much use of these funds to help the real needy people, certainly more than they were doing previous to May of this year.

Mrs. Oleson: The Member is asking about the school supply needs for children this year. It was not a closely guarded secret, as he indicates. It was indicated in brochures. It was certainly conveyed to field staff who then discussed the needs with people, and they were able to get school supplies, those who needed them in particular, instead of just giving a blanket payment to everyone. So people in some cases were able to acquire more than the allotment for last year and sometimes less. It depended on the individual needs. We did help people out in that regard with school supplies.

Mr. Rose: Just as a supplementary to that, I wonder if indeed—and we will do some checking ourselves to see if people who are in this need really do know about it and how far the limit is and what is available to them. But I just wanted to, rather than ask a question, correct the record that indeed there was information to go out that went out, and indeed there were brochures went out, but the Minister well knows those never went out until it was brought to the attention of the Minister in this House! The record will clearly show that, and I think that she should set this record straight herself in that regard.

Mrs. Oleson: While we are setting the record straight, the brochures went out long before it was raised in the House.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): We are into 2.(b), I understand, Social Allowances Programs, and I would like to ask a couple of questions and make a couple of observations.

With regard to rent allowances or rent guidelines, I have been advised by people who are recipients, people who are activists in various organizations, social allowance organizations and so on, that they are being squeezed this year, that they have the impression that the welfare recipients, social allowance recipients, are not getting the same flexible treatment as last year even, with regard to rent allowances.

Now that is a general statement that was made to me. I have no data to back it up and my question, therefore, is there any change in policy whatsoever with regard to rent guidelines or rent allowances? That is No. 1, is there any change in policy guidelines? No. 2, is there any change in administrative approach? Has the Minister ordered the staff to be tougher in terms of additional rent allowances? We know there are many, many cases where people simply cannot get adequate accommodation, particularly in Winnipeg and to some extent in Brandon, with the specific rent guidelines that we have. We have always allowed the staff to provide some flexibility to deal with many cases, so my question then is (a) has there been any change of policy, and (b) is there any change in administrative approach?

Mrs. Oleson: No, there has been no change in policy and there has been no change that I am aware of in administrative approach. There is still the same flexibility as there has been.

Mr. Leonard Evans: That is good to hear, because the impression that I got very clearly from a person who is very much involved in helping social allowance recipients is that there is a feeling out there that they are being squeezed this year, that their increases are not adequate. I am sorry to say this. It has gone on for some time; it is not only going on now. I suspect the provincial Government through this program is probably one of the chief sources of funding to slum landlords in this province. Too many slum landlords are making a good living off of the taxpayers' money through these programs. That is why we have to be more pro-active than ever before, in my judgment, than we have been in the past.

When I was Minister, we did move toward having staff identified in the various district offices in Winnipeg who could take more of a pro-active approach, particularly in helping young mothers. There are some people on the social allowance rolls who are very young. They are mother's allowance categories. They have not had the experience in life. They need guidance and I am not suggesting for a moment, as the Minister was trying to explain the other day, that we should interfere with people's lives and tell them where to live and that sort of thing. It goes beyond that.

* (1610)

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

We are not talking about how one runs one's home, whether you should put up pictures or have what colour

furniture or whatever. We are talking about basic, adequate accommodation, accommodation that does not leak, accommodation that is free of infestation, accommodation where you do not have broken plumbing or broken doors, or whatever. We are talking about basic adequate structures for these people and, as I say, there are thousands of young mothers in this city alone who I am sure are living in slums and we, the taxpayers of Manitoba, are paying these slum landlords. I think we have got to do more.

I will take my share of criticism for years gone by. I was never happy with it. We have got to do more. We try to move away from it and maybe the Minister can advise whether there has been any progress in this respect. We have simply got to take a more positive, pro-active approach in this regard to make sure we are getting good value for money. The Minister is always saying she wants to make sure she gets value for the taxpayers' money. Well, this is one way of doing it.

Let us not pour money into slum landlords' pockets. Let us not keep people in inadequate accommodation; let us be pro-active. There are certain categories of people that I am sure would welcome assistance in finding adequate accommodation that is suitable for themselves and their families. I wonder if the Minister has any comment to make on that.

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Chairman, yes, I am sure that the Member, as a former Minister, does understand the problem and I do as well. There has been no change from when he was the Minister in that regard. Things are still going on, the staff are still counselling, asked to counsel people and help people in their accommodations when it is appropriate. We are raising the rent guidelines as of the 1st of January, as has been the practice in former years. This matter was reviewed in the summertime, we are continuing to monitor it.

I do agree with the Member that there are people living in homes that really are not suitable and there is the fact that we, I suppose, in essence, are paying slum landlords but people choose to live in these places. They find it difficult to find other places. We cannot move them all tomorrow. The Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) is getting agitated about the whole thing again. I know, I understand where she is coming from on the whole thing. None of us want to see—

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member for Ellice, on a point of order. Order, please.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): I must say that I do have to agree with the Minister's comments this time that in fact I am agitated. I am quite tired of her insisting that people on social assistance choose where to live. Most of us in this House—there may be some exceptions—would recognize the fact that as far as people choosing where to live, it is dependent upon a number of variables, and one of the most common variables is income. It is the province that pays the income, so you do not choose where to live. You choose where to live based on your income.

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. Shall the item pass? The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Given the fact that we all seem to recognize that there is a problem here of taxpayers' monies being used for inadequate housing and that there are some particular categories, especially the young mothers with families who need some guidance, can the Minister advise us whether she is prepared to be more pro-active in this respect, whether she with her staff can do more? There are some basic ways of doing this through the Department of Housing.

In years gone by, the New Democratic Party has built social housing in this province, public housing for families. There are thousands of units around the province and a lot of the units do have welfare or social allowance recipients as tenants, although that was never the sole purpose of social housing. It was meant to provide income to people in accordance with need and to include the working poor or low average income as well and not simply for social assistance recipients. Nevertheless, I suppose you could argue that one solution would be, nevertheless, to build more of this kind of housing. I am not sure what the Government's plans are in that respect. Putting that point aside, can the Minister advise whether she and her staff can do something in a more pro-active fashion in this area in the months and years ahead?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes, I can undertake to tell the Member that I will work with staff and see what solutions we might suggest that we try. But I am sure that he recognizes that it is a long-standing problem, and it is not an easy problem to solve.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I would like to touch on another area under the item of (b) Social Allowances, and that is the area of Municipal Assistance.

First of all, I noticed that the monies being required this year, approximately \$40.4 million, are less than the monies requested last year, \$41.3 million. Normally, this is a reflection of the demand at the Municipal Assistance level which often relates to the levels of unemployment. Can the Minister, nevertheless, explain why this figure is lower this year than the amount provided for last year?

Mrs. Oleson: I do not know where the Member is, what figures he is looking at but, in my Estimates sheet here, (3) Municipal Assistance, \$41 million last year and \$42 million-some this year. Maybe the Member could clarify just what he is asking because, to me, 42 is bigger than 41.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I do not know where this came from. This is page 63. Obviously, what I have got is another printout here. Maybe these are the previous—no, no, they are this year but there are different numbers. For instance, under—

An Honourable Member: Then you are going to start criticizing your own budget.

Mr. Leonard Evans: That is right.

An Honourable Member: That would be a coup.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Yes. The sheet I have has another \$1 million for social allowances but it has a little less for municipal.

At any rate, I gather then that there is an additional amount made. Can the Minister advise, is that additional amount there related to the fact that unemployment is growing? Is that the reason?

Mrs. Oleson: There has been a small amount increased to allow for an anticipated—that the municipalities are forecasting there may be a caseload increase.

I am sure, in previous years—I cannot recall at the moment—that the Member himself defended Estimates that included an allowance for increases because you have to make some forecasts when you are projecting budgets for the coming year.

Mr. Leonard Evans: You make forecasts and usually base it on increasing rates. At the same time, that particular item is, as I recall, subject to correlation to some degree with their levels of unemployment. So if unemployment drops, Municipal Assistance can drop and contrary-wise. Unfortunately, the rates are increasing now and it is possible this amount may not be adequate. We may find that by the end of the year that this is not an adequate amount that has been provided for.

* (1620)

I would like to take a moment and talk about something that I am very concerned about that is in the area of Municipal Assistance, and that is the whole question of the one-tier system. We have in Manitoba, I think it is called, the two-tier system, and we are among three provinces only in Canada—Ontario, Nova Scotia and Manitoba are the only three provinces that have a two-tier system, meaning the municipal Governments are involved on their own more or less, as well as the provincial Government. In the other seven jurisdictions it is strictly administered by the provinces. Of those three, we have the least control or we try to exercise the least control of any of the three provinces that have the two-tier system. In Manitoba, the municipal Government looks after the unemployed employables, and the province looks after the long-term disabled, single parents, etc.

Now we proposed when we were in Government to take over the municipal welfare program outside of the City of Winnipeg. This is the greatest area of need in my judgment and the judgment of our Government, and it is certainly not an extremely costly area of expenditure if you exclude the City of Winnipeg from the program. While it may not be totally logical to exclude the City of Winnipeg, nevertheless, the Winnipeg rates are fairly close to those of the province and I do not see the same problem. But outside of Winnipeg, you have totally inadequate rates, and I recall staff providing some examples a couple of years ago.

As of January 1987, for instance, a single adult on the provincial scheme at that time would receive \$201 per month. If you lived in the Village of Bowsman, you would only get \$114 a month, about a little more than half. If you lived in the R.M. of Minitonas, you receive \$92 a month, less than half. The R.M. of Woodlands, there is a statement here that they would pay only \$72.00; Portage la Prairie, \$149, and you could look

at other numbers and other figures. But the fact is that the rates are much lower than the provincial rate. Not only that but the administration is inadequate as well, inasmuch as many of these municipalities do not have the staff to deal with welfare recipients. They do not have that many, so it is dealt with by the Secretary-Treasurer or someone who does not do this on a full-time basis.

Very often, the applicant must appear before the entire rural council on bended knee, so to speak, asking for a bit of a handout. I guess that is the attitude. Yet that person, under the Canadian law and the provincial law, is entitled to some time of assistance if they are deemed to be in need. Of course, they have to be in need. I am not suggesting otherwise but, in the City of Winnipeg or the City of Brandon, they are treated by professional staff. There is a rate structure, and it is paid out.

In the rural areas, there does not seem to be any consistency in some of the smallest municipalities. It is almost by gosh and by golly, and it is a demeaning experience for those people. I do not see why the people in rural Manitoba have to go through this when, if they lived in Winnipeg, they certainly would not have to go through it or if they lived in Brandon.

The other difficulty is that there is no tie-in with employment and training programs. One advantage of the provincial administration is that we could tie in the recipients or the applicants with training programs, with employment programs, to try to bring them into the work force so that they can get off of welfare.

The other thing is, and my colleague from St. Vital (Mr. Rose) pointed it out, what this does is cause a migration into the cities from the rural areas. If you are not getting a fair shake in the R.M. of Woodlands or wherever, you may get a one-way bus ticket to the City of Winnipeg and maybe that is the only solution you have to your situation. It does tend to cause migration to the City of Winnipeg and perhaps, to a lesser extent, to the City of Brandon.

The other point I would make is that this is a major principle, and it is easier to talk about principles than to put them into place, I suppose, but I have long contended that social services should be paid for essentially by provincial and federal Governments and not by municipal taxes. Health care generally and social services generally, child and family services are paid provincially and federally. But when it comes to social welfare, social assistance, we still seem to want to have municipal taxpayers to bear that. As I said, in 7 out of 10 provinces, the municipalities are not involved. Municipal taxpayers as a group do not pay a nickel towards welfare. It is entirely paid for by federal and provincial levels of Government. I would argue, therefore, that is another good reason to get municipalities out of the welfare business, that the levy should not be on the property.

At any rate, Mr. Chairman, we had planned—and this was announced—a major move here. We were going to in stages gradually take over the rural welfare system. As of April 1, 1989, all rural municipalities would be included; October 1, 1989, all towns and villages;

and on January 1, 1990, all cities in the province except the City of Winnipeg. There would be ample discussion. There was some discussion with the municipal officials. I know many people at the municipal level outside Winnipeg now seem to be opposed to this. For whatever reason, they seem to think that they do not want to get out of it. I think there is a fear that they may end up paying more if the province somehow or other comes in, because there may be a levy against the municipality.

My own particular view is that there should be no charge against the municipality, that we should simply remove that burden from them and simply do it. It is not a great number of people. As a matter of fact, I would suspect not more than 2,500 families and individuals, 2,500 cases, maybe 3,000 at the very most if the province got into it. That is a high figure.

The other problem that I can see is that it is a serious area of inequity. I believe also it is subject to court challenge. There is somebody by the name of Findlay who has a case before the Supreme Court of Canada. I do not know what the implications will be, but there is a possibility of court action, if not now, at some future time.

I know the Minister and the Premier have said, we will deal with this. We will remove this inequity because we are going to go and we will regulate the municipalities. That is my understanding. If I am wrong, I would be delighted if the Minister would clarify, but my understanding is that the Conservative approach is, okay, we recognize that there are these inequities but we will go in and we will make sure that there are minimum rates across the province. I would advise her to talk to her staff, talk to the people who have worked in this area for years and ask their professional advice on that particular route. I think they will likely tell you that particular route is fraught with difficulties because you end up having to police the municipalities to make sure that they are abiding by your rules and regulations with regard to rates, and the administration of those rates.

In fact if you do not want to, I suppose you can just leave it at that. You can just say, well this is what we think you should pay, and not really impose it. But if you are not serious about it, what is the point of the exercise in the first place? I suggest that route that is being proposed, I believe by the Minister—she still has not gotten around to talking to the municipalities. I know we have been told these promises now ever since they were into Government for the last six or seven months or whatever, that they will be consulting with the municipal officials. Thus far, unless the Minister can advise us otherwise, I do not believe that has taken place.

I would like to know just what does she have in mind. Does she not have a plan? You just cannot sit down with the municipal officials and say, let us talk about it. You have to have some plan to put on the table; you have to have some proposal to put on the table. What proposal does the Minister have in mind to put on the table to begin the discussions? As I said, I think if that does come about you are going to find that you are in the area of ensuring that the rates are abided by. You are going to be in the area of having to insist

municipalities who step out of line must pay the rates that you put into force and so on. I think that you are going to run into a lot of difficulty. It is far simpler, in my judgment, to simply assume the problem.

* (1630)

There are a lot of examples around the country where it affects 7 out of 10 provinces where that is done. This is done entirely by the provincial Government. There is plenty of precedent. They seem to be able to handle it okay. They do it in Saskatchewan, they do it in Alberta, it is the provincial Governments that do it. I do not see why we cannot in this province, at least, do it outside of the City of Winnipeg. I think the City of Winnipeg, by and large, does a fairly good job. There are always problems. I think, by and large, the City of Winnipeg is well administrated. It has a good staff. They seem to be able to cope all right.

It is when you get into these small municipalities in particular. It is not even fair to the municipalities to try to ask them to carry this out because they do not have the staff, they do not have the expertise. It is just done rather begrudgingly, I think, in some cases. I have some friends, I might add, at the municipal level in rural Manitoba who are rather boastful that they do not have anybody on welfare in their municipality, not because there are not people who need but, because they are afraid to come forward, I gather, to get some assistance. So I wonder if the Minister could tell us exactly what this Government proposes to remove, in my judgment, one of the most serious areas of social injustice in the province today.

Mrs. Oleson: The Member indicated his new-found knowledge of how things are working out in the municipalities. It makes some indications that he was not making when he was the Minister. He mentioned Manitoba being one of the few provinces that are not on a one-tier system. I believe Ontario is one that regulates and operates maybe a little bit the way we do, but they regulate. The province does not take charge of the whole welfare system.

As I have indicated on other occasions, when called upon to remark on this subject, I will as soon as possible be meeting with the Union of Municipalities and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities and, first of all, through the Municipal Advisory Committee to discuss this problem and make some proposals to them, hear from them what their view is on the subject. It is going to be a consultative process so that we come up with something that is acceptable. The Member should realize that UMM, for instance this year, had a motion on their resolution before their annual meeting. Once again, I think it is an annual event. This year, the motion to go to the one-tier system was defeated.

I have received, since I have been in office, many letters from municipalities indicating their disfavour with the method that the Member had announced shortly before the fall of the Government. So it was not totally accepted with glad cries by—well it was hardly accepted with glad cries by anyone. I think there needs to be considerable work done because we do not want to force anything on to anyone without consulting with

them and finding out how we can best together supply this service to people. I think it has to be something that is mutually agreed upon.

I have recently had a letter from the Manitoba Urban Association which had at one time indicated their support. In fact, it was 1985 they had indicated their support for one-tier system and that it should involve municipalities that presently are on provincial assistance. They have since sent me a letter, dated November 29, indicating that they have changed their mind. They do not agree with that and they wish to meet with me and discuss the matter. There is not unanimity, obviously, in that organization of what they want in the way of social assistance treatment. I will be meeting with them, as I have indicated before, and we will be discussing the matter. Hopefully, we will come up with a system which is equitable to the people who need the system, who rely on it and those who deliver it.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Chairman, that is fine. The Minister is going to meet with them soon. But when the Minister and the Premier talk about regulating the municipalities, let us recognize what you are talking about is carrying on the two-tier system. You are having a two-tier system so, to that extent, the municipal Government should be happy.

What I am telling you is that if you are going to have any meaningful regulation, if the idea of the goal of the regulation is to ensure some kind of social justice or some kind of equitable treatment, why should you be treated as a second- or a third-class citizen if you have no other means in rural Manitoba compared to people who happen to get on the provincial system or who happen to be in the City of Winnipeg? Why should there be this big difference? It is not fair. It is not in keeping with the Canada Assistance Plan. It is not keeping with the objectives of the legislation that was passed in Ottawa years ago, and which we passed.

I suggest that the Government has to show some leadership in this and, if you want to go the regulation route and keep the municipalities involved, fine. But is it the objective of the Minister and the Government to say to the municipalities, we expect you to pay a single adult the same amount of money as the Province of Manitoba is paying? Goodness knows, we are not paying that much.

For a single individual, a little over \$200 per month apart from accommodation, take it or leave it, that is what you have got for food, your clothing, and your personal needs—not very much money. I just do not know how people manage. But we are not talking about a great deal of money in terms of rates for an individual in this province, families on welfare, on social assistance. So will you say to the municipalities in your discussions, we would pass regulations whereby we would expect you to come up to our level, or would you say come up to 90 percent of our level or 95 percent of our level?

This is what we expect, and this is what we expect in the way you treat people. That it is not only the rate, it is the humanity involved, the treatment of individuals who are down and out and to treat them as human

beings and give them a chance. As I said, there are a lot of reasons for the province to be doing this because this department has training and employment programs and could very well tie in to the needs of these people to get them off of welfare. Surely, that is the objective, to get people off of welfare, and that was another major reason for this department doing this.

But is the Minister, going back to my question, prepared to show some leadership and show that she has got some objective of some social justice progress out there, that we can progress to a little more equitable system by saying to the municipalities we are going to expect you—you can run them, and we will continue to cost share—to come up to our provincial rates at least?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Chairman, as I had indicated, I will be meeting with the municipal officials and discussing this with them. I do not intend to go out with a large club and indicate exactly you will do this, this, and this. I intend to consult with them. The system has been in place all the six-and-a-half years that this Member was the Minister. Those inequities that are present today, and I agree there are, were present all that time, so I do not think I need to be berated for not having done anything about it in six-and-a-half months.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, the Minister is probably aware of a recent case of four people on social assistance in Tuxedo, where they were living in a very clean friendly atmosphere, caring people, and certainly, as acknowledged by the department, cheaper than other residences under these cases, these people needing some mental assistance. Here is a nice home that was overlooking the river, bordering Assiniboine Park and close to services. For some reason, her department made some arbitrary and, I believe, callous decisions and put restrictions on here about 24-hour supervision, which to my perusal, I know it can be a condition but it is not a mandatory condition, not in the regulation, when indeed all of these four residents were certified as not requiring such supervision.

* (1640)

I am wondering if the Minister, and I am not alluding to the fact that this Minister, since she is in power, is responsible for this or indeed any other incident, but I think it is serious enough that I would like to, for instance, know how often this has happened in the not too distant past and has indeed since this unfortunate incident came to light. Has she been in contact with her staff to make sure that in any such cases, particularly where it involves four people on social assistance under a very caring atmosphere, that her office would be advised before such drastic action would take place such as in this instance, which I am sure she is aware of, on Handsart Boulevard?

(The Acting Chairman, Mrs. Gwen Charles, in the Chair.)

Mrs. Oleson: Madam Acting Chairperson, if the Member is alluding to the question he raised in the House some weeks ago in which I discussed with him

privately, in which my Department of Community Services has done a considerable amount of work on, he will recall that the authority under which the person in question had their home was under city authority, and my Department of Community Services people are working with the City of Winnipeg to try and get that matter resolved.

It was a case in which under the zoning—I am just going from the top of my head now, I have not got any notes here on it. But as I recall the case was that under the zoning, one could only have two boarders in their home and so the city cancelled their authority. Then through my department, there was discussion about getting a residential—I am trying to think of the word, it is not licence but Letter of Authority, I think is the term. Anyway, I do not believe that woman has chosen to apply for the Letter of Authority. There was some misunderstanding about the care of these people and it was dated by her, and I have no reason to doubt her, that they did not need 24-hour care.

You see, there are different levels of group homes and I believe these are mentally handicapped persons, if we are talking about the same case, and there are some people who in group homes need 24-hour care. These people may not now. It is a matter of working on the licensing but staff are working on it. They have talked to the city officials and I am hopeful that the matter is being resolved. It may not be resolved perfectly to the satisfaction of the woman in question or of the Member opposite, but we are trying to resolve it.

Mr. Rose: The Minister indicated that I was trying to aggravate her. I am not trying to aggravate her. As a matter of fact, I have a lot of respect for people in Government who try to help people, they have a social conscience. As a matter of fact, in the last few months, I have had quite a bit of respect for her, if I might call it, spunk and courage and indeed her sense of humour and also her ability to get a little bit upset when it is warranted. There must be a little Scottish blood in her or something.

The fact of the matter is that the answer, Mr. Chairman, Madam Acting Chairperson, or Madam Acting Chairwoman—I better get Harry Enns' help here—that the Minister has just given me has shown clearly, and I am sorry to have to say this, you do not understand the situation. Otherwise, you say they may not have to put 24-hour supervision. If you would have looked at the documents that are in your department, if you would have looked at the documents that I delivered to you, you would have seen clearly that they were certified not to require that service. So you do not have to make these statements that they indeed "may not have," because it should be a fact of yours.

The second thing that the Minister brings up is about the city. Now because somebody in her department deflected her to the city has caused this lady almost \$5,000 in legal costs for absolutely nothing. The city has nothing to do with this matter, and we want you and your department to be quite clear on that. The city automatically will grant an occupancy permit if indeed the owner of the property or the person in control of the property—in this case it is the owner—has a

Letter of Approval from her department. It is this Letter of Approval that is missing, and all the efforts on the part of this person or all the other persons in the world will not get them a Letter of Approval from the City of Winnipeg.

The Minister, it is unfortunate that she has not taken this particular plight of these five people and the tremendous cost to them and the inconvenience to heart and understood the situation. Without going into a further long harangue, I would like the Minister to examine the file carefully, bring in her senior people, get the facts and get the matter resolved, because clearly to try and once again shift it over to the city as being blamed for the thing does not make any sense at all really, Madam Acting Chairperson.

Mrs. Oleson: I am at a loss to know what to say to the Member. I am not being callous and arbitrary and my department is not being callous and arbitrary. We are trying to understand the situation. I did not say that it was a city problem alone. I said there was a city zoning problem. I did not say that those people needed 24-hour care. I said that in some cases people did. In this case, it is indicated they do not. The woman in question has to apply for the Letter of Authority and I am not sure that she has done that. If she has not applied, then it will not be granted. So I think there needs to be more work done on it.

I do not think the Member is really being fair to me or to the Department of Community Services, under which this falls, by the way—not under this department—in saying that we are callous and uncaring. We have done a considerable amount of work trying to resolve the situation, and some of these situations are very difficult to resolve because each has their own idea of how it should be resolved. I get annoyed when the Member says that I do not care about it because I certainly do and, short of going out there and physically putting the people into the home, I have certainly had my officials looking at it.

Mr. Rose: Obviously, we are not getting too far on the item, and I bring it up because all four people were and are on social assistance and they have been reassessed for their needs. Because it has taken a disproportionate amount of my time without any real progress, I hope that the Minister will not take exception that, as of tomorrow afternoon, I have given the persons in question my word that I would personally intervene with officials of her staff to try and resolve the problem on as equitable a basis as we can. Obviously, we are not getting our message through, and I guess I have to fault myself for that but, if it cannot be resolved by tomorrow, that appears to be what we will have to do. I do it in the spirit of resolving it, the plight of these four people who need help, and that they, for some reason or another, are not getting it from this Minister's department.

Mrs. Oleson: The Member has indicated that he would like to meet with my staff on the subject. Perhaps that can be arranged and maybe with some more explanation of the position, maybe the Member would understand the situation better and perhaps I would

understand the situation better. Maybe we can get it resolved that way.

Mr. Rose: I always said that I would cooperate with the Government in their programs and I would cooperate with the Minister and I would hope that our relationship would keep on a friendly basis, but you can understand my frustration when we cannot get through the ABC's of a problem. If we cannot understand the problem, if the Minister and her department cannot understand the problem, it is absolutely futile to look for the solution. So I would suggest that my services—I am always approachable and at any time that I might be able to meet with her or her staff either to straighten around their lack of understanding or if indeed sometimes it would be my lack of understanding, then I am always open for that and I thank her for that offer.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Just hitchhiking on the Honourable Member for St. Vital's (Mr. Rose) questions, the unfortunate part, through you, Madam Acting Chairperson, to the Minister, is that while the problem wrangles around in the bureaucratic jungle, the people who have the problem are not being serviced and they are suffering even if it is just from a sort of a mental uncertainty. I would hope on his behalf that we, as Government, can find a way of cutting through the red tape and the bureaucratic jungle to address these types of problems.

* (1650)

On that, I have another problem that may be more in relation to policy but I think will take some strong direction from you, as the Minister, to direct your department to find a way to solve this type of problem.

I have in my hand a letter that I would certainly share with the Minister from the North End Women's Centre Inc., whereby they have addressed a specific problem of a single parent, a mother who has a couple of teenage children who she has encouraged to become self-sufficient, to go out and work and earn money, only to find out that she is being subsequently penalized by having the earnings that these children have gotten taken away from the subsidies that she has obviously qualified for as a single parent.

I find the whole system semi-productive, if not counterproductive, in relation to encouraging people to become self-sufficient and I find the system to be punitive in this particular case, but it is only a single example of the types of problems in relation to the concerns that we all should have as politicians about how we are going to best assist these people in these situations. I think that we have to look at encouraging them.

Ofttimes, Madam Minister, through you, Madam Acting Chairperson, the seriousness and the realness of the problem gets cluttered as it waggles its way through the bureaucratic jungle to the top. So I would appreciate some comments from the Minister on this specific type of problem and perhaps some general comments on how she is going to address these in the future.

Mrs. Oleson: Before I address the specifics of the question that the Member asked, I would like to comment. Before he asked it, he commented on people being—I forget how he termed it—were suffering and not in the home or something. I assure the Member that these people that the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) was discussing, as far as I understand it, the last I heard they were in a home, they are being looked after and, hopefully, there is no suffering going on, on their part.

Mr. Angus: Frankly, if I may be permitted, I appreciate that. The problem is it is sort of a mental anguish of uncertainty, of not being sure of what is happening from day to day while you and I bat the problem around, if you like. I am convinced that the department is not callous or uncaring or any of those things, but unfortunately sometimes when we get into trying to interpret black and white and find a solution to a problem, we do not recognize the fact that a number of people are being hurt, even if it is only sort of a mental uncertainty as to what is happening on a situation.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

Mrs. Oleson: I appreciate the Member's remarks and, hopefully, those people are not under anxiety because I know exactly what he means.

With regard to the Member's question about children's earnings, that has been a long-standing issue. That has been the policy that earnings were deducted and that is something that we are reviewing and actively looking to seek a solution to it. Under CAP, the assistance plan, there are work incentive programs and that sort of thing but, with regard to children in the home who earn money babysitting and whatever, we certainly want to encourage independence of young people and I do hope we come to a favourable solution on that particular problem.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I take a moment to talk about CRISP under 2.(d), assuming that we are generally going around the Economic Security area. Can the Minister advise whether the income guidelines for CRISP have been or will be adjusted for inflation? In other words, from time to time, you must adjust the income guidelines—your people will be eliminated from the program—so it is necessary to at least once a year adjust the income guidelines. Has that happened or will it happen, or is the Minister planning not to adjust those in order to reduce the number of people eligible for CRISP?

Mrs. Oleson: Those, as the Member knows, are reviewed every year on the 1st of April. That review will be part of the ongoing work that is going on toward next year's budget.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I wonder if the Minister could explain why the amount allocated for this current year ending March 31, 1989 for CRISP is only 7,077,000, whereas last year the appropriation was 8,228,000.00. Is there any explanation why that is quite a major drop in the allocation? I was wondering what is the explanation for that.

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Chairman, staff inform me that last year's budget was overbudget because there was less take-up with farm families than had been anticipated in preparation of the budget last year. That is why the budgetary allocation this year reflects that projection that will be similar to last year.

Mr. Leonard Evans: The number of farm families, I believe there is some kind of an estimate, how many actually did take up this program when the regulations were changed to enable farm families to get into it because of the removal or the raising of the assets test?

Mrs. Oleson: Some 750 farm families who took advantage of that last year where it had been anticipated that there might be as many as 1,500. The number was 750.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I just want to make a brief comment and then, as far as we are concerned at least in our Party, we are prepared to let the Economic Security section go, and then we can get into Employment Services.

I just want to say again by way of a closing remark on Economic Security, that I at least am not, and our Party is not, satisfied with the 3.9 percent increase in social allowance rates. I think, regardless of how you calculate it or whatever references you want to make to past practices, there is no question about it. The poorest people in this province are not getting a fair shake from this Government; 3.9 percent does not adequately reflect in my judgment the current rate of inflation or even the experience to date.

What is disturbing is that the rate of inflation is increasing and we gave some figures on that the other day. In October we were up to 5.7 percent as the rate of inflation. There are other signs of cost-of-living increases, the milk is an example. Frankly, these people, of the 23,000 social allowance recipients of Manitoba are going to be worse off next year than they are this year because we have not kept pace with inflation.

We are not talking about people with 50,000, 60,000, 70,000 a year salaries. We are not talking about people even with 25,000, 30,000 a year salaries. We are not talking about 20,000, 25,000, we are talking about people, single individuals with less than \$10,000.00. We are talking about a mother with a child with say 13,000, 14,000.00. We are talking about very low incomes here. I would like to recommend, and there is nothing written in stone or law that you cannot do this, that the Government take another look at this and consider another adjustment throughout the year.

We had considered it, I had considered it. I would have liked to have seen actually quarterly adjustments, that you look at inflation per quarter and make an adjustment. Certainly, if you do not do it quarterly, there is nothing that says that you cannot do it every six months. Given the fact that the rate of inflation has really escalated, in May, it was running at 3.3 percent, in June it was 3.6 percent, and then the fall comes along and we are into the high fours and high fives. In September it was 4.7 percent, October it was 5.7

percent. There seems to be an escalation, and I think that a bit of social justice here would demand that the Minister and the department review this and consider making another adjustment some time during the next year. That is one way to get around this.

I know money is tight. I know we are in a deficit position, but we are talking about some very, very poor people. I never have been satisfied with the rates that our Government put in, I was never satisfied. We should have done better than we did. We made some improvements but we could have done, and should have done, better.

* (1700)

I am suggesting to this Minister that even though the 3.9 percent is not adequate, she could somewhat overcome this by looking at another adjustment half-way during the year or at some logical point in time. I would like to leave that suggestion with her, but I do reiterate that we are simply not satisfied with what has happened to social allowances in Manitoba. Really, these people as a group are suffering. Their standard of living will decline in the year ahead because of the inadequate rate increase.

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Chairman, the Member talks about 3.9 increase as if it was a niggardly amount. I have indicated to him on several occasions that the spending power of the social assistance recipients will be somewhat increased this year because of the 3.9 increase with CPI, where we could have gone with the increase in cost of essentials which was 3.3 percent. In essence, we have really increased the spending power of people over and above what he did last year. I agree that it is not a princely amount and we all want it to be more, but I am not apologizing for the 3.9 percent. I am very glad that we were able to choose to do instead of the 3.3 percent, which is the percentage for essentials, we were able to go as high as the 3.9 percent.

The Member has asked if we will monitor this and we will make changes. I have indicated on several occasions that we will monitor the cost of living and that we will look at any escalations. Hopefully, there will not be escalations. One month is not an indicator of what may happen in the months to come. As indicated before, earlier in the year there were higher increases, but the overall average is arrived at in the same method by which he as a Minister arrived at.

Mr. Chairman: I hesitate to interrupt the Honourable Minister. The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Mark Minenko (Chairman of the Committee of Supply): 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 Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS PUBLIC BILLS

BILL NO. 2—THE BUSINESS NAMES REGISTRATION AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 2, The Business Names Registration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'enregistrement des noms commerciaux, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). (Stand)

BILL NO. 3—THE CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 3, The Corporations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les corporations, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). (Stand)

BILL NO. 13—THE MANITOBA HYDRO AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). (Stand)

BILL NO. 16—THE REAL PROPERTY AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 16, The Real Property Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings). (Stand)

BILL NO. 19—AN ACT TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF NON-SMOKERS

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), Bill No. 19, An Act to Protect the Health of Non-smokers; Loi sur la protection de la santé des non-fumeurs, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). (Stand)

BILL NO. 20—THE WATER RIGHTS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), Bill No. 20, The Water Rights Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les droits d'utilisation de l'eau, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor). (Stand)

BILL NO. 25—THE UNFAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 25, The Unfair Business Practices Act; Loi sur les pratiques commerciales déloyales, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). (Stand)

BILL NO. 26—THE CONSUMER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 26, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). (Stand)

BILL NO. 31—THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), Bill No. 31, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach). (Stand)

BILL NO. 32—THE MANITOBA INSTITUTE OF THE PURCHASING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF CANADA ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), Bill No. 32, The Manitoba Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Act; Loi sur l'Institut manitobain de l'Association canadienne de gestion des achats, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). (Stand)

BILL NO. 36—THE CONSUMER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 36, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (2); Loi No. 2 modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose). (Stand)

SECOND READING—PUBLIC BILLS

**BILL NO. 44—THE MANITOBA
INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL
AMENDMENT ACT**

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks) presented Bill No. 44, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Minenko: It is indeed a pleasure to introduce this Bill and to begin the discussion on the consideration of this matter certainly on the enthusiastic response of the Members opposite on the Government side. I remember not too many days ago when they listened with some interest to my remarks in presenting it to the House for first reading, in which I briefly outlined, in accordance with the Rules of the House, what this Bill No. 44 was intending to do. As I mentioned on that occasion, this Bill had three elements to it.

The first element was to ensure that the presiding officer, presiding member, of the Manitoba Intercultural Council be elected from the membership of that council. The second aspect is that the senior staffperson of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the executive secretary, as they are presently named, be employed by that council. The third element is that of including in The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act an amendment providing for this council—

* (1710)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks has the floor and I am having some difficulty hearing his remarks. Honourable Members wishing to carry on private conversations could do so outside the Chamber.

Mr. Minenko: Mr. Speaker, as I was mentioning, the third aspect to this rather important Bill is to provide the council with the authority to disburse funds that are provided to the council through the Lotteries Grants system.

The Liberal Party believes that multiculturalism is a fundamental value of Manitoba society, that the display, the acceptance and appreciation of our cultural diversity enhances our quality of life and is indeed a source of strength for all Manitobans. Canadian society is a pluralistic society where individuals have the right to have their cultural differences recognized, respected and accepted.

What these three elements of this Bill allow is for the council to continue its work in a more arm's length relationship with the Government, with indeed all Manitobans.

Just to deal quickly with the third aspect to the Bill, that of the authority for the allocation of grants, this certainly addresses the concern raised in the Special Audit recently ordered by the Minister. The Special Auditor noted that the Act does not presently provide

the Manitoba Intercultural Council with the specific authority for the allocation of grants. The Special Auditor went further on to say that if this aspect of operations is to continue, consideration should be given to incorporating into the Act the authority to carry out this aspect of the Manitoba Intercultural Council's operations.

When the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) was faced with some comments from various elements in the ethnocultural community, and perhaps others, about the operation of the council, she was quoted to have said, in the Winnipeg Free Press of August 4, that one of the very main concerns is whether the Intercultural Council, which was originally set up as an advisory body, should also be a granting body. Certainly, I think this has led many members in our community to consider that this may well be the direction which this Government intends to look to the council in the future.

This particular bias as set out by the Minister, and if she was in fact accurately quoted on that day, was reinforced last Friday evening on December 2 when the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation addressed the Manitoba Intercultural Council at their meeting. In her address to the council, she mentioned that she certainly saw the role of the council as being in an advisory capacity. She mentioned that she will strengthen the advisory function and, throughout her speech, I counted at least three other times where she emphasized that the Manitoba Intercultural Council will also provide an advisory function.

I may be mistaken, Mr. Speaker, but I certainly do not recall the Minister discussing any of the other operations and certainly not addressing the granting function in her speech. Earlier this week when the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) raised certain questions in this House about the Government's view of the operation of the council and certainly some of the remarks the Minister had made during her address to the council, the Honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon) suggested from his seat that there was perhaps a little bit of espionage going on, or words to that effect.

Certainly, I took personal affront to that in that I indeed attended on that Friday evening, and attended the council's deliberations the next day as well. I certainly did not view myself as being involved in any form of espionage. I, in fact, listened to the comments of the various workshops, spoke to various members of the council, both the executive and of the council itself, and I felt that I certainly went there in my capacity as the Liberal critic of Culture, Heritage and Recreation to listen to the comments that members of the council were making about the Minister's address that Friday evening.

Mr. Speaker, I sat in on the five workshops that the council was having that Saturday afternoon on December 3 where they were reviewing some of the recommendations of the Multiculturalism Task Force Report, where they made some recommendations with respect to the operation and the organizational function of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. There were quite a few concerns about the recommendations and I am sure the Minister will be hearing of these concerns in

the not too distant future or, to use a favourite expression used by the Government over the last few months, in due course, although I presume the council's report will be presented to the Minister a little quicker than perhaps some of the responses we get in due course from the Government.

* (1720)

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) will have an opportunity to review the comments of the council, will have an opportunity to review the comments of various members of communities involved and request or make representations, that her Government will support this particular aspect of this amending legislation.

One of the other grave concerns that the Liberal Opposition has with the present Act—and may I add that during her question-and-answer session that she had with the council, giving us justification for some of her recent actions for the continuation of the presiding officer of the council being an Order-in-Council appointment and also for the fact that the executive secretary would continue to be an Order-in-Council appointment, was that the legislation was in place. Yes, this legislation was passed in this House before the Honourable Minister became a Member of this Chamber, but certainly I think she has had ample opportunity since April 26 to consider, and certainly since early May when she was the appointed Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, to consider this Bill, to consider the comments from the council and others and to propose amendments, as we have, with Bill No. 44.

The Liberal Party feels that only through an arm's length, independent organization such as the Manitoba Intercultural Council can the views of the various communities, of the ethnocultural community here in Manitoba be truly represented to Government. This very much continues the theme that the Liberal Party struck during this most recent provincial election dealing with the other functions, the other boards of Government where we have proposed not only during the election, but since in this Chamber, the greater arm's length independence of the various bodies to which Government makes appointments.

There were some other concerns that were expressed as a result of the Minister's comments on that December 2 evening. Some of the comments that were raised, including the fact that the Minister would be setting up a committee to select a new executive secretary with consultation from, or I believe the Minister had said, with consultation of the Manitoba Intercultural Council for the appointment of that executive secretary.

Well, throughout the present Manitoba Intercultural Council Act, we see that the Government of the Day, whatever Government it may have been, should consult with the Manitoba Intercultural Council but it would seem to be that this would be a novelty over the last several years since the council has been set up. I understand that Governments in the past have consulted, have sought the advice of the council infrequently. Certainly, in some of the comments or

questions that I have raised in this forum with respect to Ministers—and, in fact, Mr. Speaker, other Members of the Chamber, with respect to cross-cultural education, and the involvement of the council in that is certainly important and I certainly look to this Government to consult with the Manitoba Intercultural Council to a much greater degree than has happened in the past.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 51—THE MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek) presented Bill No. 51, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

Mrs. Yeo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) for the applause.

As you are aware, I believe Bill No. 17 was passed by the House a couple of Sessions ago. As a result, the lands and the buildings of the Winnipeg Bible College and Theological Seminary, the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, the Canadian Nazarene College, and the Canadian Mennonite Bible College are now all exempt from all taxation levied by the Municipal Councils except, I believe, for taxes that are levied for local improvement.

It is my understanding that during the preparation of that particular Bill, the Catherine Booth Bible College was considered, perhaps even was approached, and they themselves chose not to be included along with the others that I have just mentioned. They felt that they could manage by other means. They have now come forward; they have now changed their location; they are now occupying I believe a portion of the old YWCA building just—they have the sign up already, I am told. They would like to be considered along with these other colleges for exemption—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May I direct the Honourable Members attention to our Rule 44.(2) which states quite clearly, no Members shall read any newspapers in the House. The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek has the floor.

* (1730)

Mrs. Yeo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At any rate, Catherine Booth Bible College has requested that they too be exempted from all municipal taxation. It seems to me that this is an issue of equity. Why should this college be excluded when the other colleges have the exemptions? I think it is a legitimate request by the

Catherine Booth Bible College, and I would urge my colleagues in the Assembly to very hastily approve this particular amendment to The Municipal Act."

I can see no reason why we could not approve this particular Bill, this particular amendment. I think that this particular college should be treated in a similar fashion to our universities. The courses that are offered are very similar to those offered at the universities. They are credit courses. We urge for fairness and equity. Therefore, we think that the Catherine Booth College should be treated in a very similar and fair manner.

At this particular college—and I do not think the purpose of discussion should be on the merits of this college or too much description of the college, but it is my understanding that the students pay a significant amount more and in fact the teachers, the instructors that are employed in this college, on the other hand, receive a considerably lower salary than found at some of the other education settings. The teachers and the instructors are working there out of a great degree of commitment, Mr. Speaker.

I think it is only fair that there should be this freedom of choice for students who wish to access colleges such as this. This particular college, I believe, is in its eighth year of operation. It has been incorporated as a degree-granting institution, and I believe that there was an act to incorporate the Salvation Army Catherine Booth College in 1983. So it is a well-recognized college. There is legal authority for the college's existence and for the college's operation. It indeed provides good services to the students who are attending the college. It also, I believe, is eligible for student financial aid through the Minister of Education's department.

I also believe that Bible colleges in just about every other Canadian province, except Manitoba, are exempt for most of their municipal taxes.

Because of the previous Bill that was passed, the only thing that is required here is a minor amendment. I would urge support to include that this Bill No. 17 be amended to include an (e) section that would allow for the fairness of the inclusion of the Catherine Booth Bible College and, again, would urge very speedy passing of this particular Bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed resolution—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I am certainly prepared to leave the Bill standing in the name of the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), but I would like the opportunity to speak to this Bill if I may, by leave.

Mr. Chairman: Is there leave to leave it standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings)? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), Bill No. 51.

Mr. Storie: The Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) says dig a hole, Jerry, because the Member for Emerson I think anticipates what I am going to say about this particular Bill, Bill No. 51, which is another amendment to The Municipal Assessment Act.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the issue that is raised by the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) is a legitimate one. The question of fairness for the Catherine Booth Bible College or the Steinbach Bible College or the Nazarene College or any of the colleges that have made representation to individual Members of this Chamber or to myself previously as Minister of Education are legitimate. I think that there is a need to treat all of those institutions fairly.

Unfortunately, I am of the opinion and was of the opinion previously, when the Minister of Highways and Transportation, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger), introduced a similar amendment to The Municipal Assessment Act, some year and a half ago, on that particular occasion I believe the Minister's Bill, the Member's Bill at that time, provided for the exclusion, the exemption, of a number of specific institutions from municipal taxation. I said at the time that I did not believe it was in the best interests of the Government, the best interests of the province, to go forward with the legislation at that time.

I said so for two reasons. No. 1, we as a province are in the middle of assessment reform. If we want to establish a separate category on a provincial basis which recognizes some uniqueness to these institutions or similar institutions, then we should do that. What we are doing by piecemealing it—and I predicted this would happen. In fact, I unfortunately did not have a chance to get my remarks, the remarks I made to the previous Bill, in time for the debate today. I recall predicting that this is the kind of amendment we would be faced with if we proceeded with the Member for Emerson's (Mr. Albert Driedger) Bill. I said, every time a Member gets pressure from his or her constituents, a particular group in the constituency, he or she is going to come to the Chamber, propose amendments to the Act for a specific institution.

Today we have The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act for the Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College. Now, I believe I have met representatives of the Catherine Booth Bible College in the past. I have no doubt whatsoever that they are providing an excellent service, the quality of the education they are providing is excellent, the people involved are excellent people. That does not necessarily mean we should be here amending legislation for a specific college. If there is a problem, let us address it to The Municipal Assessment Act, address it on a provincial basis so that every municipality will be dealing with those institutions in exactly the same way.

What we are doing here is absolving the city of its responsibility perhaps, but I think more importantly we are undercutting the responsibility of the city. The City of Winnipeg can, by providing grants to non-profit institutions, go ahead and provide the necessary grant to offset any taxation that a municipal authority invokes. In fact, they can go beyond that if they wish to. We are really usurping, if you will, the authority of the

municipal level of Government. They have the responsibility, have been given the responsibility by the Legislature, for assessing property within their jurisdiction appropriately as seen. We, by an Act of the Legislature, are in a fact denying those municipalities of revenue. If my memory serves me correctly, the RM of De Salaberry, which is the location of the Mennonite Bible College, one of the colleges which was exempt anyway deprived the municipality of some \$103,000.00.

* (1740)

The Member who introduced the Bill, the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), says this will not be that much. There is no doubt, however, that this Bill reduces revenue to the City of Winnipeg. Now I am not sure whether the Member for Sturgeon Creek has taken the necessary time to consult with the City of Winnipeg. Is the City of Winnipeg in support of this kind of legislation?

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) indicates that they, meaning the representatives from the Catherine Booth College, were sent to their representatives in the Legislature. I can tell the Member for Sturgeon Creek, that was not with the anticipation that the province would be dealing on a piecemeal basis with individual institutions within the City of Winnipeg for granting them exempt status. Certainly, we have the right, because we are the developers of the legislation, to do that. But I think it is nonetheless piecemeal. The fact of the matter is that the Legislature, in this instance I believe, is being used as a convenient scapegoat because Catherine Booth College could receive from the City of Winnipeg directly what we are being asked to do piecemeal through legislation.

They, the City of Winnipeg, with all due respect, have wanted to abdicate their responsibility for making the appropriate changes and said go to another level, another jurisdiction, probably with the expectation that nothing would be forthcoming from that effort. But we remain surprised. We are faced with a piece of legislation which I do not think the City of Winnipeg, frankly, expected to be here, and I do not think, quite frankly, the City of Winnipeg is particularly enthralled with. I do not think the City of Winnipeg is going to be particularly happy that this piece of legislation that is coming forward. I may be wrong, Mr. Speaker, but I know that, if the City of Winnipeg is happy, I know that the City of Brandon or the Town of Winkler or the City of Flin Flon would not be happy if I or individual Members of this Chamber continually brought forward individual pieces of legislation to deal with the specific problem that denied them revenue without some all-encompassing policy, without some provincial overview. Unfortunately, I think that is what we have done.

Again, I want to make it clear. I am not suggesting that Catherine Booth College does not need this break. I know that many of the private colleges are suffering financially, have a difficult time maintaining the level of service that they desire to maintain and, any time that they can have a significant burden removed, such as the elimination of municipal taxes of one kind or another, they would want that to happen.

I remember, and I have a copy of the speech. It was the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) who

introduced amendments which eliminated the municipal taxes from the Winnipeg Bible College and the Mennonite College. I recall that the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) stood in his place and said that this was a good piece of legislation, but they missed the Steinbach Bible College. I said at that time, I said that is the kind of remark that indicates what we are going to see if we accept that piece of legislation. A year later, we now have the Catherine Booth Bible College in for exemption. I predict that, if we agree to pass this legislation, we are going to see individual Members bombarded with requests from other institutions, not necessarily bible colleges. Clearly, we can exempt whatever category of institution, non-profit group we want. We are going to see them making the same kind of requests on us as individual MLAs for exclusion.

All I am saying is that if we, as a Legislature, want to exclude certain types of institutions or agencies or groups, then let us have a provincial policy. Rather than passing this legislation, let us call on the Minister responsible for Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings), the Minister responsible for Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), and ask them to proceed as quickly as possible with the necessary amendments to those—The Municipal Assessment Act and the changes to all of the other Acts which are required to implement Municipal Assessment Reform.

I know that the time line for making the final change and introducing finally the reform, putting it in place, is not that far off. The expectation is that the reform would be in place by 1990-91. So I think that we should resist the temptation to do the Catherine Booth Bible College a favour at this point, because I think it is going to make the reform more difficult. It is going to put them in a position where the Government is going to be limited in its choices when it comes to designing new taxation categories. It is going to perhaps put this particular institution in a difficult position if the Government decides not to allow the kind of exemptions that we are going to be allowing by passing this legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there are some significant reasons why we should be hesitant or reluctant to approve this legislation. I make it clear for the record again that I am not suggesting that the college does not deserve a break but I believe that, by passing legislation in this forum, we are not being fair to many, many other institutions. So in the matter of fairness, I think we have an obligation. If we believe that it is a matter fairness, we have an obligation to provide this kind of benefit for all institutions in the same class.

If the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) had not come forward with that kind of amendment, the Government would have been sympathetic to it because it intended to do it in its final implementation of the Municipal Assessment Reform, then I would have said let us do it. But this is piecemeal; it is not fair to the municipalities; it is not fair to the other institutions in this class which may also want at some point relief from municipal taxation. So I think we should be very, very cautious about passing this kind of legislation.

I do not know whether the City of Winnipeg did as the Member for Sturgeon Creek suggested. I

understand the likelihood of this being passed through the Legislature but I would certainly say without fear of contradiction that groups like the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities would not be supportive of the Legislature passing this kind of piecemeal legislation. I believe they want a more coherent approach, and I think that is a responsible way to approach this kind of change and it is a change. To the extent that it has a significant impact on the revenue of municipalities, it can be a damaging change as well.

The Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) may be quite right that the City of Winnipeg, in terms of their budget, this revenue loss will be an insignificant proportion of the revenue they gather from property taxes. In the cases of some municipalities outside the City of Winnipeg, the proportion of funding they get from institutions of this kind may be more significant and the loss may not be as easily accommodated. So I think we have to be cognizant of the fact that by supporting this kind of initiative we are potentially creating a serious financial problem for municipalities down the road.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that while Bill 51 is here because of the right motivation on behalf of the Member for Sturgeon Creek, I think that I, for one, am going to have a great deal of difficulty supporting it unless I am provided some assurance by the Government, the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings) particularly, that this kind of amendment is in fact not going to detract from some of the activities of the Assessment Reform Committee, that it is not going to conflict with the intention of the Government when it comes to special categories when it comes to assessment reform.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings) is smiling and nodding. I do not know whether that means that he actually intends to do something on his municipal reform or he is happy to have this pleasant diversion from the real task of the assessment reform. I think that assessment reform is very much needed. It is needed for the farm community, it is needed for commercial entities. It is needed for a whole bunch of other reasons in urban parts of the province, and perhaps it is needed to clarify our intention as legislators when it comes to taxation on non-profit and non-charitable institutions.

* (1750)

Mr. Speaker, the final irony, I suppose, will be if we as legislators decide to proceed with this, if a majority of the Members decide that Bill 51 is a favourable accommodation of Catherine Booth Bible College, it will be an irony if next we are inundated with Bills from individual Members who feel, perhaps quite rightly, that charitable institutions, that day cares, that churches, that other myriad number of institutions you can imagine, are also worthy of special consideration in the Legislature, are also worthy of having their municipal taxes given exempt status. It would be a great deal of work for Legislative Counsel. It would be a great deal of work for Members of this Chamber, and of course you would still be left without a provincial answer, a provincial-wide answer to the problem of fairness for all.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the legislation is good in its intent. It is quite clear in its desire, but I do not think in the final analysis it should be supported by Members of this Chamber. I think, as I said, unless we get some pretty clear indications from the Minister of Municipal Affairs that this is a desirable piece of legislation that it, in keeping with the—his intentions in terms of assessment reform, that we should proceed. I would like personally to see the Minister come forward with his agenda as quickly as possible so that we will know whether we need to provide this support for the Catherine Booth Bible College.

Mr. Speaker: By leave, this will continue to stand in the name of the Honourable Minister for Municipal Affairs.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. NO. 24—COMPOSITION OF THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), Resolution No. 24, Composition of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, the Honourable Member for Selkirk.

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): I move, seconded by the Member from Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), that:

WHEREAS the makeup of the Electoral Divisions Boundaries Commission (the "Commission") has been mandated by the Electoral Divisions Act; and

WHEREAS the Commission is now only made up of:

- (a) the Chief Justice of Manitoba;
- (b) the President of the University of Manitoba
- (c) the Chief Electoral Officer; and

WHEREAS the makeup of the Commission does not guarantee adequate representation of the diverse regional interests of Manitobans; and

WHEREAS Manitobans living outside of the City of Winnipeg should be fairly represented on the Commission.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recommend to the Government of Manitoba that it consider amending Section 8(2) of The Electoral Divisions Act such that the regional diversity of Manitoba is represented by the makeup of the Commission.

MOTION presented.

Mrs. Charles: There has been much discussion on the issue of how representation should take place in the province, and it is the belief of the Liberal Party that the Commission should be maintained as a separate entity from this legislative House. We do not want elected officials deciding how the boundaries should be made up in the Province of Manitoba, and certainly

respect that in the past it has been set up by a commission which is separate from the House in itself.

However, the members on the Commission as it is now set up tend to be all Winnipeg residents and, as well meaning as they may be, they do not necessarily understand the communities and the lines of division that exist in rural Manitoba and indeed in northern Manitoba. If we are to have equal representation by the province, and the Act has been set up so that there is a certain percentage leeway, then I think we have to have people who understand the essence of rural and northern identities. I do not believe that people who function mainly in the City of Winnipeg and probably are representing only Winnipeggers and their attitude and again, as I say, they may be well meaning and that, but they do not understand where the natural boundaries and divisions of the lifestyles are in rural Manitoba. I fully believe that if we are to have necessary representation in this House, representing the population of the province, we should have the makeup of the commission to reflect that attitude. Therefore, I have added in this resolution the idea that the commission should be looked at once again, that we should decide to have the commission reflect the attitudes and the representation of their province.

I have purposely not put in it whether the commission should be larger in number or whether it should remain the same, but I do not know why the president of the University of Manitoba is singled out. We have other universities, the University of Brandon. Perhaps we could look at that official as being on the commission. We have community colleges in the North that could equally represent the North on this commission.

We have many people who are responsible people in the communities outside of Winnipeg, who could actually have the understanding of the northern communities and the rural communities. Perhaps they do not have to be all of presidential standards. Perhaps we could look at people who travel more regularly throughout the province and perhaps have an idea of the natural boundaries that occur.

I think each of us from rural areas wonder why sometimes the boundaries are set up the way they are when sometimes natural divisions are crossed or perhaps not included. I myself, coming from the Town of Selkirk, am very much attached to East Selkirk, albeit via the very dilapidated bridge that goes from East Selkirk to Selkirk -(Interjection)- The Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings) speaks kindly of our bridge to the North, and I must admit that. Our natural market area is with East Selkirk and back and forth. However, as it is presently, although it may be changed with the new map that is coming out, we are separated from the residents of East Selkirk in our natural division. This goes on and on.

Each Member in this House, especially from rural and northern areas, can probably speak of how natural boundaries, communities are crossed by arbitrary decisions. Certainly, we have seen the necessity for several maps to come out under this commission, where we have had people come to the commission and appeal that these are not natural boundaries and could the commission look at them once again.

I think the commission as well did not take into account that we need equal representation in this province and that includes by area. We should see the rural and northern Manitoba reflecting the geographical areas only in that the percentages that allow the commission to expand that representation. I think they cut it very minimal this time but perhaps, if they had more rural and northern people on the commission, we would see them as expanding and taking to the limit what is allowed within the laws right now. Perhaps we would see more equal distribution between rural and city electoral divisions.

I certainly as a somewhat rural Member support that rural Manitoba and northern Manitoba have to have equal representation, if they are to have the necessary attention given to them. As is natural in all capital cities, the area around them, the population grows. Certainly within our life now, we are seeing the urbanization of all of the world, where people are moving from the rural and northern areas into city centres. Certainly, that means that the population grows and that we have to believe in representation by population. But in the wisdom of other legislations, they have allowed certain percentages to be within the law so that some equality is given by geographical area. I think if we had a commission that reflected the geographical area, we would see those percentages and the leeways given and better representation.

I hope this Legislature will be able to support this resolution and, depending upon how this Session goes, perhaps we can see it brought forward in the new year as a resolution that can have direct effect on the legislation and some change in the legislation, so that we in Manitoba wherever we may live, whether we are north of the 53rd or whether we are outside the Perimeter Highway or indeed inside the Perimeter Highway, that we are represented not only by population, by geographical area, but also by the attitude of those who are making the laws for us. I think that is the only fair way, and I ask for support of this resolution.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I see I have a couple of minutes so I will make economical use of my time, although I would anticipate that perhaps I will need a little in the future to finish my thoughts. I very much concur with a good deal of what the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) has indicated in her comments. One concern that I think needs to be brought forward up front and that is that, as the present commission is now mandated, the persons sitting on the commission are mandated by the position that they hold, that of Chief Justice, President of the University of Manitoba, and Chief Electoral Officer.

* (1800)

I would suggest that if any amendments in the future were to be long-lasting and have the kind of impact which she suggests and which I think all of us from rural Manitoba would like to see, somewhere along the

way, we have to identify what position a person might hold, so that the commission in the future would be made up of people not designated by name, but designated by the position of responsibility, or people of eminent character that we would be able to choose from rural Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Leave, leave.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., when this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Minister will have 14 minutes remaining.

The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning (Friday).