

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 15, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the First Quarterly Report, being to the end of March 31, 1989, for the Manitoba Telephone System.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): In accordance with the provisions of Rule 65, the sequence for consideration of the Estimates of the various Government departments by each section of the Committee of Supply has been established, agreed to by the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Alcock) and myself. I will table that sequence now.

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

I would like to inform the Members of the Assembly that I have announced today new funding in my department's 1989-90 budget which will extend and improve services to assist victims of child abuse and their families.

This increased support, being directed to treatment services and training programs, is part of our Government's continuing response to recommendations made in the 1987 Winnipeg Child Abuse Review. These initiatives are in keeping with needs identified in the review for additional and better co-ordinated treatment resources for abused children and their families.

* (1335)

The new funding will be allocated to three areas. The first of these is support for a wide range of community-based Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Programs to be phased in over three years. In this fiscal year, \$250,000 will be available to enable existing treatment centres to initiate, develop and operate programs. The new funding will initially be applied to grants or agencies operating successful pilot projects and to implement a joint proposal by Winnipeg treatment agencies.

As well, the Psychological Services Centre at the University of Manitoba will receive \$120,000 to conduct a Child Abuse Treatment Services Training Program for 20 to 25 students in the Bachelor and Master of Social Work Programs and M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in clinical psychology.

As part of their training, the students will be involved in counselling clients of Winnipeg Child and Family Service agencies. As well, staff with these agencies will receive training as part of new services.

Further, my department is assuming funding for a support program for families whose children have been victims of third-party sexual abuse. The Children's Home of Winnipeg will receive a \$190,000 annual grant to operate this program which was developed in response to a growing need to help victims and their families. In the past, the program was supported on a demonstration basis by the Core Area Initiative. The prevention of child abuse and the provision of effective therapeutic treatment for children already victimized are key to enabling many Manitoba children to develop and enjoy healthy and productive lives. This is a very necessary and worthwhile investment in our future.

In the days ahead, Mr. Speaker, I will be making further announcements on our Government's increasing support for the protection and treatment of children and women who have been or may be in abusive situations. This is an area which continues to be a great concern to our Government and to which we are responding. Thank you.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to hear today of the announcement from the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) in regard to some special emphasis being placed on child abuse treatment and training programs. Certainly it is very much a need in our society and in the Province of Manitoba and we do applaud these beginning initiatives.

There certainly are a number of excellent pilot programs that have been established out in the community, particularly through some of the child and family services agencies. We sincerely hope that the Minister will continue to work with the Child and Family Services agencies in ensuring that these programs do continue and that child abuse and treatment becomes much more of a reality in this province.

We find it interesting that there will be money, \$120,000 put forth through the University of Manitoba through psychological services. Although we certainly believe that is an excellent idea, we do wonder why, if these dollars have been targeted, why cannot day care dollars for day care programs through the Faculty of Human Ecology be targeted as well? The Government gives on one hand and takes on the other hand.

Mr. Speaker, we applaud this initiative, but we suggest to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) this is a beginning plan, it is a partial plan. You must have specially trained staff in the child and family services agencies. Many of the directors of Child and Family Services have been suggesting to me that if they went through a process of being accredited, which I am sure the Minister is familiar with, in North America where you are accredited as an agency to provide services, most of them would not meet the criteria because of the lack of training of their staff. What we need to see in addition to this is to look at the budgets of the various Child and Family Services agencies because there must be the dollars provided so that we can

provide for those staff so that they are well trained. We do applaud the beginnings of this and we hope to see more in the coming weeks. Thank you.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by offering my words of congratulation on behalf of the New Democratic Party Caucus for the announcement to date to the tune of an additional \$560,000 for some new initiatives in the field of child abuse. We all recognize that the problem of child abuse is one of the most critical issues facing our society, facing the health of our families in communities everywhere. It is a plague on our society. It creates problems for generations to come. We know that abuse in childhood often leads to those children becoming abusers themselves or leading very difficult lives generally.

* (1340)

I raise a number of concerns in the House today pursuant to this statement and pursuant to the Government's approach to the very critical issue of child abuse. The Minister has offered some initiatives that address one part of that problem. They do not address the full range of the issues before us, the issues of protection, the issues of treatment and the issues of prevention.

I regret that, although we can commend the general initiative, we have to look very critically at the actual results from this announcement today, because in fact the Minister is making this announcement after only a year ago cutting out of the budget over \$200,000 that was going to treatment workers at Child and Family Service agencies. They have also cut back the outreach and preventative programs at the Child and Family Services level, having a very serious impact on our ability as a society to deal with those problems.

As well, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, let me mention that critical to all of this is our ability to support counselling services. I have mentioned in this House regularly that there are now people, including children, being turned away from domestic abuse counselling services—26 children alone were turned away from Evolve this past year. I think, if this Government is serious about dealing with child abuse, it will deal with the problem from all aspects. It will deal with it in terms of prevention, protection and

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have, from the Arthur Oliver School, 15 students under the direction of Mrs. King. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond).

Also this afternoon from the Cormorant Lake School, twenty-five Grade 8 students under the direction of Tom Koop. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak).

From the Crestview School, we have twenty-two students from Grade 4. These students are under the

direction of Dorothy Morish. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery).

From the Blumenort School, we have twenty-seven Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Laverna Loewen. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz).

Also this afternoon, seated in the public gallery and in the translator's booth, from the Dauphin Regional School, we have 14 students under the direction of Joyce Orisko and Gerald Shewchuk. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Intercultural Council Russell Appointment

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). Yesterday, outside of this House, the Minister said that "she likes Grant Russell's approach to multiculturalism." Could she explain in the House this afternoon just exactly what it is about his approach to multiculturalism that she likes?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I do want to indicate that instead of the Liberal Party and the Liberal Opposition looking towards the good announcements we have made in the Throne Speech about multiculturalism, they choose to personally attack again members of our society, our Manitoban society and our Manitoban community.

There are many people throughout the province, including the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), who have taken different positions during the French language debate back in years before

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Springfield, on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): La position que j'ai prise était la position du Parti conservateur.

(Translation)

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): The position that I took was the position of the Conservative Party.

* (1345)

(English)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) was on

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) has asked a question. I am sure she wants to hear her answer.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, just to set the record straight, the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) was on the school board at the time when they were talking about entrenching French language into his school division and he opposed that. So I just wanted to straighten the record.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Springfield, on a point of order.

Mr. Roch: M. le président, sur un point d'ordre. Quand j'étais commissaire pour la Division Seine, le français était déjà là et je ne l'ai jamais opposé.

(Translation)

Mr. Roch: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. When I was a trustee on the Seine School Division, French was already there and I never opposed it.

(English)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. As the Honourable Member knows, points of orders are used to draw the Chair's attention to some infraction of the rules.

Order, please. I have recognized the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs. Carstairs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With a question to the First Minister, in that the Minister of Culture cannot tell us what it is she likes about the multicultural policy of Grant Russell, perhaps it is that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) can inform this House today what it is that he likes about Mr. Russell's multicultural policy.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat curious that the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal Party made absolutely no mention of the fact that Mr. Russell was a member of the Intercultural Council for two years, the previous two years, prior to that time being extended by this Government's appointment, made absolutely no mention of it and now they want to make a political issue of the fact that his presence on that council is being extended beyond that period of time.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is not only being somewhat hypocritical, but she is obviously being very, very political about that situation. If she wants to carry on trying to drive wedges and open divisions between communities in this province, open old wounds about the French language issue, that is her preference.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I have recognized the Honourable First Minister, not the whole front bench.

Mr. Filmon: That is her attitude towards making people in this province work together in a multicultural spirit. She wants to drive stakes. She wants to drive wedges, make divisions, open old wounds. That is not productive for this province, and that is not the kind of attitude that I would take towards multiculturalism.

Russell Endorsement

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): We are not talking about an elected position here. We are talking about a Government-appointed representative to a multicultural council that is going to advise this Government on multicultural policy for the Province of Manitoba. We want to know from this Premier if he endorses the multicultural policy of one Grant Russell and if that is the multicultural policy of his Government.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): What the Leader of the Opposition is saying is that she is criticizing the Irish community for having elected Mr. Russell to the Intercultural Council. That is what she is saying, that it was wrong for the Irish community to have elected him to the Intercultural Council. That is something where I think she is wrong. She is always interfering with other communities, always interfering with people, telling them what they should believe and what they should stand for.

Mr. Speaker, she at the same time will, I suppose, tell us that one Cornie Goertzen, who was her candidate in La Verendrye when he voted against having bilingual municipal tax statements in the R.M. of La Broquerie was expressing Liberal policy. I suppose that is what she says is the case. I suppose that when the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) was

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that even the Irish community has had difficulty and has been disowning Mr. Russell today. I must say that the Irish community gave me great pride today and now I can hang my head high, to once again admit that my maiden name was Connoly.

* (1350)

Russell Appointment

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, with a new question to the First Minister, on December 19, we all stood up in this House to denounce the use by the Premier of Quebec of the notwithstanding clause to override English-speaking minority rights in the Province of Quebec. We believed, all of us, that was a significant message from Manitoba to the Province of Quebec.

How can the First Minister, having stood on December 19 to criticize a Premier for not protecting minority

rights, how can he do that and, at the same time, some months later appoint one of the fiercest opponents of minority rights to a board, on behalf of his Government?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this administration has not only complied with but endorsed all of the requirements of the Supreme Court judgments, the two Supreme Court judgments earlier this decade with respect to Manitoba's obligations under The Manitoba Act of 1870, fully complied with them, set about to spend millions of dollars to comply with all the requirements, and gone beyond that to ensure that services were provided and extended to our language minority in Manitoba in the sense of good will and commitment that we have to the French people of this province, and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, many hours have been spent by Members of this House on all sides listening to Manitobans in the Meech Lake Task Force, and we are working very hard together to come up with a unanimous Manitoba position. How can this First Minister expect that position will be listened to in the Province of Quebec when his Government appoints someone who has consistently spoken out against the protection of the minority rights of Francophone people in the Province of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I remind the Leader of the Opposition that in the course of those public hearings that there were some very strongly anti-French representations made to that Meech Lake Task Force. I rejected those representations. I continue to reject those representations. My Government rejects those representations. Our policy is the policy that I have just finished stating in response to her last question, and that remains the policy and the position of the Government of Manitoba, and that is the basis upon which I will face my other counterparts in the First Ministers' meetings, Mr. Speaker.

Russell Resignation Request

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear, the Premier must do one very simple act today in order to be unequivocal. In order for him to hold his head high at First Ministers' conferences, he must today rescind the appointment of Grant Russell.

An Honourable Member: Will he?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Final two words, Mr. Speaker, will he?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Russell has served on that council for the past two years with not a word of objection from the Liberal Party of Manitoba, not a word of objection from the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs). She felt that he had the qualifications and the ability to sit on that council and now, today, she has changed her mind because it is in her political

interest to do so. That is hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker, that is hypocrisy.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. Time is very scarce and I am sure we want to get through this. Order, please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, on a point of order.

* (1355)

Mrs. Carstairs: Point of order. The First Minister, from his seat, makes allegations of individuals in this House having no principles. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, we are supposed to be referred to in this House as Honourable Members. One must assume that "honourable" implies that people have principles. It is not this Member, Mr. Speaker, who has not spoken out since June 4, 1987 in favour of protection of minority rights . . . Mr. Premier, until December 19, 1988.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. There is no point of order.

Mr. Filmon: On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: On a new point of order?

Mr. Filmon: Yes. If she had any principles, she would ask her Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) to resign, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is not a point of order. Order, please. If Honourable Members want to get through Question Period, I expect to see some decorum here today.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): The decorum party of Manitoba will ask a question. In keeping with that decorum, we will make a suggestion to both Parties that both of them should resign and then we could have all of our Parties talking in a statesmanlike way.

Emergency Measures Organization Regulation Amendments

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for The Emergency Measures Act and the Emergency Measures Organization (Mr. Albert Driedger). In the changes that were passed somewhat secretly in the middle of the night and not announced until we did so in this Legislature, there were changes affecting the procedures to be used in an emergency with the disposal of chemicals and goods from various workplaces and communities in this provinces.

The changes in the regulation mean that the specific parts of an emergency procedure for emergencies dealing with chemicals has been removed and they have moved to a general procedure for all goods. In other words, cancer-causing goods at the workplace and solvents are treated the same way. Does the Minister support the changes that have been made by

his Government in terms of the effect of procedures under The Emergency Measures Act?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Government Services): Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to reject the implication that changes were made in the middle of the night. This is the second time the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) has used that kind of inference and I take real objection to that.

I will indicate that I am very proud of the operations of the EMO organization. It has been demonstrated during the fires that we had, they have always had the concerns of the people of Manitoba at heart and we have that at the present time as well.

Mr. Doer: Well, the Minister did not answer the question, just like the Premier two days ago, and the Minister. My question to the Minister is, does he feel the change from specific information on emergencies and emergency procedures that were required under the old Act dealing with cancer-causing materials, that change to go to general provisions for all materials, does he feel that is in the best interests of Manitobans dealing with emergency procedures under the Emergency Measures Act?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that there has been any change made under The EMO Act in terms of how they operate.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, there are changes affecting emergency procedures, and the Minister should be aware when he sits around the Cabinet table.

Hazardous Material Labelling

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings). The changes in the regulation now require the material that it will be disposed of will be disposed of in such a way that the specific requirement for materials and the specific labelling of cancer-causing material has been removed, and the Government and employers are only required to have generic, no-name-brand kinds of labels for disposal of material at the workplace and ultimately to our environment.

* (1400)

Did the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) review these changes in the regulations that his Government passed, and does he feel that is consistent with sound environmental policy where we know what we are handling in the environment, rather than this change to go to a no-name brand of labelling in the environment?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, precisely what is involved in the disposal and the record of what is included in the waste that is involved is kept very carefully in a manner that will protect the lives and the health of those who are handling these products, and it is kept in a manner that is very easily accessible.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister why this matter was not referred to the Workplace Safety and Health Advisory Task Force. Was this regulation only drawn up by David Newman?

Disposal

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Why can he possibly say in this House that it will improve the environment, when he is taking away the procedures, the material and listing of materials in terms of materials that will be disposed of into the environment, disposed of by employers? How can he possibly say that will be an improvement to the environment when the old regulation required that cancer-causing materials such as PCBs would be lifted, and the new regulations go to a no-name brand under the requirements that the employers ask for, and only the employers ask for in this province?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the New Democratic Party is trying to show that he is being protective, when in fact the record of everything that is being disposed of is being very carefully kept. The protection of the workers will be facilitated through that record.

Workplace Safety and Health U.S. Standards

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour responsible for Workplace Safety and Health (Mrs. Hammond). Yesterday in this House, in response to questions about the new regulations for hazardous materials in the workplace, this Minister stated and I quote, "that these regulations do not in any way diminish the protection of the worker." That that is incorrect is abundantly clear to anyone who takes the time to read these regulations. Mr. Speaker, in fact, the new threshold levels adopted by this Minister were established in the United States of America.

Can this Minister tell this House what, if any, investigation did she do into the standards set in the United States before importing them to Canada, and is this part of the new rationalization and harmonization that was never supposed to be part of the free trade deal?

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister of Labour responsible for Workplace Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) seems to see free trade under every bush. That was not any of the reasons for the change. My department's mandate is to protect workers. We are guided by the principles contained in The Workplace Safety and Health Act, and we are instructed and directed as every Government must be by the Act, and it states, and I will quote it, "it ensures so far as is reasonably practical, the safety, health and welfare of workers." This Government supports strongly the dual principles of "reasonable" and "practical." Both the old and the new regulations provide equivalent protection of workers' health. There has been absolutely no change in this.

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

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the fact is, lowest detectable level is now gone. Reasonable practicality for who? For the employer is now the standard in this province.

The fact is this Minister did not investigate the standards in the United States because, if she did, she would have known that these standards are presently being challenged in court by the American Federation of Labour.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. Would the Honourable Member kindly put his question now?

Mr. Edwards: For the Minister, is the Minister aware that these very standards imported to Manitoba have been challenged in court in the United States?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) often has a little trouble with the rules. This time, I would suggest that he be called to order for not ascertaining the accuracy of the facts that he brings before the House and asking if the Minister is aware.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order please. I would like to remind the—

The Honourable Opposition House Leader (Mr. Alcock), on the same point of order.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, given that this question has been before the House for two days now, the Minister should be reasonably expected to be aware of the situation in order to offer opinions on things that her department has done.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) where he says awareness questions are out of order in Beauséjour, there is nowhere in Beauséjour that quotes an awareness question as out of order.

“To ascertain the accuracy of the facts,” that part is all right, but I have been hearing from the front benches, on and off, awareness questions. I would like to remind all Honourable Members at this time that there are no rules in Beauséjour which quote “should the Member be aware.”

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Therefore, there is no point of order.

Mrs. Hammond: Mr. Speaker, this regulation is in concert with its companion women's regulation and we are on the leading edge of health protection in Canada. Other provinces including Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario make reference to levels as low as reasonably practical to protect workers. The concept is not new.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), his final question.

Mr. Edwards: Obviously, the Minister is not aware that this is being challenged in the United States. My final question is, did this Minister take the time to talk to Dr. Steven Rappoport at the University of California who has done a thorough scientific study of this matter and who has concluded that considerable health risks exist with these standards and that they are set according to industry norms, not acceptable health standards?

Mrs. Hammond: In the context of amended regulation, it can actually be more stringent. Exposure could be reduced below the lowest detectable limit requirement of the earlier regulation if it was practicable to do so, so we have not made a change that cannot be substantiated. This is a change that is practical and reasonable.

Health Minister Apology Requested

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) contradicted me. He said the waiting list for speech disorders has been decreased. Mr. Speaker, he was wrong. Dr. Pat Alexander of the Health Sciences Centre has confirmed what we already knew, that the waiting list for speech therapy has grown for the last one year. There are 300 children waiting. My simple question is, will the Minister of Health today apologize for giving wrong information in this House?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Kildonan, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that. For the first time, he has been humble in this House.

Cardiac Care Waiting Period

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): My question is on May 29, when we pointed out to this Minister, there were 90 patients waiting for cardiac surgery at the Health Sciences Centre. This Minister said, “I do not believe that to be the case.” My question is, can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) apologize again, that he was wrong, and can he tell us what is the number of patients waiting now at Health Sciences Centre for cardiac surgery? Apologize.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): One is enough in any day, Mr. Speaker. No, and 83.

* (1410)

Speech Therapy Children Services

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

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): My final supplementary, now that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has apologized and he has admitted he was wrong, can he please now correct the problem for speech therapy so that children of Manitoba, who are not particularly voters at this time, and that is why they are not looking after them, Mr. Speaker, and he should put money in for them? Can he take the measures and can he tell us what are his plans to provide these speech therapy services at Health Sciences Centre?

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): The Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) referred to the fact that children are not voters in this province. We all know that, but we all know too that such a reference can only imply an imputation of motive on the part of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and I ask the Honourable Member for Kildonan to apologize to the Minister of Health for that choice of words.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On that point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), I am uncertain as to the remarks that were quoted or said by the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema). Order, please. I will have no other option but to take this under advisement.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my honourable friend's questions and his concern. Although I have to tell you that maybe the Liberal Party and maybe the Liberal Health Critic are motivated in their questioning by who can vote for them and who cannot, but I can assure you that I am not and neither is any Member of this Party. I want to tell you—

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Opposition House Leader (Mr. Alcock), on a point of order.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I am not certain, given that the point raised by the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) was unclear and could not be heard, I suspect that this clear imputation of motives stated by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) was received and was clearly understood, and I would ask that he withdraw it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. There was no point of order.

Mr. Orchard: Thank you. Then I will continue with my answer. As usual, there is no knowledge of the rules by the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic (Mr. Cheema), is saying, what are you doing? I have attempted to indicate to my honourable friend exactly what we have been doing. We have provided additional resources at the Health Sciences Centre to enable more services to be delivered in the pediatric audiology and speech pathology area. We are assessing the educational needs by Dr. MacDiarmid. It is a follow-up on a 1986 report by Dr. Alexander of the Health Sciences Centre pointing out the difficulties Manitoba faced. That report was before another administration for almost two years and within six months we increased the resource at Health Sciences Centre to provide a higher level of service.

I just want to point out to my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic, so that he is aware of some knowledge, that Manitoba in terms of numbers of speech pathologists per thousand of population is at the second lowest in Canada. Only Alberta has more speech pathologists per capita.

Provincial Parks Admission Fees—Seniors

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). The Minister's press release of May 29, 1989, states that the provincial park entrance fees and costs for unserviced campsites will remain the same this year as last year. Can the Minister tell this House why Manitoba's senior citizens are being charged \$3 a day for daily pass admissions and \$12 for seasonal passes. Under the previous administration, they were not charged at all. Why are Manitoba seniors being hit with a new fee for seniors, especially in Seniors Month, when Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C. enjoy this admission for free?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member asks the question that I am sure is of concern to many people. The decision was made by Parks Branch and by this Government that a regular increase in fees was necessary that takes into account inflationary increases, in terms of services provided to the parks. Our senior citizens continue to enjoy a considerable advantage in attending our parks. What has been imposed on them is a 50 percent cost of the regular fees which, in the judgment of this Government, was a reasonable figure.

Camping Fees—Seniors

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for The Pas, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): There has been a whole series of regulations and changes that will make a notable impact on the senior citizens of Manitoba. Could the Minister tell this House why seniors who camped for free a year ago are now paying \$3.50 for a site? Can the Minister tell us why did he decide to raise the green fees for seniors at the provincial golf course by 46 percent to \$7.50?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): I suppose any increase can be termed in percentage terms just as the Member has, but the decision was supported by many indications that I have had personally as an MLA and as Minister, that our seniors are quite prepared to pay a certain percentage to contribute to the facilities that we all enjoy in this province. They understand that although nobody likes increased fees, these facilities have to be paid for.

Mr. Speaker, in general our fee structure throughout our parks system and our golf courses is among the lowest in the country. This Government faces many demands to maintain those services, hopefully at improved and increasingly better levels, and those services simply have to be paid for.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for The Pas, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Harapiak: The final supplementary question—it is unfortunate that the Minister did not choose to make this information available or make it known when he was making his statement.

Complimentary Passes—Seniors

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): My final question is to the Minister for Seniors (Mr. Downey). A new provision in the regulations allows the Minister to issue complementary permits for parks entry fees, campsites and golfing facilities. Would the Minister for Seniors at least stick up for the seniors and issue complimentary passes so that they can enjoy the same facilities they did under the administration of the New Democrats?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that this Government has a lot of respect, and will continue to do what we can to enhance the way of life for seniors in Manitoba.

The Member makes a specific question dealing with exemptions. That falls within the jurisdiction of my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). Mr. Speaker, I have met with many seniors. Their concerns are health care, seniors abuse and all those other things that the seniors are concerned about.

I say this very seriously. I have not had one seniors organization come forward complaining about contributing to the preservation and enhancing of our parks and our environment. In fact, I think they are very anxious to help preserve what they have enjoyed for their children and their grandchildren. It is a political issue being raised by the New Democratic Party—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) on a point of order.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): The Member is imputing motives with his statement about politicization and the fact that the Government

withheld this information from the public. We raise it as clearly within our responsibility, and I would ask that he apologize.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There is no point of order.

Social Assistance Rental Allowance

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). We in the Official Opposition have repeatedly asked this Minister questions of the crucial issue of the Inner City housing and inadequate food allowances. We asked them last Session during the Estimates and again last week. The Minister of Family Services continually gives us weak responses to same.

* (1420)

The Minister has recently indicated to us and recently to the Winnipeg School Board that there is no connection between shelter allowances and student transience. Will this Minister agree today to undertake a study in conjunction with the Winnipeg School Board, SACOM, and other community groups to develop comprehensive recommendations which will resolve this serious problem of sub-standard housing?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, in response to the Member, I should tell him that I have met on three separate occasions with the SECOM group and discussed with them their opinions on the rental accommodations. Also, they have met with my staff to discuss this and to get some more information at the staff level concerning rents. We did increase the rental allowance, as the Member may be aware, on the 1st of January, which cost the province approximately about \$3 million. We are continually monitoring the rental situation, and that is an annual occurrence that takes place. The rental is raised at the level of the Rentalsman.

CRISP Payments

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose), with a supplementary question.

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the same Minister, will this Minister explain why children in families on social assistance in the City of Winnipeg are entitled to CRISP payments, but recipients on provincial social assistance have the money grabbed back from them from the Government? Why does the Minister allow this most unfair inconsistency to continue after more than a year in office?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the Member will be aware that SECOM has taken that subject to the Human Rights Commission and it is before them at this time. I have indicated before to the SECOM Group, and I believe in this House, that the Winnipeg caseload is very, very small because they have people on social assistance for a short term,

employable people. So, their caseload of people who would be qualified for CRISP is very small. Also, I will indicate again that case is before the Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose), with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, as small as they be, it would sure help to put some food on the table and increase the accommodation for these children.

Lunch Program

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, my last question will be to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach). I ask the Minister, is this Minister willing to continue to condone the practice of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) whereby thousands of children every day have inadequate housing and attend school on empty stomachs, with the resulting waste of our scarce educational dollars, this action at the same time as the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) sets up a \$200 million slush fund?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me indicate to the Member opposite that this Government has committed itself to a proper education system in this province. We have shown that by our support of the education system in this province in terms of supporting education, not only in the City of Winnipeg but throughout the entire province. We will continue to do that. It is a tragedy that there are children within our province and in our city who do go to school with empty stomachs. That is not a desirable situation for any of us. We in this Government, although we have only been here a year, are doing everything we possibly can to ensure that in fact our children get the proper learning environment within the school system so that those children can learn and contribute to our society in the future.

Land Titles Office Delays

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). A year ago, registration and acceptance of title at the Winnipeg Land Titles Office took 43 days. How many days does it take now?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): A year ago, Mr. Speaker, it was 43 days. The numbers fluctuate a little bit from day to day, but as of yesterday it was nine.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) with a supplementary question.

Mr. Gilleshammer: A supplementary question to the Minister of Justice. To what does the Minister attribute this improvement?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): . . . Government Members to ask questions, and certainly while it might have been more appropriate for a ministerial statement on the first question, I really do believe that the second question is not appropriate. We have sat here patiently throughout Question Period, the New Democratic Party, with many very important questions to ask. I would really suggest we move on to more urgent matters.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. We have time left if the Honourable Minister's answer is short.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order.

Mr. McCrae: I believe the question was—

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

Mr. McCrae:—dedicated civil servants and good Government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) did not hear the question or he would have answered, because we are not doing anything in terms of the economy.

Hydro Development Ontario Sale

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): My question is to the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Neufeld). In 1987, Manitoba Hydro signed an agreement with the Province of Ontario, with Ontario Hydro to export some 200 megawatts of power. Part of the terms of those negotiations were the agreement on the part of both parties to continue discussions for a much larger 400 to 1,000 megawatt sale.

My question to the Minister is, has the Minister's own anti-hydro development attitude or that of the chairman of Manitoba Hydro stopped those negotiations? Can the Minister give this House an assurance that he has directed Manitoba Hydro to conclude a sale to Ontario Hydro, given the eagerness on the part of Ontario Hydro to have that sale?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Hydro is continuing its negotiations and discussions with Ontario Hydro. To date, no decisions have been made, no conclusions have been made, but as soon as that happens we will report to the House.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are genuinely interested in the orderly development of our hydro resources. I do not need to tell the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro that the unemployment rate is growing. I do not need to tell the Minister that Ontario

desperately needs some long-term power. My question is, has the Minister had any direct contact with Ontario Hydro? Can he indicate whether the phone calls that he has received from perhaps the Premier of Ontario with respect to the sale are being returned?

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Speaker, this Government is not about to allow the economy of the province to be driven by construction projects before they are needed. As the negotiations proceed, we will report to the House. Nothing has been concluded. I have been in contact with the Minister of Energy from Ontario, and our chairman has been in discussions with the chairman of Ontario Hydro, but no negotiations have been concluded.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, my final question is to the Premier. Is the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) of this province going to sit on his hands while his Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro blows potential sale after potential deal after potential deal? Will the First Minister, who has received phone calls from the Ontario Government who are anxious to have the sale concluded, will the First Minister stand up for Manitoba and help the Province of Manitoba develop its natural resources?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member for Flin Flon that I am well-informed of the procedures and the process of the negotiations and discussion. I have been involved myself with authorities at the highest levels in Ontario, and I can tell the Member for Flin Flon that, unlike his administration, when the deal is concluded, it will be a good deal for the benefit of the people of Manitoba and not a giveaway or not involve the building of plant two years before we had a market in order to foster and fuel their own political interests. This will be a good deal for Manitoba when it is announced.

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

* (1430)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call the Order for Return, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon?

ORDER FOR RETURN NO. 8

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I move, seconded by the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that an Order of the House do issue for the return of the following information:

- (a) a list of all private schools receiving public funds; and
- (b) a list of all schools receiving special needs funding and the level of funding received; and
- (c) a copy of all correspondence sent to private schools outlining the procedures for applying

for and spending special needs financial support; and

- (d) an outline of the accountability procedures in place within the Department of Education, or other departments, to monitor or account for the money provided for meeting the needs of special needs students; and
- (e) any written correspondence from the Minister, or any of his designates, with respect to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Special Needs.

MOTION presented.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, this Order for Return is acceptable to the Government.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education, 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, Agriculture in the Chamber, Highways in the committee room.

MATTER OF GRIEVANCE

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): M. le président, je voudrais présenter un grief, ce qui est mon droit comme membre de cette législature. Hier le premier ministre (Mr. Filmon) et la ministre du Patrimoine et de la Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson) ont fait des déclarations fausses publiquement non seulement dans la Chambre mais aussi en dehors de la Chambre aux médias. M. le président, je reconnais le fait que j'ai le droit de les poursuivre dans les tribunaux et je vous dis que ceci est une option que je suis en train de le considérer. J'ai déjà fait un rendez-vous avec les avocats nécessaires.

Mais pour tourner aux déclarations que les ministres ont faites en Chambre, aux médias, hier durant la période des questions le Premier Ministre a dit: "Prior to getting involved with our party or being elected he was a member of the Grassroots organization, actively involved as a citizen member of this province in opposing bilingualism."

M. le président, je peux vous dire que ceci est faux. J'avais joint le Parti conservateur en 1976 alors c'était pas avant et puis comme j'ai dit hier, et que j'ai répété aux médias je n'ai jamais été membre ou bien été impliqué avec l'organisation Grassroots. Aussi dans les deux journaux principaux de Winnipeg, le premier ministre a répété ses déclarations fausses. Et aussi hier soir la ministre du Patrimoine et de la Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson) a dit publiquement qu'elle avait les preuves. Je lui demande d'abord aujourd'hui de nous démontrer ses preuves. Qu'elle les sorte, qu'elle les mette sur la table. Si elle n'est pas capable, je dis au premier ministre, ce que je vous dis, M. le président, ces allégations ont été faites en dehors de la Chambre et puis s'ils ne sont pas prêts à défendre ce qu'ils ont

dit, ils vont peut-être être obligés de défendre leurs actions dans les tribunaux.

M. le président, comme vous le savez en 1986 l'opposition au bilinguisme officielle faisait partie de la plate-forme du Parti conservateur. M. le Premier Ministre, le Membre de Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) à une assemblée de tous les candidats conservateurs, que sans doute vous vous rappelez, a dit que n'importe quel membre qui n'était pas d'accord avec la plate-forme du Parti conservateur, qu'il ne signerait pas ses papiers de nomination. Tous les membres, tous les candidats en ce temps-là, y inclus le Membre de River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) y inclus tous les vingt-quatre membres du Parti avec l'exception de peut-être deux, qui sont nouveaux cette année, ont accepté ça.

M. le Président, on sait que durant le cours de la campagne que malgré que le Premier Ministre (Mr. Filmon)

(Translation)

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): I wish to present a grievance according to my right as a Member of this Legislature. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) made false statements publicly, not only in the House but also outside the House to the media.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the right that I can pursue them in front of the courts but I am telling you that this is an option that I am considering. I have already made an appointment with the lawyers as was necessary. I have returned to the statements made by the Ministers made in the House and to the media. Mr. Speaker, yesterday during the Question Period the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) said: "Prior to getting involved with our Party or being elected, he was a member of the Grassroots organization, actively involved as a citizen member of this province in opposing bilingualism."

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this is false. I joined the Conservative Party in 1976 and as I said yesterday, and as I repeated to the media I have never been a member and have never been involved with the Grassroots organization. Also, in the two principal papers of Winnipeg the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) repeated his false statements and also, yesterday evening, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) stated publicly that she had proof. I ask today that the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson) show us the proof, that she table this proof and, if she is not capable of doing this, I would say to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) what I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, is that these allegations were made outside the House and if they are not ready to defend what they have said, they will perhaps be obliged to defend their actions before the courts.

Mr. Speaker, as you know in 1986 the opposition to official bilingualism was part of the Conservative platform. The First Minister, the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) in an assembly of all Conservative candidates, as you probably recall, said that any

Member who was not in agreement with the Conservative Party that he would not sign his nomination papers. All Members, all candidates at that time, including the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), including all the 24 members of the Party, with perhaps the exception of two who were new that year, accepted this.

Mr. Speaker, we know that in the course of the campaign that in spite of the fact that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon)

(English)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, on a point of order.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I know that the Member from Springfield (Mr. Roch) was referring to some meeting of candidates and I want it clear on the record that I was never at a meeting of any candidates before the 1986 election because I was not nominated till after the writ was issued.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order. The Honourable Member for Springfield.

Mr. Roch: The Minister is partially correct. Cliff Annabal had been nominated for a year prior and was forced to resign because of other matters. The fact remains that when she accepted to be a candidate she accepted the PC Party platform or else the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) would not have signed her nomination papers. As a matter of fact, during the course of the campaign upon which all PC candidates in 1986 ran, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) circulated an open letter to all Manitobans and all 57 constituencies and it reads as such, and this is a direct quote:

"An important message from Gary Filmon: Dear fellow Manitoban, Let's set the record straight. During the election campaign, many of you have asked our candidates for the position of the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba with regard to the French language issue. I hope the following points will clarify our stand.

"1) We will not entrench additional French language rights in our constitution.

"2) We will not agree to any unwarranted expansion of French language services in Manitoba Government departments or Crown Corporations.

"3) Prior to proceeding with any proposal for constitutional amendment, whether it be language or any other subject, we will hold provincewide public hearings and be guided by the results of these hearings.

"Manitobans, we hear you loud and clear.

Sincerely," it is signed, "Gary Filmon, Leader of the Manitoba Progressive Conservative Party."

M. le président, ceci était une plate-forme que non seulement les candidats conservateurs courraient avec,

et j'en étais un de ceux, malgré que j'ai toujours dit—dit durant mes campagnes électorales—la division scolaire et au niveau provincial que j'étais en faveur des services en français ou il y avait la demande suffisante où bien une demande signifiante.

Et si, le membre qui est maintenant le chef du Nouveau Parti Démocratique (Mr. Doer) aurait eu la signature du Membre de Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) pour être candidat du Parti conservateur à River Heights en 1986, lui-même aurait accepté cette plate-forme. Alors, qu'il ne fasse pas d'accusations aujourd'hui. Comme j'ai dit auparavant hier soir, à la télévision, le premier ministre disait que j'étais tête-à-tête avec M. Grant Russell, le chef de l'organisation Grassroots.

* (1440)

M. le président, je n'ai jamais connu Grant Russell. Je ne l'ai jamais rencontré. Je sais qui il est. On sait tous qui il est. Mais encore, le premier ministre (Mr. Filmon) continue à faire des déclarations fausses. Il faut que le record soit clair et sûr. C'était intéressant à matin à la radio que malgré que j'imagine que le Premier Ministre (Mr. Filmon) n'a pas écouté la radio ce matin. Il disait que c'était hypocrite des Libéraux de poser M. Russell à ce temps-ci parce que c'était deux ans qu'il représentait la communauté irlandaise sur le Conseil interculturel. Mais, à la radio ce matin, les membres des deux organisations irlandaises ont dit que M. Russell n'avait pas été élu, ne les représentaient pas. Les quelques personnes d'origine irlandaise avaient, et, se dis leur mots exactement, "flipped a coin" pour décider qui les représenterait sur le Conseil interculturel.

M. le président, c'est intéressant que dans ses réponses le premier ministre (Mr. Filmon) n'était pas au courant de ceci. Le premier ministre (Mr. Filmon) et la ministre du Patrimoine et la Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson), en effet, tout les membres du Gouvernement, aiment ça appeler les Libéraux des hypocrites. Et quand je dis membre du Gouvernement, je suis aussi bien d'inclure le Nouveau Parti Démocratique parce qu'essentiellement, ils sont tous ensemble. Mais, qui sont-ils, les hypocrites? Ils se tournent de bord maintenant, et ils sont en faveur des droits minoritaires. C'est possible. Tous les partis politiques au courant de leur année changent leurs positions. Tous les partis politiques depuis leur fondation que ça soit en 1970, 1967, 1870, 1867, ont des changements de positions. Je ne suis pas au courant qu'il y eu un changement de politique dans le Parti conservateur dernièrement, mais s'il y en a eu un sans doute ils devraient le dire.

En élisant M. Russell à leur exécutif, à leur dernier congrès, ça démontre à tout le monde ce que je pense que leur politique n'a pas changé. Nul autre que Bernard Bocquel, le rédacteur de la Liberté m'a dit personnellement, et je crois qu'il l'a écrit aussi que la différence entre le Parti conservateur et le Nouveau Parti Démocratique au temps de la grosse issue de la langue française était plutôt la rhétorique que l'action ou le non-action.

Et là l'on se retrouve avec l'issue du Lac Meech, une issue que j'ai opposée personnellement durant la

campagne et même quand j'étais du bord du Gouvernement, mais que le premier ministre (Mr. Filmon) voulait absolument, absolument passer pour essayer d'être dans les bons—je ne sais pas comment on le dirait—sur le bon bord du premier ministre du Canada. Mais ce n'est pas arrivé. Tout à coup le premier ministre (Mr. Filmon) a réalisé que la position du Parti Libéral était celle qui représentait les Manitobains. Et d'abord à ce point-là, le premier ministre (Mr. Filmon) après qu'il avait présenté la motion le vendredi sur la fin de semaine, eu il a la pression de son caucus, sans doute, et à plusieurs lettres et de coups de fils a décidé de renverser sa position complètement.

Si l'on retourne à des issues du Free Press au mois de juillet et possiblement au mois d'août, ou peut-être c'est toutes les deux au mois de juillet, il y avait deux articles quand je siégeais encore sur le bord du Gouvernement où j'ai publiquement indiqué que je ne supportais pas l'Accord du Lac Meech. En ce temps-là on devrait dire probablement encore aussi jusqu'à après l'élection fédérale que le Nouveau Parti Démocratique y inclus le Membre de Concordia (Mr. Doer) supportait avec enthousiasme l'Accord du Lac Meech. Alors, qu'ils ne viennent pas prêcher aux Libéraux aujourd'hui que c'est eux qui représentent les Manitobains.

C'est comme M. Carstairs a dit l'année passée, l'Accord du Lac Meech est mort. C'est à peu près le temps qu'ils deviennent convaincus. M. le président, l'année passée il y a eu des temps où j'ai eu des différences d'opinions avec La Société Franco-Manitobaine. J'ai souvent eu des différences d'opinions avec différentes organisations mais ces différences sont dans le passé.

Quand M. Léo Robert, qui était le président de la Société à ce temps-là, était président, quand je le vois ces temps-ci, on a aucune difficulté de s'asseoir et prendre une tasse de café ou quoi que ce soit ensemble. Même en 1986 quand j'étais candidat Conservateur j'avais été invité par la Société Franco-Manitobaine à donner la parole à leur congrès annuel. Et je voudrais lire d'une lettre qui m'avait été envoyée le 12 février 1986 par M. Rhéal Sabourin qui à ce temps-là était devenu le président de la S.F.M. En partie ça dit: "En cette année d'élection vous pourriez faire connaître les politiques, les intentions de votre parti à l'égard des Francophones du Manitoba. Je profite aussi de cette occasion pour vous souhaiter bonne chance dans votre campagne électorale et je vous remercie d'avoir accepté notre invitation au nom de M. Filmon."

M. le président, j'ai dit clairement quelle était la position du Parti conservateur et aussi ma position personnelle à ce temps-là. Ça n'a jamais été un secret. Il y a des membres du Nouveau parti démocratique qui disent: "Ah, ben on a des pamphlets que tu as distribués." Sans doute. Ils ont été distribués dans tout le comté de Springfield. S'ils n'en on pas, bien, ils ne gardent pas leurs records trop bien.

Dernièrement, il y avait mention que dans les questions orales que quand j'étais commissaire j'avais opposé les services de langue française. Une autre allégation, une autre déclaration fausse. M. le président, la Division de la Seine a toujours été une division

scolaire bilingue. Je n'ai jamais opposé ça. En vérité quand ils voulaient construire une école régionale française du grade sept à douze, je me suis débattu pour essayer de l'avoir dans mon quartier. Je représentais le monde qui m'avait élu.

Puisqu'il y avait, comme c'est naturel dans la politique, une petite différence d'opinions sur la location, ceux qui la voulaient ailleurs m'accusaient d'être anti-français. Je ne comprends pas comment que, moi-même qui suis peut Canadien-Français, moi-même peut être accusé d'être anti-français. Surtout quand que j'en ai pas appris la langue anglaise avant que j'aie cinq ans. J'ai encore de la misère avec. En tout les cas, je n'ai pas réussi dans mon but, l'école a été ailleurs. Mais, avant de partir, j'ai eu l'occasion de commencer les démarches pour en avoir une toujours bien de la maternelle au grade neuf qui est maintenant construite. Il y a eu des problèmes avec la construction mais ça c'est une affaire de contracteurs et non-politique.

Dernièrement, Monsieur le président, j'ai été invité à participer de la part du caucus libéral et de la part de Mme Carstairs, à la fondation de l'Association des Municipalités Bilingues. M. Maurice Gauthier, ancien représentant du Commissaire aux langues officielles m'avait rendu l'invitation. Il était très content que j'étais venu. M. Denis Grenier qui est maintenant le président de l'Association, le maire de Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, mon village natal, m'a envoyé une lettre de félicitations, content que j'étais venu. Alors, ça vient de contredire tout ce que le Premier ministre et la Ministre de la Culture ont dit.

C'est intéressant de noter qu'une invitation avait été envoyée à l'ancien Ministre des Affaires municipales pour être là, le membre de Ste-Rose, pour être présent. Et quand il y a eu un changement dans le Cabinet, ils ont changé le nom du département des Affaires municipales au Développement rural, qu'ils ont envoyé la même invitation une deuxième fois au Ministre présent du Développement rural. Ils n'ont reçu aucune réponse. Aucune réponse jusqu'à la journée même dans l'après-midi, quelques heures avant l'événement quand quelqu'un les a fait savoir que j'avais accepté l'invitation de représenter Mme. Carstairs et le Parti libéral à leur Association. Et là, et seulement à ce temps-là, M. Don Leech, le secrétaire du cabinet, a vite appelé M. Gauthier pour leur les informer qu'en effet le ministre serait présent. Je pense que si ce n'avait pas été le fait qu'ils avaient invité un membre de l'opposition, je pense que le ministre n'aurait pas été là.

Le président de l'Union des municipalités du Manitoba était présent en leur offrant de l'assistance dans n'importe quelle manière qu'il pouvait. Le représentant du gouvernement fédéral a fait la même chose. Mais le ministre même a seulement dit quelques mots de bienvenue et ne bonne chance et ne leur a fait aucune assistance. Cela dit beaucoup de droit de là.

* (1450)

Mais est-ce que le ministre et ce gouvernement est seulement anti-français? Je pense que ça va plus loin que ça. M. le président, dernièrement j'ai demandé des

questions sur la situation légale entre la ville de Thompson et la tribu d'Indiens Keewatin. Et puis le ministre a dit qu'il voulait se rencontrer moi-même et le critique du Nouveau parti démocratique.

Monsieur le président, j'espère que le ministre essaie pas de jouer les membres des organisations municipales contre les Indiens en espérant gagner l'avantage politique dans d'autres parties de la province. Parce que je ne pense pas que ces jours-ci une situation de même marcherait. Peut-être en 1750, peut-être en 1850 mais pas aujourd'hui.

La position du Parti libéral est très claire, très claire, et j'avertis le ministre de ne faire aucune déclaration fausse malgré qu'il a dit, malgré qu'il a dit qu'on se rencontrera ensemble. Et peut-être je devrais lire les questions et les réponses qui ont été présentées le 12 juin 1989.

J'ai demandé à ce point-là, j'ai dit:

"Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner). On October 7, the then Minister of Municipal Affairs wrote to the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities and stated the following with regard to the Keewatin Tribal Council's case against the City of Thompson. When I receive a copy of the decision of the court, I will be in a better position to determine what action, if any, we have to take with respect to the matter. Will the Minister of Rural Development now tell this House what action his Government intends to take?"

Whereupon the Minister replied:

"I thank the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) for his question. It is certainly something that the court has ruled on. I have asked for a legal opinion and advice from my department on this matter. As soon as I have received that, I will sit down and attempt to, and I invite both Opposition Parties to meet on this matter with me to discuss this matter and see whether we can come to some point, on some reasonable course of action on this matter, but only if and when I have received legal advice on it."

(Translation)

Mr. Roch: This was a platform that not only the Conservative candidates ran with, and I was one of them in spite of the fact that I always said, and I said it during my electoral campaigns and in the school division and at the provincial level that I was in favour of French services where there was sufficient demand for it or if there was significant demand for it. And if the Member who is now the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer) had had the signature of the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) to be a Conservative candidate in River Heights in 1986, he himself would have accepted this platform, so he should not make any accusations today.

As I said before, yesterday evening on television, the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) said that I was hand in glove with Mr. Grant Russell, the leader of the Grassroots organization. Mr. Speaker, I have never known Grant Russell. I have never met him. I know who he is. We all know who he is, but again the First Minister (Mr.

Filmon) continues to make false statements and the record has to be clear and correct on that.

It was interesting this morning on the radio, although I suspect the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did not listen to the radio this morning, he was saying that it was hypocritical on the part of the Liberals to oppose Mr. Russell at this time, because he had been representing the Irish community for two years on the Intercultural Council already.

But on the radio this morning, members of the two Irish organizations said that Mr. Russell had not been elected and that he did not represent them. Certain people of Irish origin said, and I will quote the words exactly, they flipped a coin to say who would represent them on the Intercultural Council.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that in his answers the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) was not aware of this. The First Minister and the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), and in fact all the Members of the Government, should not call the Liberals hypocrites, and when I talk about the Members of the Government I am including the NDP, because essentially they are all together.

But who are they? They turn around and they are in favour of the rights of minorities. This is possible. All political Parties change their positions from year to year, and since their founding, whether it is 1970, 1967, 1870, or 1867, they have all had changes of position. I am not aware that there has been a policy change in the Conservative Party lately, but if there has been one, probably they should say so. In electing Mr. Russell to their executive council at their last meeting, that shows to the whole world that their politics have not changed.

None other than Mr. Bernard Bocquel, the editor of *La Liberté*, said to me personally that the difference between the Conservative Party and the NDP, at the time of the great French language issue, was rather a difference in rhetoric than of action or of non-action. And now there is the Meech Lake issue, a matter which I opposed personally during the electoral campaign, and even when I sat on the Government side, but which the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) wanted absolutely to have passed in an attempt to be in the good books of the Prime Minister of Canada.

But that did not happen. All of a sudden, the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) realized that the Liberal Party position was the one that represented Manitobans and firstly, at that time, the First Minister, after he had presented the motion on a Friday, over the weekend, under pressure from his caucus no doubt, and undoubtedly because of various letters and telephone calls, decided to reverse his opposition completely. If we turn to several issues of the *Free Press*, in the month of July or possibly in the month of August, there were two articles when I sat on the Government side in which I publicly indicated that I did not support the Meech Lake Accord.

At that time, until after the federal election, the NDP, including the Member for Concordia, supported the Meech Lake Accord. So he should not come preaching

to the Liberals today, who are the ones who represent Manitoba. As Mrs. Carstairs said last year, the Meech Lake Accord is dead. It is about time they realized that.

Mr. Speaker, last year I had differences of opinion at different times with the Franco-Manitoban Society. I have often had differences of opinion with various organizations, but these differences are in the past. Mr. Léo Robert was the president of the Franco-Manitoban Society at that time, and when I see him now we have no difficulty in sitting down together and having a cup of coffee or what have you together.

Even in 1986, when I was a Conservative candidate, I was invited by the Franco-Manitoban Society to speak to them at their annual meeting and I would like to read from a letter sent to me on February 12, 1986 by Mr. Rhéal Sabourin who at that time was the president of the Franco-Manitoban Society. In part, this letter says: "In this election year, you could make known the policies and intentions of your Party in regard to Manitoba's Francophones. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you good luck in your electoral campaign and I thank you for having accepted our invitation on behalf of Mr. Filmon."

Mr. Speaker, I clearly stated what the position of the Conservative Party was and also my personal position at that time. It was never a secret. There are Members of the NDP who say, well, we have some pamphlets you distributed. Doubtless they were distributed throughout Springfield and if they do not have any, then they do not keep their records very well.

Recently, there was mention made in Question Period that when I was a trustee I was opposed to French language services. This is another allegation, another false statement. Mr. Speaker, the Seine River Division has always been a bilingual school division. I have never opposed this. In truth, when they wanted to build a French regional school, it was from Grades 7 to 12, I fought to obtain it in my area. I was representing the people who had elected me because, as is natural in politics, there were small differences of opinion concerning the location of the school. People who wanted it elsewhere accused me of being anti-French. I do not understand how I, who am a French-Canadian myself, could be accused of being anti-French, particularly when I did not learn English until I was five years old, and I still have difficulty with it.

As for the school, I did not succeed in my objective. The school was built elsewhere. But before leaving I had the opportunity to initiate action in order to have one from Kindergarten to Grade 9 in my area, which is now built. There were problems with the building of it, but that is a matter to do with contractors and not a matter of politics.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, I was invited to attend, on behalf of the Liberal Party and by Mrs. Carstairs, the founding of the Association of Bilingual Municipalities. Mr. Maurice Gauthier, former representative of the Commissioner of Official Languages, invited me. He was very pleased that I came. Mr. Denis Grenier, who is now the president of this association and the Mayor of Notre Dame de Lourdes, which is my home town, sent me a letter of congratulations, pleased that I had come to this meeting.

That contradicts everything that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) have said. It is interesting to note that the invitation wassent to the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Member for Ste. Rose, and when there were changes made in Cabinet they changed the name of the Department of Municipal Affairs to Rural Development, and they sent the same invitation a second time to the present Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner).

They received no reply. No reply until the very day in the afternoon, some hours before the event, when someone was told that I had accepted the invitation to represent Mrs. Carstairs and the Liberal Party at the association. And only at that point, Mr. Don Leitch, the secretary to Cabinet, quickly called Mr. Gauthier to inform him that the Minister would indeed be present.

I think that, had it not been the fact that they had invited a Member of the Opposition, the Minister would not have been there either. The president of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities was present and offered whatever assistance he could. The representative of the federal Government did the same, but the Minister himself only said a few words of welcome, wished them well, and offered no assistance.

Are the Minister and his Government only anti-French? I think that it goes further than that. Mr. Speaker, lately I have asked questions about the legal situation between the City of Thompson and the Keewatin Tribe, and the Minister stated that he wanted to meet with me and the NDP Critic. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister is not trying to play the Members of municipal organizations against the Natives in the hope of gaining more political advantage in other parts of the province, because I do not think that such a situation would work—perhaps in 1750, perhaps in 1850, but not today.

The Liberal Party's position is very clear and I warn the Minister not to make any false statements, in spite of the fact that he said that we would meet together. Perhaps I should read the questions and answers presented on June 12, 1989. I asked at that point, and I said.

(English)

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Minister has not received this legal advice. We have met, the Minister, myself and the Member for Dauphin and we asked certain questions. But, being the Minister, being in Government, as I told him, bring us your proposals. I certainly do not appreciate getting veiled threats that, well, I may have to go out to the regional meetings of the municipalities, of the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities and the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and say I do not have the co-operation of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go on with the further question I asked. Whereupon I stated on the same day as my first supplementary:

"Mr. Speaker, Treaty rights are granted by the federal Government. What action does this Minister plan to

take with his colleagues in Ottawa to ensure that our municipalities are not suffering any loss of revenue whatsoever and ensure that Treaty rights are not violated?"

Whereupon the Minister replied: "Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you, as I have indicated to the House, that I am quite willing to sit down and discuss this issue with the two Parties opposite to see whether there is some result to this matter. It is certainly a matter that takes some decision-making but before I receive legal counsel or advice on this matter, I simply will not discuss the matter publicly. I think it would be detrimental to the result of the issue in the long view if we did that."

Mr. Speaker, in my final supplementary, I said: "The fact remains that Treaty rights were originally granted by Ottawa but the spirit of that legislation was to exempt the property on the reserves. He has to be in touch with his colleague, the federal Minister of Northern Affairs, to ensure that, (a) there would be no loss of revenues to any rural municipalities, and (b) that Treaty rights would be respected. Will he be in touch with his colleague in Ottawa over this issue so that we can then sit down and discuss it amongst all the three Parties here in Manitoba?"

The Minister replied, "yes," and now Mr. Speaker, we have had those conversations, he has said yes, but he has not. He seems to feel that we here in Manitoba should unilaterally change the Act without consulting the municipal people, without consulting the Indian bands, without even admitting that the federal Government has a responsibility in this whole matter. The fact remains too that we were supposed to get together over this in a co-operative fashion. When a Minister comes and makes veiled threats that he will blame his lack of action, the Government's lack of action on this very crucial issue on the Opposition Party, I do not like that, but I could have bit my tongue. When the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) of the province and the Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Mitchelson) in this Chamber and outside this Chamber go out there and make totally, completely false statements about me, well then I realize they have no honour and, therefore, I am not held to my word to that Minister.

Mr. Speaker, what gets me on this whole issue is that -(Interjection)- well, the portfolio without Minister from Portage is quacking again. I do not know what he does at Cabinet meetings, serve coffee or something, but—

Anyway, I digress from my notes and, contrary to what the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) believes, we are allowed to use notes. But you know, Mr. Speaker, to have the gall to accuse me whose maternal grandparents came from France and my paternal grandparents came from the Gruyère district of Switzerland of being anti-French, is ludicrous.

Ma position durant toute la campagne, durant l'élection de 1986, elle est consistante avec celle du Parti conservateur.

(Translation)

My position throughout the campaign during the 1986 election is consistent with that of the Conservative Party.

(English)

Well, I hear someone on the other side. I believe it is the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), who does not know what a sibling is, mention whose side are you on this time? Well, obviously we know whose side they are on, because when Members that dress up like the Ku Klux Klan, have Ministers of the Crown go out there and shake hands with them and the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) does not even demand their resignation, never mind apology, we know whose side they are on. That is racism at its worst, I think, anti-French and anti-Indian and also anti-multicultural. So do not make any allegations, despite the fact that the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) at the annual convention of the Yellowhead Conference thought they were ghosts. Well, it will probably win you some votes in some quarters, but in the long run you lose.

Well, I hear the lapdog from Lac du Bonnet make comments out there, an ex-Liberal.

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

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), on a point of order.

* (1500)

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I believe it is unparliamentary to refer to any Member of this House as a lapdog and I am offended by that statement.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would have to ask the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) to kindly withdraw those remarks. As he knows, all Members are Honourable Members.

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): Yes, yes, Mr. Speaker, I am withdrawing the comment. I know he is very sensitive and I guess I should not have said that. He is well-known throughout his constituency as that, but I withdraw the comment. But it is kind of ludicrous for even him to make comments about this whole issue because he was a candidate in '86, too. He ran on the same platform as all of them, and they are laughing.

Now, well the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), an ex-Liberal, is talking about changing Parties. The Minister of Energy (Mr. Neufeld) is an ex-Liberal. The Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) is an ex-Liberal. The Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) is an ex-Conservative. It is just a— what the heck!—fun place.

I have got my main points on the record. Rather than belabour the point, I swear, well, I would like to mention one more thing.

Given the fact that this Government is professing to support the multicultural community by such actions as appointing Grant Russell and taking away their authority to disburse funds, doing it by Cabinet committee, I think that is the politicization of that whole

process. By making it a fact that now groups must go see them to obtain monies, I believe that will lead to the politicization of the whole process. I think that is pork barrelling possibly, and let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, that of all the actions that this Government has taken to date and will take for the next year or two or whatever, let us not forget who is keeping them there, it is the New Democratic Party. Possibly they are still governing this province, I do not know. Maybe they have joint caucus meetings.

So let the NDP not think that they are squeaky clean in all this, because they are propping up this Government. The proof is in the pudding. With their recent appointments, with their recent actions, the Conservative Party has lost virtually all support from the multicultural community and the support that the NDP once had has virtually evaporated.

Mr. Speaker, when I sat in Opposition with the Tory Caucus and was critic for Culture, Heritage and Recreation, it was not regarded as important. I built up some good contacts and good followings within the multicultural community. I recall that when the then Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, David Crombie, tabled the national Bill on multiculturalism, I asked as many caucus Members as possible to attend a briefing being put on by none other than one of their own people, Danny Lega. None showed up. That was the kind of priority they put on multiculturalism in Manitoba. The only one who eventually showed up, because I called him and asked him to because he was my deputy critic, was the former Member for Assiniboia, Mr. Ric Nordman. To his credit, he was busy but he left the matters he was attending to, to attend that meeting. So there was a grand total of three.

I attended several functions. Several members of the ethnic community told me that they appreciated my presence there where they had grave concerns about my Party and my Leader, the same things that I heard day after day after day, like most of the Members here heard during the last election campaign.

I must say—and I digress a little bit too right now—it is indeed an honour now to have a Leader that one can respect, that I am proud to be under the leadership of Sharon Carstairs.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) makes comments. He does not realize that his Party's policies have changed back and forth, back and forth, over the years. Ed Schreyer, Duff Roblin, Sharon Carstairs have a lot of items in common, but Ed Schreyer today has nothing to do with this Party. Even when the Member is trying to do a draft Schreyer movement, Mr. Schreyer absolutely refused him because of several factors but no doubt because of what this Party has degenerated to. That was known as one of the factors.

Mr. Speaker, the proof is in the pudding. This Government and its access alliance has got no support from the ethnic communities, no support from the Francophone community, except for token support here and there. By this happening these past few days, their actions, they have eradicated what hopes they had to salvage this. Now, if they want to continue making these

false allegations, we will keep the issue burning. The choice is theirs. Thank you.

* (1510)

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

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 Department of Highways and Transportation; and the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) in the Chair for the Department of Agriculture.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Chairman (Harold Gilleshammer): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This section of the Committee of Supply will be dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Highways. We will begin with a statement from the Honourable Minister responsible.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It give me pleasure to present the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation for the year 1989-90.

As I have indicated before, I am very pleased to announce a record construction program for this year. Our budget figures are \$225 million compared to \$219 million last year. Of this, highway construction makes up approximately 50 percent, highway maintenance 25 percent, while the other transportation and related expenditures makes up the balance of the 25 percent of the budget.

In spite of the fact that we are saying that this is a record budget for construction in the Highways program this year, I have to indicate that had we maintained our 1982 expenditure level of \$100 million, just by adding the inflation rate to that we would be spending possibly in the area of \$125 million a year on the road construction. However, that is not the case and we are still trying to get towards that objective. We believe that highway construction is a very important and necessary component in the rural areas, as well as affecting the city.

Some of the major construction projects that are on track right now are the Highway 75, the twinning of Highway 75. We will be paving 15.3 kilometres this year and we are resurfacing a portion of 21.9 kilometres in the Emerson area. We are continuing with the No. 1 West near Brandon for construction and paving that is taking place, and we are providing a continuous four-lane facility from Falcon Lake to Oak Lake. That is the objective in terms of our four-laning of the Trans-Canada.

Major interchanges on No. 7 and 101, and also No. 1 on PR 240 are on track and we are moving ahead with them. As Members are probably aware, these are very expensive projects. The interchange at No. 7 and 101, the cost is estimated at approximately \$13.5 million.

I would also like to indicate at this time that this is the third and final year of the current three-year \$20 million Yellowhead Highway federal-provincial cost-sharing program, and hopefully we can meet the objectives of getting most of the projects completed this year. The Yellowhead Highway Agreement has recently been revised to allow the tendering of the final phases of the interchange construction of PR 240 and PTH 1 in the fourth year. We will be completing that one next year, and that has been agreed to.

Under highway maintenance, we are continuing to restore maintenance on our highway system to a standard recommended by our engineers. That was in place some years ago. Funding provided in this budget will see all standards restored with the exception of gravelling standard which is still 5 percent below what we consider desirable.

Under the RTAC routes, a total of 1,700 kilometres of RTAC interprovincial routes were approved under regulation in '88. These routes will allow maximum gross vehicle weight of 62,500 kilograms on certain tractor-trailer configurations. Staff is continually monitoring this. As we can accommodate and make changes, based on the structures involved and the road involved, we will certainly do that.

We also had announced this year a new Access Road Policy which allows truck traffic weights on certain roads. This is access off PTHs on PRs into communities within a certain distance of the PTH. This basically affects 175 rural communities and involves 415 kilometres of access road.

I would also like to indicate at this time that we established uniform speed limits across the province, which were announced, that all PTHs would be 100 kms. an hour and all PRs would be at 90 kms. with a few exceptions where road conditions did not warrant it on PTHs. I think it would help alleviate confusion because until now certain PTHs were 100 and others were 90, and it created a lot of concern and confusion in people's minds. We have that uniform system in place now.

Also I would like to make special reference to the 4-H Highway Clean-up Program. This spring, the department again joined with the 4-H clubs in a joint benefit program. One hundred and eighty-two clubs with 3,480 participants cleaned up 2,194 kilometres of highway right-of-way providing the club with \$32,911 to finance their endeavours.

I personally went out and had a look when they were doing this. I think it is a great program. I personally would like to actually see that expanded. They do a tremendous job. This year when they were out, the weather conditions were sort of marginal at times. The kids went out bundled up and wearing gloves, but they were doing a tremendous job, I really support that

though. I think it helps in two ways, it helps clean up the highways as well as it helps the 4-H clubs. I think that is a very positive program. I would like to see that expanded if possible.

Under winter maintenance, you will remember that we have just been through a very severe winter with very heavy snowfall. The total winter maintenance expenditure this past winter exceeded previous years' expenditures by approximately \$5 million.

Under streetwork or the grants to cities, towns and villages and roadwork in the LGDs, I am very pleased to indicate that this year's budget will provide for partial restoration of funding for grants to cities, towns and villages for street improvements, an increase of \$200,000 to \$1.5 million. It will also enhance the funding provided for roadwork in local Government districts. We are still not at the standard that we were at a few years ago when there were cutbacks in that area, but we are trying to get back to that. I think it is a very necessary program as well. Judging by the applications that come in from the villages, towns and cities, there is a need for this program and I certainly support it.

In conjunction with that, we have a new program that I would like to indicate to you, which is the Municipal Bridge Assistance Program. This is a new cost-sharing program to assist rural municipalities in the rehabilitation or replacement of bridges on the municipal road system, complements the other programs available to municipalities, such as the Grant in Aid Program and the Local Government District Program, by providing for the first time infrastructure funding to assist rural municipalities.

This year's program provides for \$500,000 to assist municipalities in undertaking planning and design work necessary to get the program started in the following year. I think this is something that has been needed for a long time. I believe that we will get good response from the municipalities. The details of the program will be forthcoming in a very short period of time, and we will be notifying the municipalities exactly of the details of it and, hopefully, launch a very successful program.

Under Government Air and Radio Services, during the past fiscal year, the department took delivery of the fifth CL-250 water bomber and immediately put it to use in one of the busiest forest fire fighting seasons ever. We certainly had utilization of our water bombers as well as seven additional ones that came in to help during the crisis time that we had.

There has also been a 40 percent increase in the use of air ambulance because of the growing acceptance of it by both provincial and federal health agencies in northern communities.

Other initiatives that we have been proceeding with is the centralized booking. The centralized written and road test booking system was introduced just over a year ago, benefitting approximately 50,000 Manitoba drivers requiring driver's testing and interviews each year. Service to the public has been enhanced in a variety of ways.

Then we have the Driver Improvement and Control Program. The division of Driver and Vehicle Licensing

began requiring problem drivers to complete two National Traffic Safety Institute Courses, namely, the Responsible Driving Workshop and the Driver Improvement Workshop, which are facilitated in Manitoba by the Manitoba Safety Council. Drivers are identified for these courses through driver improvement interviews or show cause hearings conducted as part of the Driver Improvement and Control Program. The overall goal is to improve the highway safety of Manitoba by initiating a change to the attitude of driving offenders.

* (1520)

Also, we will be bringing in, and probably will be able to give it second reading tomorrow, impaired driving and driving while disqualified countermeasures. I will not go into the details of those at the present time, but we will be debating them during the Bill itself, possibly tomorrow. I hope that we can get support from all Parties concerned so that we can move that legislation through as soon as possible so we can implement these countermeasures, because it will take a certain while until we can bring implementation on stream. So I think it is pertinent that we move as fast as we can in those areas.

Under Commercial Vehicle Inspection Program, this is one of the National Safety Code initiatives involving regular periodic safety inspections of all registered truck tractors semi-annually, and all registered semitrailers annually.

In March of 1989, a new regulation was enacted requiring truck tractors and semitrailers to be inspected at regular intervals, and the mailing up of call-up notices was discounted. The regulation provides for less frequent inspection of low distance truck tractors which may go up to one year or 25,000 kilometres between inspections.

There are currently 15,013 semitrailers in the province, and 6,796 truck tractors registered in Manitoba, each of which will be safety inspected and brought into a safe operating condition at regular intervals as prescribed in the new regulation.

On Highway Vehicle Safety Inspection Program, this is another of the National Safety Code initiatives involving inspection of commercial vehicles travelling on the highways. Safety inspections are carried out in accordance with standard criteria set out by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance.

All Canadian and most U.S.A. jurisdictions are members of the Alliance and follow identical criteria. In 1988, teams of Vehicle Standards and Inspection officers working in co-operation with the Transport Compliance Branch carried out 950 on-highway truck inspections. Of these inspections, 123 trucks were found to be free of any safety defects, 748 had minor defects and 19 had hazardous safety defects.

The 1989 program includes two teams of Vehicle Standards and Inspection officers, again working in co-operation with the Transport Compliance Branch. Inspections are scheduled to be carried out to more than 150 venues at 13 strategic locations during the period between May and October. It is estimated that

approximately 2,800 inspections will be carried out during this period.

The Off-Road Vehicle Act was proclaimed on October 1, 1988. This Act addressed three main concerns, three areas of concern, namely operator safety, owner and vehicle identification, and environmental effects of off-road vehicle usage.

I might indicate that when we proclaimed this legislation that we ran into certain difficulties, we made certain exemptions. Basically, we exempted farmers, if they used the vehicle on their own property would not have to comply. Also, we made exemption for trappers who have a registered trapline, and we also made exemption for commercial fishermen. Since that time, a lot of concern has been expressed and concerns have been brought forward, especially from the isolated northern communities, where we have a definite enforcement problem. We are reviewing this, and we are hoping to come forward with further exemptions that will accommodate those concerns within the next short while.

I would also indicate that we have recently completed a feasibility study to identify photo licensing. We plan to proceed in that program over a period of time. Cabinet has directed the department to issue tenders for the photo driver licensing system and to proceed with development of the implementation plan and ongoing licence renewal schedules. So, we are moving ahead with that and the implementation of it, as indicated the other day in my sort of rash comments that I made in response to the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake), there is a time element involved in terms of doing the full registry or getting it implemented. It is quite complex. I had envisioned, possibly like many others, that it was just a matter of a minor change, and you could have photo licences on your drivers, because we are unique in Manitoba in terms of how we have the insurance portion along with our drivers. It gets to be very complex in terms of how we do that, but we are well on track with this and hopefully we can make up the major announcement on it within a reasonable period of time. So I would hope that—the Members ask, just indicated, how long. We are looking at possibly having some response in terms of the tendering by July or August some time, at which time then there is still that implementation period, but we will then be on track and committed down the line.

We still have an Autopac Review Commission on the division of drivers and vehicle licensing. There are ongoing discussions between my department and MPIC regarding the recommendations of the Kopstein Report. In fact, in the Kopstein Report, I believe we had some 40 recommendations that affect the Highways Department, and we are working together with them to try and get them all implemented.

Under the National Safety Code, the National Safety Code is a comprehensive Highway Safety Program for commercial vehicles in all Canadian provinces and territories. The code is a conduct and a set of performance standards for the safe operation of commercial vehicles. My department has been working for two-and-a-half years very diligently on this to introduce the 17 safety standards associated with this

endeavour. I can indicate that staff, when it was implemented, and the previous Minister will probably agree to that, Manitoba chose a time frame that they felt was reasonable and we have been able to meet that time frame. We now find out that some of the other provinces have not been able to adhere to that and we hope that they will be coming on stream so that we have a consistent plan or a quota across the province.

We are also in the process of an intraprovincial record exchange project. This is a national project which has been developed in the country over the past two-and-a-half years to facilitate the exchange by computer of driver and vehicle licensing information. It is expected that all jurisdictions will be on line by September of this year. Manitoba, as well as four other provinces have been ready for some months, but again we have been waiting for some of the sister provinces to complete their system of changeover. We think that is going to be a positive, as well.

I have addressed some of the things that are involved in the Highways aspect of it, and I would like to also address some of the concerns and happenings in the transportation aspect of it. Certainly, the first thing that comes to mind is the Port of Churchill and, I suppose, sometimes I feel that I have re-invented the wheel because problems have not changed that much from the time that the previous Minister went through this, almost on an annual basis, in terms of trying to get the federal Government and the Wheat Board and all the players involved to utilize to the maximum the Port of Churchill. For a while, it has looked very dark for the utilization of the Port of Churchill this year. However, I think we have a glimmer of hope that there is going to be some more activity again.

I think, as Members are well aware, that our role in Manitoba is not a decision-making role in there. Our role is basically a matter of lobbying and influencing as much as we can with some—and we are having, I have to admit, a difficult time of it when you have a federal Government that has not necessarily been that receptive or as positive about the Port of Churchill as we would like to have them. We also have strong lobby groups from the St. Lawrence Seaway who feel that they want more action as well, and we have all kinds of other lobby factors involved.

What I have done, I have requested the federal Minister of Transportation to remove the Churchill line as a grain-dependent line. We feel that this could lead to some positive competition for CN, in terms of other commodities that can move through there.

* (1530)

I am sure that during our Estimates process that we will be having a fair amount of discussion on the Port of Churchill and we are looking at initiatives that can probably go into more detail later on in terms of what has happened. We still feel that there is a future for Churchill and I want to indicate that in my dialogue with the federal Minister that my staff and his staff are supposed to be meeting and we will both meet again, as Ministers, in the fall. Somehow I do not know whether

we are getting that message across quite as strongly as we would want to, but I am still trying to hold the federal Minister to that timetable if at all possible.

I would also like to indicate that I have written, after verbal discussion with the Ministers of Saskatchewan and Alberta, I have written them to ask them to continue to start funding again the Port of Churchill Development Board. We have put our money in. We continued to fund that program last year on our own, and I am quietly optimistic that we will get positive response from the other two provinces in terms of participation.

I want to indicate that the ERDA agreement expired March 31, 1989. Manitoba has met all their obligations under the agreement. However, the federal commitments outstanding there are still some commitments outstanding under the Churchill Subsidiary Agreement. One includes the Air Terminal Operations Building, and Phase 2 of the Railway Roadbed Stabilization Study. We have indications that the Railway Stabilization Study should be completed by this fall. We are very anxiously awaiting that. Once it comes forward, I would like to certainly have all Members of the Legislature, who are interested, to be apprised of it and look at what our alternatives would be after that.

Also, under the Transportation Development Subagreement, the University of Manitoba, Transport Institute, will receive \$240,000 for operating costs and \$300,000 for program development for '89-90.

Our policy people were also very involved in the Aspen Airlines. We were finally successful in striking an agreement with them. In fact, I have to indicate that two of my staff people, namely Rolly Savoie and Jim Wallace, have been very active in the negotiations that took place. We finally made an announcement some time ago, and I want to indicate to Members here that tomorrow afternoon and on Saturday, the inaugural flight is taking place. I am very pleased to be part of that first inaugural flight. Unfortunately, I cannot invite anybody else. I want to indicate though, I promise to report how things went when we get back to the Estimates on Monday.

I would also like to indicate that we are negotiating at the present time to have Canadian Airlines International construct a new maintenance hangar in Winnipeg. We realize a decision will probably be forthcoming very soon and we hope it is a positive one for us. Certainly, in terms of investment and employment, it would be a real boon for us.

Another thing that I could touch on possibly is our continued concern about rail abandonment. Governments in the past and present have taken a position and put forward concerns as to the process of rail line abandonment. Another area of major concern that we do not know exactly what will be happening is the discussion that is now taking place in terms of paying the producer. I think these are things that we have to monitor very closely. I hope we have some input from my department in terms of the potential impact it would have on our road system.

I would just like to indicate at this time that the trucking deregulation—we have had some concerns

expressed from time to time. I have had extensive lobbying from people from other provinces that we should escalate the program. However, we feel that because we are a major transportation centre in Canada, we export transportation services. I feel very possessive of that. I feel the transportation industry to Manitoba is similar almost to the oil in Alberta or the potash in Saskatchewan. We have chosen, of course, to take the maximum time that was established by federal legislation so that we feel that we can take as much time as we can, until possibly January 1, 1993, when deregulation is supposed to be in place.

We hope by taking a slower approach to this that it will allow the industry to sort of find itself. By carte blanche deregulating, we feel there would be a lot of turmoil, a lot of maybe unfortunate bankruptcies taking place. We feel the slower approach is something that is going to be beneficial for the transportation industry for this province. In spite of the fact that there is possibly somewhere in the area of 150 applications, we have a backlog. It is moving a little faster now and we feel we are accommodating at the speed that we feel comfortable with.

This does not necessarily meet with the approval of other provinces, basically provinces like Alberta, who have been deregulated virtually all the time. So, these are the carriers. Most of these applications, if I might add, are not from within province. They are from out of province to get authority within the province. We feel that our approach is justified in what we are doing.

I would like to just briefly touch on the program for the transportation of the mobility disadvantaged in rural Manitoba and indicate that the number of trips provided in 1988 was 112,339, which is an increase of 11 percent over the previous year—38 percent of the trips were for quality of life purposes, 31 percent were for employment and school reasons, and 31 percent were for health reasons. We think that this program has really been accepted well. It is serving a tremendous service. We had 34 communities sponsoring Handi-van services in that year, in 1988. We have two applications on stream right now and more coming. We think that is starting to work out better all the time and is very beneficial.

I would just like to briefly touch on the fact of what has happened in the taxicab industry. As Members are aware, the chairman resigned last year and an interim acting chairman was appointed who then proceeded with the process of what we had designated that we would do, which would be a public hearing process for people within the industry as well as the general public. There is a lot of concern that has been expressed by people within the industry. The hearings have been held and lobby groups have indicated they want to meet with me. I have indicated that as soon as I do have the report and the recommendations coming forward that I am prepared to meet with the industry. To do it prior to that, I think, would be premature. I would just like to indicate that we are hoping to be able to deal with an industry that has had some difficult times and has major concerns. We hope to address it in a proper manner.

I think, Mr. Chairman, I have covered maybe not all the items that probably we would want to be discussing

but these are certainly some of the initiatives that have taken place. With those comments, I am prepared to try and answer any questions. We will try to be as forthright and honest with our answers as we can. If we do not have the immediate information here, I can indicate that we will certainly get the information.

With those comments, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We will now have the customary reply by the critic of the Official Opposition, the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake).

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): First of all, I would like to thank the Minister for his statement. I noticed in the Hansard that in previous years, in 1987 in particular, the critics at that time were provided with a printed version of the speech. I was just wondering, is this cancelled or are we going to continue on with that share process?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I have to apologize. I have a whole bunch of material here which was basically prepared and what I tried to do instead of going through it in total detail, some of it I did, I sort of went with synopsis to some degree and ad libbed. If there is some area specifically that the Member would want, I would be very pleased to give him that portion of my notes that I have here, if that would be accommodating.

* (1540)

Mr. Mandrake: No, I just thought it was a procedure that would follow as, say, a parliamentary procedure. If not, let us leave it at that, Mr. Chairman.

Before I go into my speech, I would like to have only one item corrected which is on record. The Ministers had said, "He was not even a Member of that committee and that he is the critic of Highways and Transportation under whose jurisdiction that should be. That shows the confidence that obviously the Liberals have in this Member." Let me just clarify that. I was sick that day. I had a very, very bad cold. When I found out that they were selecting people for this committee, I set out to crawl here on my hands and knees, unfortunately. They selected very, very good people, our Honourable Members for Niakwa (Mr. Herold Driedger), Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans), and Selkirk (Mrs. Charles). Every time that this Minister held any kind of session, they certainly informed me as to what went on. Let us not have that on record saying that I was not capable of being on the committee.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to interrupt the Member's remarks.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I want to indicate here today that possibly when I responded the other day that I probably was a little agitated and maybe was not relatively very nice about some of the comments we made, but it happened to be one of those days. I apologize if I have slighted the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) in

any way. It was sort of a knee-jerk reaction to his response.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, I suspected that was it. I just thought I wanted to put it on record the reason why I was not there.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I do not think you should let those things go. You let the little things go and then they get to be big things.

Mr. Mandrake: That is right, exactly. The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) certainly makes a very, very valid point.

Mr. Chairman, in response to what the Minister said, I am very happy that he is continuing on with the tree planting program. I think it is very important that we maintain the beauty of our province. The tree planting program, I think, was in existence in the Member for Dauphin's (Mr. Plohman) days when he was the Minister. I think it should be continued on with the same vigour as it is now.

The centralized booking problem bothered me. I raised this question before. We will certainly be discussing that during Estimates. I am very pleased that the Minister has indicated approximately when the photo licensing program is going to be put in place. I think we have long awaited this program. I compliment the Minister of this initiative and maybe after yesterday it probably will be fate after what I said.

The one item that I am going to be asking—maps for example, Mr. Chairman. I understand that new maps have been published. Again, the northern part of Manitoba has been excluded. If I am wrong, please correct me on that. From the last one I received, it did not have northern Manitoba and particularly Churchill in that. Churchill is part of Manitoba.

The Port of Churchill, I am amazed, how is it that the NDP Opposition can go to Ottawa and secure an audience with the Minister of Transportation and, of all people, the Wheat Board Minister? I mean, I cannot seem to get that through my head. Yet, when this Minister approached Mr. Mayer, he said no. What is going on? We will be talking about that in Estimates.

VIA Rail is another one that I would like to touch on in my brief comments here. VIA Rail—if we do not show our Minister in Ottawa that we are very concerned about VIA Rail, go down there, knock on his door or sit on his doorstep until this man listens, listens to Manitoba. We have lost too much and we can ill afford to lose VIA Rail. Not only that but, if we are going to lose VIA Rail, we are also going to lose the Maintenance Branch Department. They are supposed to be building, I think, it is a \$3 million maintenance facility here, and if we lose VIA that is going to be the next on the chopping block.

CN Rail is another one. We have lost again jobs and we are constantly losing jobs, and jobs and jobs. I know the Minister cannot foresee some of these things but at least why not have possibly one of the personnel

within his department go down there maybe on a weekly basis and, if I have to, on a daily basis, and knock on their door and say now look, what is going on, so they can be kept abreast as to what is going on, on a daily or a weekly basis.

The one thing that I am very, very pleased with is that the Minister mentioned about the mobility disadvantaged. I am very happy that the program is doing as well as it is. I compliment this Minister upon the action that he is taking in that field.

Mr. Chairman, I have concerns about highways. There are a lot of concerns about the condition of our highways in our province and I will be addressing those particular issues as we go through our Estimates.

When this present Government was in Opposition, on June 5—and this is worth repeating—June 5, 1986, then the Opposition said the Government should seriously consider some form of dedicated funding for the department. I would want to indicate to the Minister that it would be my intention to support any such move and I would encourage it to the best of my ability, my caucus to do likewise.

In the second paragraph, of dedicated taxation of motive fuels, dedicated so that when it is collected by the motoring public they know it is going to go back into that system.

Now this is what they said, Mr. Chairman, when they were in Opposition, again on June 5 the same thing. When they were in Opposition, this is what they said, "We need another \$150 million." Now that is a lot of money. I am not advocating that is the kind of money that should be pumped into the Highways budget now, but I will just go through the Estimates brochures that were provided for me.

This is what I extracted out of it: gasoline tax, the total that is being collected is \$120 million; motive fuel, \$64 million; licensing and fees \$34,288,200; drivers' licences, \$758,000, for a total accumulation of revenue by that department of \$346,046,200.00. That is a lot of money that the Department of Highways is collecting. So why cannot the Minister maybe approach his caucus and say, well, look caucus, this is how much money I am collecting, give me a greater portion of it. I mean, \$6 million which we have been appropriated, added into our budget for this year, is hardly enough.

The Minister is on record as saying that he is going to twin Highway 75 in the most expeditious way he knows, and I believe he really believes in that. But the thing is that if we do not provide this Minister with some funding, I mean, we are going to be constantly harassing him and I do not think that is fair to this Minister.

* (1550)

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to belabour that fact any more. With that comment, I will just say that it is going to be a great pleasure to sit here, my second year, during Estimates. I will tell the Minister right now that last year I was very, very naive because I was not exactly sure what the Estimates process was even like. I will guarantee it, this year is going to be a different

story. I have -(Interjection)- That is right. We are going to want answers, line by line by line. If we do not get those answers, Mr. Chairman, I am quite confident that my colleagues and the New Democratic Party are going to sit here as long as we have to until we get those answers. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I thank you. We will now hear from the critic of the Second Opposition Party, the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Mr. Plohman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments on this, the Highways Estimates.

I note that the Estimates are increased by some \$6 million total which is less than a 3 percent increase overall. So before the Minister starts to brag too much about all the money he got, he should keep in mind that there are some significant reductions in certain areas, such as in the sub-agreement area which have been so important for the development of Churchill, that he has been able to use that saving toward highway construction. But overall, the budget has only increased less than 3 percent, which is less than the rate of inflation. So he is actually sliding backwards a little bit overall in his department.

But having said that, I think the Minister highlighted a number of important initiatives and I want to compliment him, first of all, on a number of those. I think the department continues to manage well and operate well, as they did when I had the privilege to be Minister for some four years. Over that period of time, I do not think it was necessarily appreciated all the time by the Opposition or by colleagues that there certainly is a very progressive group of people involved in the Highways and Transportation Department who have a lot of initiative and put forward a lot of good proposals for the Minister to take credit for. I know he also appreciates the staff who have done that work as well.

But I want him to know that we are going to be joining in what the Liberal Critic has mentioned as a more serious or more stringent review of the Estimates this year. I would not call last year's not serious, but certainly the time allotted was so short that we were unable to delve into issues the way we would have wanted to. We just touched the surface a little bit. Of course, as well, the Liberal Critic has pointed out that he felt that he wanted to work in a spirit of more co-operation. I think now he understands the adversarial role of Opposition and he wants to get in there and really deal with the issues. I am pleased to see that as well.

We are going to be asking the Minister questions about his highways program, the construction program, the priorities, the distribution and so on. As well, I point out, for example, a specific project like Highway 44, which seems to have been slowed down a great deal, is barely moving at all with acquisition of right-of-way and nothing happening on that project which was a major undertaking a few years ago. We will have to find out why the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) is not listening to his colleague from out in

that area and why he is not giving it a higher priority, because it is a very highly travelled road in terrible condition. It probably should not be 100 kilometres an hour because of the condition of it, and yet it is just languishing there. There is no push to get that work done. I think that is as important in terms of the traffic as Highway 75, maybe not in terms of being a gateway to the province as Highway 75 is but certainly in terms of traffic. The Minister should be moving on that more quickly.

We will be asking about the handicapped transportation program or the mobility disadvantaged transportation program for Manitoba and rural areas. I want to talk about that. I want to ask the Minister about how the budget is being diluted with new programs such as the Access Road Policy. How much is that costing the province, the Government over a period of years? What is going to be the cost of that increase in weights to those communities within, I believe, 5 km, or is it 10 km, 8 km from major PTHs? What is—and I know the Minister must have that figure—the cost of weights and dimensions increase that was agreed to without federal funding?

When I was Minister, it was one of the last attempts. The last federal-provincial conference I was at was an attempt to get some support for federal funding for implementation of this program since it is in the national interest to have a highways policy across this country or to have a consistent and uniform weight limit and dimension limit for vehicles. Since it is in the national interest, they should have been putting money in. They refused to do that at that time. The need for a national highways policy that the Minister has picked up upon as an area of policy that he is advocating, we will want to determine from the Minister where he is going in that regard and how much progress is being made.

I will also want to ask him about the municipal bridge assistance program. I believe this is a good idea. It is one that is, as he said, long overdue, one that I felt strongly about in previous years as Minister. Understanding that the \$500,000 is really a drop in the bucket for the first year in terms of the need out there, I have to wonder whether the Minister has contemplated the full extent of the program in terms of its amounts per year once it is rolling and whether he is requiring the municipalities to develop a strategic road program of priority roads that would have bridges replaced so that there will be some way of making decisions and prioritizing decisions before they are eligible for this program. That was something that was started by our Government as well with a number of departments working at attempting to get the municipalities to start planning their grid system in terms of those roads that are higher priority than others, so they would more quickly be dealt with in terms of bridge replacement, which is really endless in rural areas now as bridges built 50 years ago and so on, over the years, are falling down and need replacement.

We will also be wanting to discuss the National Safety Code and its implementation and other safety measures. The rapid exchange of information for drivers' licences is something that we were beginning to work on and I am very pleased to see that coming into place and

that September will be, hopefully I think, from what the Minister said, the date of implementation so that information can be shared on computers instantly across this country on drivers. That is very important because, in the past, drivers with suspended licences have come into the province and obtained a licence and then, in some cases, driven recklessly in this province without the authorities maybe being aware, at least in the short term, that they had this terrible driving record in other jurisdictions.

* (1600)

We also want to raise the issues of the impact of deregulation on the rural truckers and on Manitoba, generally. The issue of off-road vehicles, I want to tell the Minister that some of the exemptions he talked about for farmers were already in the Act and others were certainly provided for in terms of the regulations, that there was a provision and we envisaged some exemptions, especially in northern areas. There was supposed to be a round of consultation take place with northern communities because they did not participate in the initial rounds of consultation that were undertaken when we formulated that Act. So now it will be interesting to see what demands are being made by the northern communities and remote communities with regard to the implementation of The Off-Road Vehicle Act, and the enforcement of that Act in those areas.

As well, Mr. Chairman, the issue of policy in Highways—before, I just want to mention the Highways maps. The Liberal Critic mentioned that Churchill was left off. In fact, Churchill is in the maps on an insert as they were designed. It is a highways map, not necessarily a tourism map for Manitoba, or whatever. It was meant, at that time—and I think this philosophy is the same, although it could be changed—to delineate all the highways in the province, the provincial roads and the provincial trunk highways in the province. So therefore the Churchill area was put in an insert because there are very few roads there and there is no road to Churchill, so therefore you did not need a highways map to show the highway to Churchill, since there was none.

But I can tell you that it was mainly done because of a reduction in the size of the map to accommodate tenders which were much more competitive than they would have been otherwise. The highways map used to cost much more to print before the change was made and the reduction in size. So therefore, of course, the Minister is going to have to weigh those variations, there are various considerations, before he makes a change in this format, I would think.

The photo driver's licence is an important development, one that I certainly support and one that I am sure Manitobans will receive well in this province.

Insofar as transportation issues, this is an area that the Minister finds most frustrating perhaps at times, because he says he does not have a decision-making role. He only has an advisory role, and that is why, even though he is responsible for these areas, he cannot get the kinds of results that he should be getting on behalf of Manitobans.

We see it in a number of areas. I think he could have a stronger influence. As I said earlier, he has excellent advisers, but the Minister has to take a very strong role in some of these transportation areas if he is going to ensure that he is able to counter the very strong movements against Manitoba's interest, whether by plan, deliberately, or whether as a consequence of other decisions that are being made which really do not consider Manitoba's interests. Therefore, when it comes to what is happening in CN, for example, a few years ago when we noted that the CN was planning to move its headquarters, western prairie headquarters to Edmonton, we were protesting. I believe that they have done it anyway and I saw evidence of that the other day when the Minister said in the House he did not even know, he was not even told by the senior vice-president for Manitoba, Frank Campbell, of these massive layoffs that were announced, that we became aware of and announced before CN announced them. I do not know how they would have announced them because it certainly was not welcome news for many people in this province, as well as people across Canada.

Those massive layoffs, some 3,395 people with a net loss of 1,800 or so, were actually going to be taking place in this province. The Minister was not advised of that. The Minister said he believed the senior vice-president in Manitoba did not know about them only two weeks before. That was his belief and that was his statement and I think it is accurate. That is how he was quoted. He said that in the House, he said it outside of the House.

That is really something that is hard to believe. It is unbelievable. If that is true, it means the senior vice president in Manitoba no longer has any input into decisions, the senior people in Manitoba have no input into these decisions. Not only do they not have input into these decisions, they are not even told about them, which is scandalous for Manitoba.

That is an unbelievable development, and that is something I think this Minister should be protesting from the top of the Golden Boy. We are a transportation centre and to be insulted in that way by the senior vice-president, not even knowing if that is a fact, then I do not think we should be standing for them. I think this Minister should be raising Cain on this issue with the federal Government and asking them what on earth is going on insofar as Manitoba's role in transportation.

If the senior vice-president knew about this and did not tell the Minister, then he should even be more upset because that means the senior people in CN have absolutely no respect for the office of the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) in this province, in this Government. They will not even tell them, which is a deviation from a policy they had established a number of years previous where they answered in response to protests that we made when they had major decisions affecting Manitoba, that they would let us know in Government before they announced those decisions. They did let us know, and in this case they did not, so the Minister would see a decline in his role as Minister of Transportation and should be protesting.

I will want to know what the Minister has done about this scandalous situation insofar as the communication.

That is not the issue. The real issue is the fact that the federal Government has embarked on decisions based on bottom-line profits, being all that is of concern to them on Crown corporations that are affecting our rural areas terribly.

They are hastening the decline of our rural areas with decisions that result in layoffs in our small communities, with negative safety implications, implications for safety, I believe, in those areas and with no consideration for service and for the economic development role of Crown corporations in our rural areas.

Canada was built with those Crown corporations playing a very significant role because of the nature of our country. Yet, the present federal Government is saying that is not important. What is important is whether they make a profit or not. Many of these lines cannot be profitable on their own. The whole idea of the system was to ensure fairness and equal opportunity in our country and across our country, to tie our country together. That is being lost, that whole goal is being lost. We see it in the VIA cuts. We see it in the CN layoffs. We see it in post office closures and amalgamations taking place.

All Crown corporations are being told, you make a profit or you get rid of it. It is the old use it or lose it type of policy. Yet the people in those areas really have no control over that. They cannot use those services to the extent that will make a profit because there just is not enough of them for them to make a profit. I think this Minister should be protesting the kind of policy that causes that. I blame the CN, but I blame more the Government directing and imposing the kind of policy that is causing that to take place in this country.

We are also, Mr. Chairman, going to be raising the issues of Churchill itself. I believe the Minister has had ample opportunity to become very aggressive on this issue. I have not seen that aggressive stance. I believe he is sincere. He says that he is concerned. He said he is trying and it is frustrating. I, to a certain extent, empathize with him, having been in that position, but not in the position of seeing 51,000 tonnes, two ships, maybe no ships or a few ships this year.

I think, despite this frustration, the Minister has to be much more aggressive because his political future, to a large degree, depends on that and the ability to get some results and not to be labeled as the Minister who shut down Churchill for Manitoba, which is what possibly could be the results of what is happening at the present time.

* (1610)

I think when he had an opportunity in the committee, the all-Party committee, to accept what was proposed by the New Democratic Party in that committee, as a strategy for Churchill, he passed up on that opportunity.

The basic platform of that strategy was a commitment for 3 percent of Canada's export grain, not a set amount of bushels or tonnes, because you cannot make that kind of commitment. When you have good crop years and small crop years and large export years and small export years, you cannot make a certain numerical total

and say that has to go through the port, but you can give a percentage commitment as a goal that the Canadian Wheat Board will work towards.

Yet the Minister will not endorse that. His Government will not endorse that. The Liberal Party will not endorse that because they say somehow that is an interference in the day-to-day operations of the Wheat Board. They will not support publicly, and if they do today, that is a new policy from this Liberal Party. They did not say that they support the 3 percent goal.- (Interjection)-

Mr. Chairman, there is a Member here who was not at the committee, who did not hear the arguments of his colleagues against 3 percent at the all-Party committee. It was certainly said. That is significant. The fact is there has been no statement made publicly that I heard the Liberal Party is prepared to endorse the 3 percent goal, and the Government has not been prepared to do that either.

We asked the Minister when we went to Ottawa just last week to get that particular goal. We did not get it but he understands more the fairness of that procedure, I believe. I think we can get them off of this line that they take, that they weasel out of this commitment by saying that we would not intervene in the daily operations of the board. To do otherwise would compromise the autonomy of the board's decision-making processes.

Don Mazankowski said that to the Minister last December. This is the same line Charlie Mayer uses all the time. The fact is, we are not asking them to interfere in the daily operations of the Wheat Board. We are saying give some policy direction, and that is you treat all areas of the country fairly and you maximize—they say the major goal of the Wheat Board is to maximize the benefits for the producers. They are constantly saying that maybe this would not, if they use Churchill to a greater extent, maximize the benefits to farmers, and therefore it is not in the mandate of the Wheat Board.

We argue that it is in the mandate of the Wheat Board, because by maximizing the shipments through Churchill they are providing greater profits to the producers, because there is a \$20 to \$25 advantage per tonne in shipping through—you have a million tonnes, that is \$25 million. Even if you give \$20 of that to the customers to entice them to buy grain through Churchill, you still have \$5 million for the farmers that they would not otherwise have had. So, how is it inconsistent with maximizing the benefits to the producers to maximize the shipments through Churchill?

We demonstrated in that effort in Ottawa that 3 percent is an historical average that is not inconsistent with what has happened in the earlier years of the port. As a matter of fact, it was even higher than that in some years, and 3 percent would ensure a fairness for the port, would ensure it is viable under most years. This year, it would even mean 300,000 tonnes. It is a viability level but at least it would ensure that it has somewhat a viable season. It needs at least 600,000 tonnes. Based on 30 million tonnes, that 3 percent would give us 900,000 tonnes. So there are all kinds

of opportunity to get a viable season and to ensure that Churchill makes a profit and is not a drag.

We have not had that commitment from the federal Government. We have not had it from the Liberal Party. We have not had it from the Conservative Government in this province. I think we need to do that. The Minister said in Ottawa that the Seaway wants 7 million tonnes, but they did not make a distinction between a numerical value of 7 million tonnes, which I do not think they can commit to, and 3 percent which is a very small percentage in any event, but is still a percentage of what is shipped as opposed to a base amount of tonnage that is really difficult to ensure.

The Minister seems to be not taking a strong position. He has not convinced his Premier to make strong public statements condemning the inaction of the federal Government on this issue. He has made it on Portage, the Premier. He has gone out there, but he has not done it on Churchill. That is very hard to understand because I believe the significance of Churchill goes well beyond the significance of what is happening at Portage. I believe Portage is very important with the base being removed and serious, but I believe that the closure of our only Arctic seaport in Canada is far more serious and far-reaching than the closure of that base to our province and to the country.

Yet, we have not had that kind of statement by the Premier of this province and that is what is lacking from those Ministers as well, to say publicly. However, we were pleased that we had them say that they will not be closing, they had no plans to close that port, and they had no plans to shut down the rail line. That was encouraging from the point of view of our delegation last week. We will want the Minister to answer questions as to why he has not been able to develop a strong policy that would be well defined, that he can take forward, and why he has not got that strong statement and an endorsement of a strategy that would be very forceful in Manitoba's interests with regard to the Port of Churchill.

That will become an issue, I can predict, of very great significance in these Estimates' debates along with the cutbacks in Manitoba's significance as a transportation centre. We always use that term. Sometimes now I wonder whether in fact we should still be using it because of the dramatic decreases that have been taking place in that role in the last number of months, and certainly over the last year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to a discussion with the Minister on these very important issues.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Minister and the critics for their opening statements. The Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Chairman, I simply have one matter that I want to address before this committee begins to continue its work. That is, with all respect, I wish to just inform the committee that you, as the chairman of this committee, do not have the support or the confidence of my Party,

that there is still a matter of privilege outstanding. Although the matter of privilege that was raised in the House has been returned, there is a serious question of order that has been referred back to a committee that has to do with your capacity as chairperson. Now we are prepared to let this committee proceed to facilitate the work that needs to be done in the Department of Highways, but it is being done under some protest. I simply want to put that on the record. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I would remind Members of the committee that debate on the Minister's Salary, Item 1.(a), is deferred until all other items in the Estimates of this department are passed.

At this time, we would invite the Minister's staff to take their places at the table.

Mr. Plohman: Just on procedure, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister is wanting to discuss particular highways issues, highways projects throughout or would he prefer, and I would recommend that it all be dealt with under Planning and Design or else under the Capital program. If the Opposition Party, the Liberals, do not agree, well then I am prepared to accede to the wishes of the committee. I feel that it would streamline the discussions if Planning and Design would be the area where we would deal with the majority of plans of the department on highways projects, because that is where they are undertaken.

Mr. Chairman: It is my understanding we have to proceed line by line with the Estimates.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, sometimes there is a great deal of latitude and leniency shown on that and it does get confusing. I am just proposing that we deal with that in order, as you are saying, under that one area. I want to know what the Minister's plans were in that regard.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Last year, we were very flexible in that. I am at the will of the committee. Preference naturally for myself and for staff would be that if we go on a line-by-line basis that we can deal with the survey and design, we can deal with part of the road program there and the balance under Capital, whichever way you want. As I indicate, we have the various sections and I have staff, accordingly. It is a little easier for, I think, ourselves to deal with it if we do it on a line-by-line basis. I certainly do not want to take and supersede any discussion that should be coming forward, so if there are things that get missed somewhere along the line we will try and accommodate them somewhere along the line.

Mr. Mandrake: First of all, I do not feel we should be jumping around from one page to another. Let us go line by line providing the Minister, his staff, that he can call them in here on that particular day so that he does not have to be calling the deputy here one day and the next day not. Let us go line by line. That certainly will help his staff out. I think we should proceed in that manner and certainly it would be of great asset to, I am sure, his staff.

Mr. Chairman: I thank all Honourable Members. Mr. Minister, would you like to introduce your staff?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes, I have with me Bill Dyck who is the Director of Administration, and Dan Coyle who is the Acting Deputy and also the Registrar.

* (1620)

Mr. Chairman: Under No. 1. Administration and Finance, we will move to (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries \$356,400.00. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Mandrake: On that, Mr. Chairman, I noticed that there is a substantial increase in that particular department of \$12,800.00. First of all, this money is obviously for mirrored performance. How is this given out and what percentage is this calculated on?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate to the Member that if he notices throughout the Estimates, in most cases, that there are increases under the Salaries aspect of it, which are the normal increments and increase in wages as negotiated by the MGEA contract, so that each year that is where you can see the increases there.

Mr. Mandrake: Again, Mr. Chairman, how much? What is this? Is it inflationary, 4.9 or is it 3.2 or what is the figure?

Mr. Albert Driedger: You know that it is a 3 percent increase in the wages, and I think the present agreement terminates in September of this year.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass? The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Well, that leads to another question then. In the past, it has been the procedure at times certainly to include a nominal amount for salaries, for the increase that will be projected after September 1. Obviously, it is only half-way into the fiscal year and so there will be other costs incurred. This is not the full salary costs. There will be additional salary costs if there is any increase at all in the agreement that takes effect from September of 1989 onward till the end of April—or pardon me, the end of March—for the end of the fiscal year.

So I ask the Minister whether in fact there is any provision made in these Estimates for that salary increase or if in fact it is contained in another department overall or whether in fact there is no provision made for an increase.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told that has not necessarily been the practice for quite some time already, but if you look under page 161 of your Estimates book, it says, General Salary Increases, "provides for the estimated cost of general salary increases in Government departments. All or part of the amount hereby authorized may be distributed to and thereby augment the amounts respectively authorized for salaries in the various departmental Estimates in such

accounts as the Minister of Finance at his discretion may determine.”

So that is the provision. I am told that is how they operate it because you cannot dictate exactly how much—and this how they address it.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, thank you for pointing that out. That was what I was looking for but I wonder whether the Minister could get, when we meet next, a percentage figure, what percentage that represents of the total salary costs in Government.

Mr. Albert Driedger: We will try and get that information for the next time we meet.

Mr. Chairman: Item 1.(b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries—pass.

On Item (b)(2)? The Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Mr. Chairman, I was just wondering if we could have information as to where the Deputy Minister is, and why he is not here.

Mr. Albert Driedger: My apologies, my Deputy Minister is attending the RTAC meeting in British Columbia. He is the chairman of that and I think he is playing a very important role in terms of the national highway program that we are trying to implement and that we, hopefully, over a period of time are going to be bringing forward federal funding into it.

I might, however, add that he will probably not be available next week, because he happens to have booked his holidays, one week's holidays, in advance time and is involved in some kind of a condo-sharing situation that he has difficulty cancelling that. So we will probably not see him for the balance of this week and next week.

Mr. Chairman: Item 1.(b)(2), Other Expenditures, \$81,900—pass.

Under Executive Support, total \$438,300—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, just one question, the Minister, does he have—I see the permanent staff years are the same. Does the Minister have any additional term staff working in his office?

Mr. Albert Driedger: No, not in my office.

Mr. Plohman: Or in this section, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am informed, no.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(c) Administrative Services: (1) Salaries, \$529,300—pass.

1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures, \$71,600—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Can the Minister please explain what that increase is for? We are carrying close to a \$15,000

increase on Other Expenditures. What was this increase for?

Mr. Albert Driedger: The Member is asking why there is an increase from \$56,100 to \$71,600.00. I will have to indicate that is an adjustment for parking of pooled Government vehicles.

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

Mr. Plohman: Yes, very briefly, can the Minister just outline whether there are any changes in this area? I see the staff numbers are the same, any major staff changes that have taken place in the last year in terms of personnel? I see there is a \$2,000 allowance for staff turnover.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am informed there are no changes at all in the staff in this area.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, one Communications officer at this time?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry, I did not quite get that question.

Mr. Plohman: I just asked, Mr. Chairman, whether there was one Communications officer working in this section, or more than that?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Only one Communications officer.

Mr. Plohman: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(c)(2)—pass.

1.(d) Financial Services: (1) Salaries, \$631,500.00, shall the item pass?

Mr. Mandrake: Financial Services?

Mr. Chairman: (d) Financial Services (1) Salaries, \$631,500—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Pass.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(d)(1)—pass; (d)(2) Other Expenditures, \$70,900—pass.

Item (e) Personnel Services (1) Salaries, \$708,100—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, the issue of affirmative action has been an important one that has been discussed many times in these Estimates in the past. Can the Minister indicate whether the targets that have been set have been revised, have stayed the same, and whether they have been met in the last year for affirmative action hiring?

* (1630)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the objectives have not changed. I would like to indicate that in the ratio of male versus female employment that in 1986-87, we

had 14.7 percent female employees, and in '87-88 it rose to 15.5 percent, and for '88-89, it rose to 16.3 percent.

Mr. Plohman: That is only one aspect of affirmative action. There is much more in terms of other minorities, handicapped people, visible minorities, whatever.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I have a whole chart here. I can read it on to the record or I can make the chart available to the Member if he wants so he can use it for comparison sake.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I would like a copy of that if I could, please.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate that I will make a copy for both critics and we will have it here next time we meet. Would that be adequate?

Mr. Plohman: Yes.

Mr. Albert Driedger: If there is any specific question on that, we will make provision to be able to address that. Okay?

Mr. Plohman: Yes, that is very good. Thank you.

Mr. Mandrake: Just on that same point, Mr. Chairman, the section heads, your Deputy Ministers, all of the upper echelon people, of all the people, how many are in offices that you would say are a visible minority? How many are, let us say, women who are section heads, senior management?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I do not know what raised the question because I do not have any ladies here. I do not think that we have some on staff who are in managerial positions, depending to what level down the Member wants the information. I would like to indicate that when I bring forward that sheet, you can look at exactly the number of Native people employed, the number of disabled who are employed, etc.

Mr. Mandrake: I can appreciate that, but the thing that I am trying to get at is the positions of managers and above. How many are minorities, women? That is the area that I am interested in. I am not questioning the Minister's chart or anything like that, but what I would like to know is, for example, your Deputy Minister, the Acting Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, the Registrar, directors, the people of that level?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I can indicate to the Member that we will try and indicate exactly how many positions and who is filling those positions. I will try and have that information for you next time when we meet.

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

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, just to clarify, I think that is a very good question. I know that it is not that difficult to get the nature of the employees in terms of whether

they are affirmative action candidates or not, when they were hired for managers and above. I do not know whether that is what the Minister took as his understanding. It certainly is lower than directors on this organization chart. It would be managers and directors and Assistant Deputy Ministers.

Mr. Albert Driedger: We will get that information.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(e)(1)—pass; 1.(e)(2) Other Expenditures, \$88,600—pass.

Item 1.(f) Computer Services (1) Salaries \$932,700—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I notice again no increase here, but there has been an ongoing effort to computerize the design systems. I have forgotten what the name is but I just wonder if the Minister could report on the automated design systems that were being put in place with the involvement of staff, with the American Association of Motor Vehicle administrators as well. They are involved in developing these automated systems. We were involved with expenditures and staff, I believe, in contributing to that so we could benefit from that automated design system. Can the Minister indicate whether this is the section to deal with that and whether there is a progress report he could give us?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, is it the construction management system that the Member is asking about?

Mr. Plohman: The construction, if that also involves the road design.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Maybe I could, for the benefit of Members, indicate that the computer system, the system implementation which began in '86-87 with the acquisition and implementation of the department's graphics computer, has continued throughout '88-89 with completion of conversion of the roadway design system from Manitoba Data Services to the intergraph computer, yielding an annual reduction in MDS charges of \$200,000 to \$300,000.00. Future expansion of capability in this area will include extended use of the Interactive Graphics Roadway Design System both at the head office and the district offices.

Work on the provision of full metric support was begun in '88-89 and brought near to completion. Addition of function and form of co-ordinate geometry and geodetic computations support, which is expected to form the future foundation of the department's geographic data base, was deferred to '89-90 pending completion of metric work and availability of funds.

I was not trying to be facetious. That is one portion of it but we have a whole series in the whole industry where we are using the computer system, for example, equipment management system, construction management system, the bridge design system, on and on.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I realize there are a whole number of areas but I did want to ask about the

progress. I think this is very important, this area, and I wanted to get an idea if the Minister could provide, if he cannot do it right now, the cumulative costs up to date of that system to the department.

Mr. Albert Driedger: We will certainly try and get it. I will have to indicate to the Members too that when I first had the opportunity of serving in the capacity of Minister of Highways and Transportation, I took the occasion to go and visit the various areas where a lot of this work is being done. I have a limited knowledge of the computer industry but I was very impressed with the bridge construction, road construction, the computer they were using. It is very impressive. We will try and get the cost factor as to what has been spent in this area to this point.

Mr. Plohman: I just think it is important to point out that because of going this route I believe we are getting a benefit that far exceeds the cost to the province. I am asking this in terms of the cumulative costs and also in terms of the benefits that we are getting, because we did this in conjunction with other Governments, with other jurisdictions. If we tried to develop a system like that ourselves, it would have been colossal, the costs.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass? Pass.

No. 1.(f)(2) Other Expenditures \$509,200—pass; 1.(g) Occupational Health and Safety: (1) Salaries \$168,000—pass.

No. 1.(g)(2) Other Expenditures \$50,000—the Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: I notice that there is no increase in Other Expenditures, particularly when it comes to Occupational Health and Safety. I thought that you would have some additional expenditures in promoting new programs that are out or whatever, and yet we are maintaining status quo insofar as expenditure is concerned.

* (1640)

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told that the costs are borne by the programs they serve. I would like to indicate though that for '88-89, implementation and introductory training took place for 101,284 employees respecting the Workplace Hazardous Materials Control Program; the automatic testing of approximately 1,000 employees, that is the audio, the noise aspect of it; implementation of rehabilitation program; re-employment of injured workers; implementation of new injury illness reporting system; and first-aid training for approximately 400 employees.

So the department is very safety conscious, I think always has been because of the type of work that they are involved with in many cases, especially out in the field that this is a major concern. I think this is a good program and good awareness of the people in this system of the program.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, there has just been an issue raised, and the Ministers here as well, regarding

the removal of minimums for standards for cancer-causing agents. I will not attempt to use that word—

An Honourable Member: Carcinogenics.

Mr. Plohman: Carcinogenics. Can the Minister indicate whether there is any impact of that change in this department that his officials feel as a result of those changes in removal of minimal requirements, and whether in fact there have been any monitoring done in that regard in any workplaces involving the department?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Well, as I indicated before, I will try and see whether they have difficulty trying to define exactly the information that the Member wants. But I would like to indicate that we have been training 1,284 employees regarding Workplace Hazardous Materials Control Program. That happened within the last year, so there is a very keen awareness of dealing with hazardous wastes specifically whether the change, which I do not know whether that has any material change in terms of what the department does. I would just like to indicate that we are not aware that there is any change that affects the way we operate with hazardous material.

Mr. Plohman: Just to clarify, I wonder whether there were programs being undertaken to ensure that certain standards were being met that would not have to be undertaken as a result of those changes. If the Minister is not certain at this time, it is possible that his department has not even been advised yet that would be the case, or have they?

Mr. Albert Driedger: At this level at least, we have not been advised of it yet, and we will find out whether anywhere within the system that there has been.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I would appreciate if the Minister would report on that as to any programming that has been undertaken in this regard and whether in fact there will be changes made as a result of the decisions to remove these minimum standards for cancer-causing agents.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(g)(2)—pass.

Item 2. Operations and Maintenance, \$75,271,300.00. Provides program management and specialized functional support services in tendering, bridge design and engineering to the department's maintenance, assistance and construction programs. Provides for the maintenance of Manitoba's primary and secondary road system and winter roads.

(a) Maintenance Program \$54,618,000—shall the item pass? Just before we go to the answer, would the Minister like to introduce his new staff?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes. This is Siggie Goodbandson, who builds every road in the province and maintains every road in the province.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, I look at this, our inflation rate is now 4.2 percent, and what do we have in this

particular program? Our roads are deteriorating fast and we get a 3.4 percent increase. Is there any rationale to such a—\$1,804,200 is all we got in the maintenance program. Could the Minister explain the reason only why we got so little in that particular program? Maintenance is very important.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to announce that based on the standards, the general maintenance standards that our engineers have for the road system and within the province, that by the type of funding that we have that we have been able to get the standard back. As indicated in my opening remarks, up to the 100 percent standard requirement in everything except the gravel aspect of it. I think the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) understands what I am saying at certain times because of the funding cutbacks, that there was a reduction in some of the standards. We feel very positive about having an increase in there and having been able to bring our standards back in all categories with the exception of gravel, where we still have a 5 percent shortfall. Certainly, we feel we have come a long way in terms of bringing the program back up to the standards that our engineers feel that they should be at.

Mr. Mandrake: We are talking about maintenance programs. I would like to bring the Minister's attention to a particular road up north, 373. I received a call from a Chief Monias from the Cross Lake Band in Cross Lake, asking—you know, this road apparently is in very, very serious condition. It is not being graded. The traffic that uses that road is Gardewine, Grey Goose, Manfor, postal services, taxis and apparently that road is in very, very bad condition. Just to prove my point about maintenance, here we only got a 3.4 percent and here we cannot even do that road. Please explain.

Mr. Albert Driedger: We could go through the roads almost on a mile-by-mile basis through the province and come up with roads that are in dire need of maintenance or rebuilding. We have an ongoing program on Highway 373 where we have last year worked out an arrangement together with the Department of Northern Affairs in terms of the cost-sharing of roads right up to Norway House. In fact, we are in the process right now, where we have done the preliminary work to build the Jack River Bridge at a very high cost, \$1.8 million. This was done in conjunction with the band out there, where we worked out a program where the bridge is the first priority, where we have defined the responsibility of the province or the Department of Highways as well the Department of Northern Affairs as to who will have responsibility for portions of the road.

We have an ongoing reconstruction program going on 373. That does not take away from the fact that there are stretches from time to time, as you move with these programs, that they are going to be rough. Certainly, we are trying to do as much as we can through maintenance in terms of getting these roads so that they are safer and driveable, because the people who utilize these roads for transportation, the wear and tear on equipment and the safety factor are major concerns.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, I can appreciate that the Minister cannot look at all the roads and I would

not expect him to provide answers or provide initiatives on all of the roads in Manitoba, but I would like to just ask the Minister whether or not he could look—apparently this road 373, which goes from Sea Falls to Norway House, Jenpeg, Cross Lake, and Norway House—could he possibly have the engineer in that area go down there, have a look at this road, and if it does need grading or it does need some repairs, could he give this committee the assurance that it will be done or it will be looked at?

* (1650)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I most certainly want to indicate that we will, based on the request made by the Member here, look at 373. We have also had requests already via phone and writing, and we are going to view 373 as well as any other roads where we have complaints.

When people phone me up and say you should drive down this road, Mr. Minister, and you will know what I am talking about, invariably we try. If I cannot do it myself or my assistant, certainly some staff will get out there and we try and address it as best we can.

At certain times of the year—we just had rains up to, and the inches varied from place to place, but in certain areas the roads just took a terrible beating. I love the rain, but at the same time it creates more problems with maintenance, and we certainly try and address it.

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

Mr. Plohman: Is this Liberal Critic going to pass \$54 million just like that?

An Honourable Member: He asks serious questions.

Mr. Plohman: I know he has to, yes. I wanted to ask Mr. Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, what standards have been brought up to the standards that were developed, I believe, in the 1960s in the manual that was developed by the department for standards for gravelling, mowing, dragging and various other activities that are related to maintenance work. Which ones had to be brought up this year? Which ones were brought up this year that were below the standard?

Has the Minister reviewed the standards in any way to determine whether they all are still relevant or whether they should be improved or increased or decreased as the case may be, particularly with regard to, for example, the roadside mowing, which was always one which was rather easy to cut because it did not really affect the safety, although in the final analysis it may. Because of drifting of snow and so on that is caught in brush that has not been removed, it may affect safety. I wanted to ask the Minister just to make a general comment on this area.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to announce that generally the maintenance standards that were set in 1960, those standards have always

been sort of tried to adhere to and, as the Member well knows, and I do not want to get into a shouting match here in terms of cutbacks and stuff necessarily, but you know there were cutbacks as he indicated in areas of shoulder restoration, paved edge treatment, mowing, brushing. Those were the areas where the cutbacks came the easiest. We are down to sometimes 50 percent and 60 percent of what the standards had been established by the engineers. That is why I indicated we have all of them back up to the 100 percent standard, which was established, except for the gravel which is still 5 percent below standard. We feel this is a very positive move forward.

The other thing I would like to just add, based on the question the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) asked about maintenance, the fact is, as a road program, construction program increases over a period of time, the maintenance end of it should actually, over a period of time, maybe go down. We have not hit that standard yet because the roads are in too bad shape. We need a lot of maintenance on them, but ultimately there should be a little bit of an adjusting in there if we can ever get the program up high enough in the capital so that we can do bigger areas at one time, cover more road. Ultimately, there should not have to be as much maintenance there.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister is dreaming a little bit yet in terms of whether he believes he will soon have the highway system with a \$6 million increase to the point where the maintenance will actually be decreased, because in fact I would suggest maybe the Minister could give us the figures, according to RTAC and Trip Canada Reports and so on, in terms of the standards that are required for Manitoba roads, that we are far below meeting, or just treading water, just keeping things even and that in fact we are falling considerably behind every year. We are continuing to do that so that there will have to be more and more emphasis on maintenance activities in the foreseeable future, unless he is talking about some gold mine. Maybe he will get his hands on that \$200 million slush fund that his Minister of Finance has put away there for roads.

I think it is important to mention that because I think the Minister's statement would seem to indicate that somehow he is cutting into that and really he is not with this small increase this year, as good as it is.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I have to indicate that actually all highway systems, even if we build a brand new road, needs some kind of maintenance and repair shortly thereafter. Invariably, the Member knows that even after you have put asphalt on there, you have cracks appearing. That is why we have a sealing program that is a very effective one to sustain the life of our highways. Maybe I was a little bit facetious when I said that we did not need as much money

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, one more question at this time on this area is the issue of the seal coat program. It is a major program, some \$9 million this year planned for seal coating which will involve many miles of road throughout the province. I believe it is about \$10,000

a mile to do a seal coat, or is it \$20,000.00? Whatever it is, would the Minister clarify it and indicate whether he could provide us with a program similar to the highways program that he has given us for the major capital program for seal coating in the province? Does he have such a program available and could he share it with us the next time we are sitting on these Estimates?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate that the approximate cost is about \$5,800 per kilometre in terms of seal coating.

Mr. Plohman: I am not far off at \$10,000 a mile then.

An Honourable Member: How much did you say?

Mr. Albert Driedger: \$5,800 per kilometre. What happens is each district submits their request in terms of roads which they feel would benefit from a seal coating to lengthen the life of the highway by—what is it?—five, six years, sometimes by putting on a seal coat.—(Interjection)—With your patience.

Mr. Chairman, we have approximately 754 kilometres that we propose to do seal coating at a cost of—I cannot be specific on that—approximately close to \$5 million.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, just to close, I asked the Minister specifically whether he could provide us with the detail of the program as opposed to just total kilometres. We would like to know which roads are on and where.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we will run off copies of the proposed Maintenance Seal Coat Program for this year and have it available for you at the next meeting.

* (1700)

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

* (1510)

SUPPLY—AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): This section of the Committee of Supply will be dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture. We will begin with a statement from the Honourable Minister responsible.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have copies of most of what I am going to say for each of my critics, if you would like to hand them around, please.

It is indeed a pleasure to have an opportunity to start this process of Estimates off this year. I guess from the standpoint of agriculture we are on a much better note than we were even a week ago, and certainly an

obviously better note than where we were a year ago when we were heading into the worst drought that we were going to face in Manitoba over the history of this province.

Clearly the last week has brought to us a significant degree of rain up in the Interlake area. The Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) will probably be able to tell you better than I can about the amounts of rain that occurred up there, probably to the point of excessive amounts in certain areas. I understand that over most of the province we have reasonable good rains. There is only the odd location that is less than an inch and certainly that is very good news, not only for grain production but for livestock pastures and for forage production for this year.

Mr. Chairman, before I get into the general text of what I have handed out here, I would like to announce to my critics and to everybody who is here that if they have not noticed the news release most recently, Mr. Greg Lacomy has been officially appointed Deputy Minister in my department. He will not be with us today because he is in Ottawa on some significant meetings, but I am sure he will be here the next day that Estimates sit.

I want to first talk a little bit about departmental objectives and certainly, since taking office, the present Government has committed itself to the achievement of a number of major objectives including the preservation, the strengthening of the family farms in Manitoba, reduction of economic risk for farmers, and enhancement of stabilization of farm incomes, through a variety of programs.

The expansion of production of agricultural commodities, especially those with export potential and with the potential for further processing in Manitoba, is a major objective that we need to proceed on continually over the coming years. We want to get involved in provision of opportunities for younger, beginning farmers to enter agriculture and develop viable farming operations. When we get to that particular area of the Estimates, I will be making some announcements in that direction.

We have spent a lot of time this past winter in meetings dealing with conservation and improvement of Manitoba's soil resources and the environment, especially in the area of sustainable development. Some key items of action within the department in terms of the management staff, we have put a lot of emphasis on trying to ensure that staff know they are to be the forefront of service delivery. The staff should be proud of being departmental employees and they should show it in their dealings with the public, farm groups and so forth.

We want to co-ordinate communication. Efforts must be undertaken to promote areas such as high quality service, urban understanding of agricultural issues and the importance of agriculture to the economy. We must keep up with technology and ensure effective ways of transferring this information to our clients, the farmers of Manitoba. We must ensure that the industry has input in shaping the future direction of the agriculture industry in this province and in western Canada.

Certainly some of the future challenges that we face, we want to address those challenges in a high level of consultation with the farm community and with the agribusiness sector in this province.

Some of the challenges that we do face are pretty well-known to everybody, the diversification of value-added opportunities in terms of producing products for which there are markets somewhere in the world at an economic return to our farm community. Stabilization of farm incomes is very important. Certainly the importance of this is highlighted because of the events of the drought of 1988. The export marketing area, certainly we have developed agriculture on the basis of being able to export economically. We will always have to do that and I think we will have to do it on an ever-increasing basis in order to continue to maximize our agriculture potential here in Manitoba.

Certainly there will be a challenge in terms of examining the GATT negotiations that are presently under way as they relate to the subsidization of agriculture by other countries in the world. We have another challenge in the maintenance and strengthening of the competitive position of producers of Manitoba relative to producers in other parts of Canada and other countries. We will want to be looking very carefully in terms of the re-examination of the payment mechanism for the Crow benefit. Clearly that issue is in front of us and we have to deal with it in a responsible manner.

We have to look at strengthening educational research and other services available to agricultural producers to be sure that our producers are able to maximize their potential to meet the challenges of the future. This Government is developing its policies and programs in identifying future priorities, and has placed substantial reliance on consultation with farmers and producer organizations. High priority is attached to open communication and dialogue.

Just some examples of what we have done over the course of the past few months: on the soil strategy, to look at the methods of delivering an effective soil conservation program to rural Manitoba, some 24 meetings were held by my staff. Some 28 meetings were held by staff in dealing with the issue of cattle tripartite and the eventual conclusion of the beef plan that had been in effect here since 1982. Thirdly, we had a number of winter meetings on crop insurance throughout the province on a number of issues, and have most recently had three major meetings dealing with a review of the program, with looking at some options for the future.

In addition, I can assure the critics that we have had numerous, numerous producer groups, farm groups and industry groups come forward to make representation to us with regard to what they would want to see us do in the future, which I am sure is no different than in the past. We have attempted to meet their needs as much as we can in some of the things we will discuss through the course of the Estimates.

In the support of this kind of approach, the province has served as a catalyst in the setting up of the Red Meat Forum. This is a committee comprised of representatives of the livestock producers, sellers and

meat processors, which has a mandate to first identify problems restricting the development of livestock and meat processing industry in Manitoba and (b) to work towards the resolution of these problems.

Secondly, we had to set up a Ministerial Advisory Council chaired by the Associate Dean of the University of Manitoba Faculty of Agriculture. The council brings together the expertise of major farm and rural organizations in Manitoba. Right now, there are four farmers and four representatives of the agribusiness sector. Its role is to provide advisory assistance on major policy issues relating to agriculture and rural development. Obviously, the first issue that council is going to address is the issue of how Manitoba should address itself to the question of method of payment of the Crow benefit.

Thirdly, we have formed, as a result of looking at the problems of the bee industry, a committee of producers, Government and industry people to look at the future of the honey industry and what needs to be done in order to keep that industry alive in the coming years.

Just in a general overview of the Budget, the Estimates that we will address in the next few days support the Government's commitment to the agricultural industry of Manitoba. The Government has budgeted over \$88 million to support the department's programs and services. Although there seems to be a decrease in the expenditure budget, it should be noted that a non-recurring amount of \$18.3 million for the emergency Drought Relief Program does not appear in the '89-90 Estimates.

Also, there has been a significant decrease of about \$4 million in the allowance for doubtful accounts under MACC. It is good that sort of reduction is in place because that means that there is less problem in the community in terms of paying their MACC accounts than was initially perceived a year ago. This combined with the phase down of the Manitoba Beef Commission and under a reduction of the Emergency Interest Rate Relief Program, results in an effective increase of over 5 percent in the agricultural Estimates.

* (1520)

Some of the program adjustments, I would like to just highlight. The Marketing Branch, there has been a significant increase of over \$130,000 or some 75 percent in other expenditures to provide stronger support to the efforts of the Marketing Branch, to sell the fine quality products Manitoba farmers produce. In an area of ever-increasing competitiveness, we must search out markets for our goods and capitalize on the positive image that has been developed, particularly in the Pacific Rim countries. Increased efforts must be taken in co-operation with industry groups so that we can maintain viable contacts.

Certainly the announcement by Minebea to locate a hog breeding farm in Manitoba has already had some significant spinoff. Yesterday, a group of Japanese business people, a company called Global Pig, was here with some 10 representatives looking at breeding, the breeding hogs in the Province of Manitoba. They are a conglomerate of some 54 commercial hog

producers in Japan who have a nucleus breeding herd to produce the F-1 in subsequent generations for the commercial breeders, and they obtain their breeding stock, or their nucleus breeding stock, from around the world, have visited Manitoba some five years ago. They have not bought any pigs yet, but the mission that they are on here in this last couple of days hopefully stimulates some sales. They are here partly because of the Minebea presence in Manitoba.

Certainly the Education Tax Reduction Program for farmers has been increased some 10 percent, from 25 percent to 35 percent of the total school taxes payable on farm land. This has been provided under the Education Tax Reduction Program. This translated into an additional \$3.4 million commitment from the past year's estimates and represents our position of significantly reducing the burden of this kind of particular tax on the farming community.

Under the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation, this corporation has been responsive to the needs of producers and effected changes in both its regular programs and the Livestock Feed Security Program to better serve its clients. Producer response has been positive to the crop insurance programming. As an example, the all-risk contracts have increased some 2,000 to 14.5 thousand this year; and the Livestock Feed Security Contracts have increased from 1,986 last year to over 6,600 contracts this year.

Some new programs that you will see identified in the Estimates, first on soil conservation, under the general umbrella of trying to promote sustainable development, you will see a funding for \$1 million provided under the Canada-Manitoba Agreement. Hopefully that agreement, the Soil Accord, will be signed in a few days, or at least no more than a few weeks, so that we can proceed with this program with joint funding federal-provincial, a million from each.

The thrust forms a key component of the recognition, and subsequent action of our natural resources must be preserved for future generations. Elements of the soil conservation initiative will include the on-farm soil conservation demonstration projects looking at alternate land use, and there will be some conservation education technology transfer initiatives. This is a result of some 24 meetings that were held this past winter under our land and water strategy that we initiated in consultation with the Department of Natural Resources.

There are also going to be other announcements by private sector in terms of also participating in this. Those announcements will be expected before the end of the month. So I think you will see in the coming months a very spirited initiative in the soil conservation area involving producers, Government and the private sector.

Secondly, tripartite stabilization—three new commodities have been approved for stabilizing under the national tripartite plans. These plans present a fair approach to stabilizing incomes, both from the aspect of funding, involving federal, provincial and producer funding and a more equalized approach across provincial boundaries. The three new plans involve cattle, lamb and honey. An estimated expenditure on stabilization programs in these Estimates is some \$10.8 million.

A tripartite stabilization unit will be formed to administer all the tripartite plans, and it will consist of about 10 positions and will be administratively located within the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation.

Thirdly, the certification agency—this represents a vehicle with the establishment of a representative producer organization under The Agriculture Producers' Funding Act. It is our belief that particular commodity producers and the farm community, in general, must have the opportunity for organized and properly funded representative groups to present their views and positions of their members. This approach links strongly with our intent to continue working with the industry in forging the future direction of agriculture in Manitoba.

Some special responsive programs that you will see in the Estimates, two in particular I would like to mention. The first is the financial assistance to the beekeeping industry of some \$759,000 which has been allocated to help beekeepers through the financial crisis resulting from severely depressed honey prices in soft markets brought on by unfair subsidization really in the United States. The majority of this money is on a per colony basis of \$10 per colony with 100 colony deductible for all beekeepers.

We have also allocated some \$9,000 to the National Honey Marketing Plan to assist with market promotion. This action, in conjunction with the introduction of the honey tripartite will substantially assist beekeepers maintain their long-term viability. The applications for these programs are presently in the mail.

The Excess Summerfallow Compensation Program to deal with flooding that occurred in the Interlake in the fall of 1985 which prevented those farmers from seeding in 1986, this agreement has been reached between the federal-provincial Governments to compensate the Interlake and eastern producers who are now eligible for the 1986 federal Special Grains Deficiency Payment Program. A sum of some \$880,000 has been allocated for this program with 50 percent of it being recoverable from Canada. Again, applications have been mailed out.

Through the course of the Estimates discussion we will talk about the extension and changes to the Guaranteed Operating Loan Program, increased grants to weed districts, settling of the milk suit, herbicide performance mediation, bonding and licensing of livestock dealers and right to farm proposals.

I look forward to a positive and critical analysis from my critics and discussion from them and look forward to their input to look at ways and means of designing programs that suit the farm community in Manitoba for the present years and the years ahead. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: We will now have the customary reply by the critic of the Official Opposition, the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to point out to the Minister it seems as though this year has gone very quickly because it seems as though it is a very short

period of time since we terminated the discussion on the previous set of Estimates.

I do want to thank the Minister for the very good relationship that has existed between himself and myself, as the critic for Agriculture, and likewise with my colleague from the Interlake, the critic for the New Democratic Party (Mr. Uruski). I think sometimes we feel that the only way you can operate effectively in the House is if you have a confrontational style.

Certainly I think that the Minister has been very up front in any comments that I have made, or questions I have asked, and I certainly appreciate that, Mr. Minister. I think that the relationship has been good and I feel there is a good level of mutual respect and I anticipate that will continue.

So as I go through this there will be some comments where I will be critical and many of those, I would assume, will be on somewhat of a philosophical base, rather than on a personal basis. I can lead off by saying, Mr. Minister, that I am somewhat disappointed in the level of funding that has gone to the Department of Agriculture because, as you well know, the 88 million that you are looking at is still well below 2 percent of the total Budget. I think it works out to something like 1.83 percent of the Budget.

Without being facetious, I think it is difficult to really stand up on one hand and say that agriculture is still the backbone of the Manitoba economy, and then find out that the level of support for it is below 2 percent. Of course, if you take off some of the programs that are what I would call a one-shot-in-the-arm type of thing, such as the support to the beekeepers, Excess Summerfallow Program, and so on, in terms of the level of support that has been provided for what I would call are the basic programs within the department, many of those all in the range of 1 percent to 2 percent. In other words, you have not been successful, in my opinion, at maintaining the support above the level of inflation in some of those areas, and we will get into some of those in greater detail as we go on.

But I do want to commend you on several of the initiatives that were taken last year. I think you have to be congratulated for the quick action that you took in terms of the Drought Program. Both of those programs I feel were quite effective, certainly the Greenfeed Program was totally effective. The Herd Retention Program, I am not sure, Mr. Minister, whether you in fact utilized the full amount of money that was available or not—he nods his head to say it was very close. In which case then I certainly feel that it was a move in the right direction.

* (1530)

It certainly looks good when you compare it with the ad hoc programs that the federal Government brought in and sometimes I think Manitoba would have been better off if the federal funds had been transferred directly to the province and allowed the province to deal with them, because some of those that were handled federally turned out to be a fiasco. I speak particularly of the one that annoys me the most, and that is, the Feed Supplement Program which is through

MCIC, but I gather that the reason it was not lock-stepped with the new yields that came through the appeal process was the reluctance of the federal Government to come up with the funding.

I think that made somewhat of a mockery of the whole appeal process where the yields were monitored, the appeals were held at the municipal level, the appeals in many cases were upheld, the yields were identified as being much lower than the initial figures that were released. Then the Livestock Feed Security Program did not adhere or comply with the appealed yields, and it ended up with some municipalities. I have certainly had contact with one where, I believe it was the R.M. of Argyle, that had one of the highest sign-ups for the Livestock Feed Security program, estimated that the individual producers in that municipality lost something in the range of about \$3,000 on average per producer by the failure of the Livestock Feed Security Program to utilize the appealed yields.

This is certainly one area where the federal Government has not done a good job. The other one of course is the old business of the \$850 million Drought Aid Program where, at the present time, there is no indication of where the other \$425 million is going to come from because only half of it was identified in the federal Budget. I assume that there is still pressure being put on by the federal Government onto the provinces to try to get the provinces to kick in with the other half. I understand, it is only a rumour at this point, but I understand that there is some sympathy starting to be developed in Alberta for that concept of the Alberta Government providing it.

I hope, Mr. Minister, that you do not succumb to a divide-and-conquer philosophy because I think you run into difficulty if one or two provinces decide they are willing to come up with half of the drought payment, then you find yourself as the odd man out, and that puts tremendous pressure. I suspect, Mr. Minister, that you have already somehow or other had to succumb to that type of pressure in the fact that the provinces are now picking up what I regard as a disproportionate share of crop insurance.

I think that the crop insurance should have been retained as a primarily federal initiative and the federal Government should have been responsible for 50 percent of the premiums with the provinces required only to look after the administrative costs. I think that is already far enough along in the negotiation process that there is no way that the provinces are not going to be forced into coming up with probably 25 percent of the premiums and perhaps even a percentage of the administrative cost.

The problem I see with that, Mr. Chairman, is that the finances of the province are certainly much more restricted than that of the federal Government. I think that every time the federal Government off-loads these programs onto the province, it is much more difficult for the provinces than it needs to be. I think that in the case of agriculture, we have to remember that agriculture is a Canadian resource. It is not a resource that should be broken down and identified as being individual provinces. I think it is imperative that provinces, such as Ontario and Quebec, which have

the large resource base and the large taxation base, that they continue to be the ones that are primarily funding some of these programs such as crop insurance. I think we are moving in the wrong direction on that.

While I am on the subject of crop insurance, Mr. Chairman, we certainly will be looking at the changes that have been made. I think that they are in the right direction. I have spoken to numerous producers and they all feel that the improved coverage and the availability of options that allow them to identify the price that they want to lock in on are moves in the right direction. I am not convinced, Mr. Minister, that the move to utilizing soil zones or rainfall patterns as the breakdown for the assessment of yields is going to be to the advantage, but certainly there again, the options are open. I would assume there will be some growing pains in that and it will be looked at from all perspectives, and whether it works out better that way or not, time will tell.

Obviously, if you could come up with a mechanism where individual farmers could rely simply on their individual yields rather than having to be looking at it on a global scale within a municipality or even a township, it would be preferable. I would assume over time that there will be attempts to reduce the size of the area that is used for the averaging. I would think with the software and the technology that is available, you should be able to eventually move in that direction.

I also want to express a word of caution here, Mr. Chairman. That is with the respect to drought proofing. I think there has been a tendency in western Canada to think about drought proofing when we had a drought. While I certainly am pleased that we are getting the rainfall that we are, and in some places it even looks as though we may be getting a little on the excess, there is a tendency, I am afraid once the rain starts to come, to start to diminish your concern about drought proofing.

I would certainly like to see a little more in terms of specificity when it comes to drought proofing, to make sure that even with the transition of the Water Services Branch from Agriculture into Rural Development that there is no decline in the support that is given for the drought proofing in this province, be it through the availability of water, whether it is wells, dugouts, pipes, or whatever it is. At the same time, I think there needs to be additional funding going to the research that is necessary if you look at some of the drought proofing, because it is amazing how fast, once the rain started to come, that you have not had one word in the last several months about the greenhouse effect.

Last year, I was one of those along with many others who was standing up and saying gosh, maybe this is the indication that the greenhouse effect is here, maybe we are in the early stages of the heating trend and all the rest of it. If the drought was a blip, then the rain this year may be a blip as well. So I do not think one can just all of a sudden feel that because you are getting a change in weather over a few months that the long-term trend may not be the same. I would certainly request that the Minister give consideration to the maintenance if not the enhancement of the Drought Proofing Program that is currently in effect.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): The same thing goes for Budgets.

Mr. Laurie Evans: The Minister of IT and T (Mr. Ernst) says the same thing for Budgets. I do not plan to get into a philosophical argument regarding budgets at this early stage in my address, but perhaps towards the tail end we will get into some of the philosophical issues as well.

I want to speak very briefly about the program of the compensation to the Interlake farmers. Here again, I guess one can say certainly better late than never, I am not sure. I have not had too many comments, but the level of payment per acre, I believe, is a maximum of \$14, but if you start to calculate that back as to what that would have been had it been paid at the right time and you look at the inflationary aspect of it, it is not very much.

The other thing that bothers me a little bit is the concept of putting such a tight cap on it. In other words, we are looking at \$840,000 as being the maximum that is available based on the assumption that there are 60,000 acres. Now if there are 70,000 acres that are identified then the per acre payment drops down. The converse is not true, as I understand it. If they only find that there are 50,000 acres that are eligible, will the payment be \$16 or \$17.00? This has not been clarified, I do not think. I am not so much opposed to the \$14 an acre, but I am not sure that there was any necessity to identify it as 60,000 acres and 840 with a cap on it. I suspect that you may run into a little bit of dissatisfaction, but I really do not know.

After the years that have been involved here, I am not sure anyone knows exactly what acreage you may end up with when all of the applications are in. I note with some interest that the Member of Parliament for that area, Mr. Holtmann, at one time had indicated that the payment probably would be more like a million and a half, so \$840,000 is probably a little bit disappointing to some of those farmers in the area.

Another area that the Minister has mentioned briefly and is reported or mentioned in the Throne Speech, Mr. Chairman, and that is the willingness on the part of the Manitoba Government to renegotiate the ERDAs. I think the willingness is there but I get the impression there is little likelihood of that renegotiation taking place. Eight of those ERDAs, as I understand it, expired on the 31st of March of this year. Some of them are ongoing because there was a clause in the agreement that allowed the utilization of the residual funds. What I see happening in those ERDAs is as the residual funds disappear they will just slowly wind down and die a natural death, because there is no money in there.

* (1540)

Many of those programs, and the Minister is probably even more aware of the nature of some of those programs than I am, but there is a fairly extensive book that outlines the details of each of those programs that are supported under ERDA. To my way of thinking, the majority of those are excellent programs and some of them, I would venture to say, should not be put at risk

in terms of the continuity of the people that are doing the work. I speak specifically of the one that I know best which is the Bridle Testing Program which has been ongoing in this province for many years under contract to the University of Manitoba. It is going on this year. I believe the funding is adequate for it to continue on next year.

In that particular program, there are some 19 sites throughout the province where varieties are tested. They test there and the work that is done, is dependent on the qualifications of the technical staff that do that work. I do not think I need to impress upon the Minister that if you, for some reason, have to terminate those people that are so well qualified and they go off somewhere else, then the credibility of the testing program tends to suffer because it takes them a while to get them back. Many of those people working on those programs have been on it for quite a few years and they look upon it as a career. I think that it is a service that is essential. I am not advocating that it necessarily has to be done by the university. I am not opposed to the concept of some of those things being looked upon, at least as potential for privatization, but at the same time somebody has to do it.

Any time that we have looked at that type of a program and tried to compare it with the cost if it is done privately, the private sector charges considerably more. The assumption has to be that the university in this case actually covers a lot of the costs through the internal operation of the university. In other words, the level of funding that they have negotiated probably, put bluntly, maybe the university negotiators were not the best because they should have been looking for more money to do the level of work they are doing, because they are not doing it on a cost, and certainly not a cost-plus basis.

I am concerned about these ERDAs. They have been in many respects the life blood of agriculture in the sense of the Agri-Food Agreement which, the past one was \$38.5 million of which \$23 million came from the feds, \$15 million from the province. I think it was money well spent and I would certainly urge the Minister to do everything within his power to make sure that type of program is continued on. Once again, I favour the program because the bulk of the money is coming from the federal Government.

There has been some suggestion that this may be done through the Western Diversification Funding. Now I do not like that. Maybe the Minister would disagree with me here, but I think the ERDA type of funding is a grass-roots type of decision-making process where the projects come up from those who know what is required. The Western Diversification, it seems to me, is one where there is fairly large shots of money put into individual projects. I get the impression that sometimes there is a little more political involvement in the decision-making process and things like the Western Diversification Fund than there is in the ERDA type of program. So I certainly am supportive of the ERDA style program and will be very disappointed, Mr. Minister, if there is not some move in the renegotiation of those.

I understand that no province has been successful at the present time in renegotiating them. It only tells

me, Mr. Chairman, that there is no great advantage of having a provincial Government that is the same stripe as the federal Government because we have to remember that the bulk of the ERDAs were developed in cases where the provincial Government was not the same stripe as the federal Government. The Minister is smiling a little bit but I think he knows the history. As a Liberal, I know the history. When Pierre Elliott Trudeau became Prime Minister, there were five provincial Liberal Governments. When Mulroney became the Prime Minister, there were many, many Tory Governments provincially, and those Tory Governments are disappearing one at a time and we have seen them go under.

I think that it is a fact of life, particularly in western Canada, that there is no merit and no benefit to the people who live in that province to have the federal and the provincial Government of the same stripe. I suspect the people of Manitoba will bear that in mind the next time there is an election as well because it seems that there is perhaps even a disadvantage of having a Conservative Government at both levels at the same time. The only thing that could be worse is having a socialist Government at both levels at the same time. I do not want to bring up the ire of my colleague from the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) but sometimes there are things like that you just cannot avoid to take the opportunity when it occurs.

Carrying on, Mr. Chairman, I am certainly supportive of the concept of tripartite. Here again I find myself congratulating the Minister on being able to negotiate these with the Red Meat Program. Certainly, the sugar beets, the honey, the beans and the rest of them that make up that overall tripartite program, I think is a step in the right direction. I have come to the conclusion, and I think more people are moving in that direction, that we cannot continue on indefinitely with this sort of a piecemeal program of income stabilization.

I think it is time, and as the Minister well knows, this goes back almost a decade ago now when the Canada Grains Council first established a committee to look at the concept of farm income stabilization or farm revenue protection. There are many different names that have been given more or less to the same concept. I think that we cannot just go on with this increase in the number of individual commodities that are stabilized. There has to be a better way, and it is my view that an income stabilization program which is a broad one, which would perhaps still encompass crop insurance, I think crop insurance is something that could be included in it and to have the overall program superimposed on crop insurance. But I do not think farmers in western Canada can continue to be dependent on adhocery. That is what I call it in terms of the special grains payments that were made, the drought payment. I mean one can be cynical and say that the farmers would not have got any drought assistance back in 1986, if Grant Devine were not facing an election.

Grant Devine got a hold of the Prime Minister and the next thing you know, there was \$1.1 billion made available as a drought payment. The Conservatives would say, well, that would have been there anyway.

The Liberals would be very doubtful if it would have been there, and it probably would have been less, and the other thing that one has to realize is that now, there are IOUs out there.

If Grant Devine, by a phone call to the Minister, was able to get that \$1.1 million, then Grant Devine has an IOU that the Prime Minister is going to call eventually. My suspicion is that the Prime Minister, or his Minister of Agriculture, is already doing that in the sense of putting pressure on for half of the payment for the drought program. If you do not want to pay for the drought program, then you have to pay your share, or bigger than your share of crop insurance. So I do not like the concept of those IOUs being out there and adhocery, the way we have seen it in terms of supporting Western Canadian farmers, has the tendency to build up this IOU type of situation.

So while I commend the Minister on his ability to negotiate the tripartite agreements, I think that they are just a stopgap to something that comes along that would be a more realistic income insurance, and one that would not have any potential to be trade distorting. I think that the other thing which is clear, from what is happening in the hog industry is everyone of these stabilization programs, tripartite, you name it what you will, everyone of them is subject to being at least looked at from a countervail standpoint. I suspect that we are going to be faced over the years with numerous test cases everytime the Americans find that they are not happy with the way movement, back and forth, across the border occurs. They are going to look at these and say, well is it countervailable?

If you only judge the ability to fight these things on the basis of the number of lawyers that are involved, you have to assume the Americans have 10 times as many as Canada has and, therefore, their likelihood of succeeding is probably something in the range of 10 to one, as far as we are concerned. I really have some concerns about that type of thing. Whether or not you could have an income stabilization program that would not be countervailable, that I guess only time will tell.

My biases show, I think that there will be a time when we will be able to show that Canada was not the brilliant negotiator that it thought it was when it came to the Free Trade Agreement. I still have grave concerns, Mr. Chairman, with the whole concept of supply management. We are seeing situations now in the dairy and feather industry, where they are increasing the quotas that are allowed of American produce coming into Canada. I think the supply management end of our industry is in trouble. How fast it will go down the tubes, one only knows. I have heard the argument put forward by the Conservatives that if supply management does not survive, it will be because it rotted from within. But if you have a situation where it is not doing the job, then you are going to get the bickering within and we have already seen the bickering within the various supply-managed areas.

B.C. is not happy with the poultry situation. Ontario is not happy with the level or the number of items that are on the import control list, and somebody did not remember to put yogurt and various other things on the control list at the right time, and simple things, Mr.

Chairman. Just by not having control over the importation of pizzas that have mozzarella cheese on the topping is enough to disrupt the whole thing. So supply management certainly could be in a lot of trouble when it comes to the Free Trade Agreement.

Likewise, we have seen quite a few companies go into bankruptcy, or get into trouble in the last little while. Here again, of course you get the partisanship that is always involved. One side says, well, it has nothing to do with free trade; the other side says, well, the closing is the only thing that you can attribute to the Free Trade Agreement. I suspect, Mr. Chairman, that it is somewhere in between. I do not believe that the closing of the plants that we have seen, such as Canada Packers, and the others, Lipton Coffee, and so on, I certainly would not attribute them all to free trade, but I do not think it is fair to say that free trade has not been a factor in the decision-making process, in some of those. Now we see in the paper the last day or two where Varsity, the company that took over Massey Harris, is considering moving its operations south of the border. These are things that, I think, one has to be concerned with.

* (1550)

Another area, Mr. Chairman, that I have to take the Minister to task for and that is the whole area of agricultural research. Here again, the Minister could not find it within his means to even give agricultural research an increase even up to the cost of inflation. The figure is still \$875,500 and I think that has been, essentially, the figure now for several years and what has happened in the period of time. I think the Minister is aware of this, that the traditional granting agencies such as NSERC, the Western Grain Research Foundation and even the private sector have had it relatively tough. The agricultural scientists have not had good fortune going out and seeking funds elsewhere. It has been very, very tight. I think it is fair to say that we now have a situation where we have agricultural scientists, here in Manitoba, who are being underutilized to some extent because of the fact that there is not adequate funding. We have looked at several ways that could have been done.

There was a time when the Western Grain Research Foundation was looking at a possible checkoff for the money to go to research. Unfortunately, at that time, those who I thought should have known better, such as the Pools, did not get up and really support the concept of a checkoff for research. As a university researcher, at that time, I have to take some of the flack myself because I think the researchers should have got out on their little barrels and raised hell out in the country and made sure that the farmers were aware of the situation. When the farm economy is in the doldrums, the way it has been the last few years, that probably is not the appropriate time to go out and suggest it again with the idea of a plebiscite for a checkoff for research.

I do think, Mr. Minister, that the opportunity was there to have given that research community a little shot in the arm. It did not have to be a lot, but I think just that little shot in the arm that would say, yes, I am still

behind you, we feel that agricultural research is important even if it had only been 50,000 or 100,000 additional in the year, I think would have been important. I am afraid that what filtered through, Mr. Minister, was the concept that we will only do it if the private sector gets involved because I know there is a proposal out there to try and do that. I guess this is where the philosophical difference comes in. I would far rather see the money made available to the researcher, who then uses that money as seed money to go out and try to get it multiplied from the private sector, rather than operate the other way and say, if you can get this from the private sector we will put this much in. I think the other way around is much better.

I know from past experience that groups such as the Pools, United Grain Growers, Cargill, Ducks Unlimited and there is a whole range of these groups who are interested in agriculture, will support agricultural research when they are in a position to do it. It is very difficult for the Manitoba Pool or United Grain Growers or any of those, who have a board of directors, to go out and try to make a strong case for additional support for agricultural research when their books are in the red. At the present time, they are not the ones who we can rely on to come up with the additional support for research. I think there has to be more Government incentives and initiatives into that area at this time.

I would like also—and here I am sure my colleague from the Interlake will probably perk up—I am very pleased to see that the federal Government once again has introduced Plant Breeders' Rights. I would hope, Mr. Minister, that you already have something on file indicating that the Government of Manitoba is supportive of the federal initiative, because I am sure you are aware this is the fourth time the Plant Breeders' Rights has been introduced into Parliament. Eugene Whelan brought it in. John Wise brought it in twice and now Mazankowski has brought it in. I am hopeful that this time Mazankowski has brought it in early enough in his mandate so that it will not fall off the end of the agenda paper. I think you also know that it is a contentious issue.

I suspect the federal Government will feel it has no alternative other than to have public hearings. Here in Manitoba, I suspect my colleague from the Interlake will be instrumental in making sure that the vocal minority come out and raise a lot of noise about Plant Breeders' Rights. I want to go on record, and I point this out to the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) that at the present time with Government funding being reduced for agricultural research, and it is being reduced, there is no doubt about that whatever, I would be quite happy to take him out and show him situations where plant growth chambers and things of that nature from Agriculture Canada are not in use because the budget is not there to keep them operational.

So they are cutting back seriously. There is no alternative, in my opinion, than to go to Plant Breeders' Rights so that the public sector, including Agriculture Canada, the universities and the private sector can collect royalties on the development of these varieties. If they do not do that, Mr. Chairman, what we are going to be faced with is a thing that I think is much worse, and that is the introduction of plant gene patenting.

Plant gene patenting is a very serious issue, because there you have a situation where, as a plant breeder, you might find yourself having to pay several royalties for a plant patent gene or the genes that are patented, simply to use them in a plant breeding program. The chairman has indicated I have only got a couple of minutes left. I did not realize I was under such tight time restraint this afternoon because I could go on at much greater length, Mr. Chairman.

There are two or three other things that I hope the Minister will address. Is there a time limit?

An Honourable Member: Oh, yes.

Mr. Laurie Evans: There is a time limit. Oh, well, I will hang in there until I am brought to order at least.—(Interjection)—I can last for the next three minutes, I can assure the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz).

There are areas I want to touch on very quickly then, and one of them of course is the whole issue of sustainable development. I have mentioned this two or three times. I would like the Minister to be able to stand up in this House either today or later on and say yes, the World Class International Centre for Sustainable Development will be coming to Manitoba, and tell us when, how much funding there will be, what its mandate will be, and is it for five years or is it there indefinitely.

We have not seen anything other than the inference at least, that World Class has disappeared and that International has disappeared. When someone of the stature of Maurice Strong comes out and says it is not going to be anything more than a switchboard, that concerns me because sustainable development certainly is a very significant issue as far as agriculture is concerned.

I also want to touch briefly on a thing that bothers me very strenuously, Mr. Chairman, and that is the method of payment on the Crow benefit. I am sure you do probably as much or more reading than I do, but when you go through the press and you see that Alberta and Saskatchewan are ahead of us in terms of task forces and recommendations, and the one that annoys me the most is the title such as Cargill Ag Canada on the same track where they indicate there what Cargill would like in the way of method of payment adjustments, is what is acceptable to the Minister of Agriculture federally. That worries me because, while I have nothing against Cargill, I regard them as a good corporate citizen.

I think you have a situation there of a potential of the dog being wagged by the tail. I regard Cargill as the tail of the industry, not the one that should be making the decisions. I have tremendous aversion to having Dick Dawson be the one who is determining agriculture policy here in western Canada. With that, the time limit, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your indulgence.

Mr. Chairman: We will now hear from the critic of the Second Opposition Party, the Honourable Member for Interlake.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. I am pleased to take part in this debate

this afternoon. I do not know if I will use my total time limit, but that will remain to be seen.

I note that the departmental objectives relatively, and I say relatively almost to the word, remain identical in terms of the objectives of the department several years ago and as they are today. I recognize that as the workings of Government and the desires of the department and the Government for its farmers. There has been a fundamental change in the way that agriculture is perceived both here within the province and nationally. That concerns me and my colleagues immensely.

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

At the provincial level, Mr. Acting Chairman, what we are finding today and now, is that I believe the Conservative Government is saying to farmers, you are going to have to hold tight, we are going to cut back on the Budget. No matter how in whatever light they attempt to put that forward to dress it up as to what they are doing, the fact remains that support for farmers is declining. There is just no doubt about it that there are virtually no new thrusts in the department, other than carrying forward a number of the programs that have been placed. I want to say good programs and no argument with what there is existing in the department.

* (1600)

To justify some of the reductions in expenditures, for example, the question of the significant decrease in the number, in the allowance for doubtful accounts in MACC—nothing wrong with that, the \$4 million decrease. The fact of the matter is, one could ask the Minister of Agriculture, what programs are you putting into place to basically use the saving, in terms of the stability of MACC, to provide assistance for the farm community who are not out of the woods in respect to financial pressures and the farmers who are going through financial crisis and continue to do so, and will for probably another year or two, depending on the market conditions and prices that they receive, and it may be even longer. It will be a sustained pressure on the farm community.

What we are finding in agricultural policy is that there is a move away. Although the rhetoric and the departmental policy is to support the family farm and economic risks, we are determined to move away from what I would consider interventionist policies to those of allowing the world market to work and the farm community to go its own way and survive. I say that in a number of ways of what has happened over the last year, Mr. Acting Chairman.

This Minister of Agriculture and his Government have gone ahead and said that they fully endorse the free trade deal signed by the Mulroney Government. They endorsed it fully, yet we see in the last number of weeks, clearly, the hog industry having been effected by additional duties imposed as a result of pressure put on by the hog producers and the rest of the industry in the United States. The Conservative Government of Manitoba fully supported the agreement. They did not raise even one iota of concern that the hog industry,

that hogs are not part of the free trade deal, they had been left out. We said that from Day One. If we are going to have a free trade deal we wanted two conditions. We wanted the dispute-settling mechanism before we would accept it.

Mr. Findlay: It is there.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Acting Chairman, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) says it is there. If it is there, why have hog prices in this province and across Canada plummeted? There is no way of resolving this issue because hogs are not part of the deal.

The fact of the matter is -(Interjection)- No. The fact of the matter is hogs are not within the agreement and hog producers' stability is on the line, and it has been on the line, and it continues to be on the line because you would not even raise any of these concerns about the agreement.

Mr. Acting Chairman, as well, I was -(Interjection)- the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says Pawley was trampling around the States. I was trampling around the States.

An Honourable Member: Both of you?

Mr. Uruski: Yes, we both were there. Mr. Acting Chairman, the fact of the matter is we did not support the Free Trade Agreement. It excluded a number of factors and hogs was one of those factors because it is not part of the trade deal. As well, this Minister of Agriculture, while supporting the objectives of his department, is undermining the farm community by policies of attacks on the orderly marketing system.

This Minister, before there was any consultation or any discussion in the farm community, came out on the one area full square in support of removing the oats from the Canadian Wheat Board. He said it was a small market and that was okay, as far as he was concerned, as Government policy. There he spoke out while the rest of the farm community raised concerns. The vast majority of grain producers in this province opposed the removal of oats from the Canadian Wheat Board without consultation, without a plebiscite, and undermining the authority of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Clearly it is a first step and it is a test step because, quite frankly, had farmers sat quietly on this issue, there are continued pressures to remove barley from the Canadian Wheat Board, continued pressures on an ongoing basis. The fact of the matter is if that was done, and all you have to look at is what is the likely outcome, the more of the product that you remove the more expensive does the system become. Quite frankly, as a farmer, the fact of the matter is the farmers will ultimately say if another crop is removed and barley is it, the system becomes too expensive. If it becomes too expensive, why would I want to pay for just the marketing of wheat through the Canadian Wheat Board?

This Minister is culpable in undermining orderly marketing in this province not only in that area, in the

dairy industry. The agreement that he signed, and I repeat the comments that I made before with the milk producers of this province opening up the entire quota system for the marketing of quota. Those in the industry who are retiring can, in fact, get the full benefit of a quota, of value for quota that for many did not have to pay one penny for. That is clearly an abdication of the responsibility of this Minister of Agriculture in this province in terms of orderly marketing.

As well, this Minister of Agriculture will also see himself, and I predict that in the milk industry he will find himself, and it may not happen for a number of months, in a jackpot the same way that occurred when his former colleague, the now Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), did when they deregulated milk prices in this province, when rural and northern Manitoba was faced with paying the costs of reducing milk prices in the supermarkets, the two chains in the City of Winnipeg. The rest of the province had to pay. Those pressures will in fact come on this Minister, I predict.

I will be interested in another year or so in seeing what the statistics are on milk consumption in this province should some of those wars come about. If the marketplace and the industry does act and behave, as it has under controls, then I will say that the system did not have to be changed, like the rest of the industry is saying, do not tinker with something that does not have to be changed. I mean, who has said this? Consumers have said this. The processors have said this. The distributors have said this and the Independent Grocers Association have said this. All of those in this industry said the system is working fine, why tinker with it? I should not say, but if the Premier made a statement, I guess the Minister has some work to do in this whole area. But the fact of the matter is I believe the Minister deep down believes that the system should not have been tampered with. I will give him that much credit, having sat on the Natural Products Marketing Council before as a member. This was a difficult decision to take.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

* (1610)

Mr. Chairman, I continue because of what is occurring here in the Province of Manitoba and nationally and internationally in the discussions with GATT, where Canada and Canadian agriculture is headed. What we do require is a policy in this country to make sure there is a reasonable level of income for the farm community. How that is achieved is going to be a major question for policy makers in this country, including this Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). He knows within his department's files that there have been some proposals several years ago by the department and me dealing with the, in concept I would say, similar proposal to the resolution made by the Agriculture Critic from the Liberal Party about having a farm income support program not tied to any specific commodity.

Quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, I believe we will have to look at that area very seriously and consider that because, short of having a supply-managed system

within our country, there is no other system that will be able to withstand the pressures of the GATT Agreement that will likely come. We will look at family farm income, income on the broad scale, to try and work out of it, returns on investments, capitalization of the farm unit, capitalization of land, but try to maintain a decent farm income. I have spoken to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) on this issue.

I do not believe, for example, that farmers whose incomes are, to the greatest extent, guaranteed by supply management should be able to bring in monies from support programs, even of an ad hoc nature, that have been paid out in the last couple of years. Money, millions and millions, hundreds of millions of dollars are going to producers who financially may be very well off. We will have to really examine that question, but it will be a very difficult one that has to be, I believe, tied to a philosophical approach of the Government that is prepared to enhance orderly marketing.

There has to be a determination by this Government and by all Governments that there is a belief in orderly marketing. If there is not, clearly eventually the farm community, the family farm, if one can describe it as such, will be a thing of the past. There is no doubt, even though it continues to be the most efficient means of production that there is, because quite frankly in many instances they are working for nothing. The fact of the matter is there are many farm families who are working for what most people would not stand for, for less than minimum wage.

The fact of the matter is, unless there are some guarantees through the support of orderly marketing which can provide some guarantees—supply management can provide some of those guarantees, but I believe right now the area of supply management has been closed by the federal Government through its national policies of no other policy but tripartite, which says let the marketplace go, we will try and balance out those incomes through the income assurance plan, as imperfect as it might be, so that supply management is quite frankly, I believe, an area that is almost foreclosed in agriculture, at least for the foreseeable future.

What is left is orderly marketing and the kind of proposals that are now emanating from the Liberal Caucus that have been on the federal-provincial agenda for several years, which I have to say sincerely have to be considered.

There are a number of other areas in this department that will require detailed examination. I think the area of income stabilization is the area where there has been a major reduction and it has been achieved at the expense, while other commodities have come forward, of the cattle industry.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister shakes his head in denial. Quite frankly, what he has done is put the cow-calf industry on the trade-off table. When we were in Government, I said we would not join the federal tripartite program in its present state because the benefits and the support, especially for the cow-calf industry which is the basis of the cattle industry of this province, was not adequate enough. I signed

agreements, I signed the hog agreement. We signed the beet agreement, with great difficulty we signed it. We were working towards the sheep program. There were still some matters to work out with the sheep industry, but clearly that was being worked on.

The area that we were also going to fight on, quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, is the bean stabilization plan because, like beets, it was clearly an offloading of federal expenditures onto provincial Governments. The reduction in expenditures or the ability of the province here to go into lamb and honey, has been at the expense of the cattle industry, because there is no doubt in the short run there may be some support for the cow-calf industry. All that one has to do is look at and determine what the support level for the cow-calf industry will be under national tripartite. I venture to say it will be interesting to see how many people have signed up under the program. I do not know how many.

I want to tell the Minister that I, for one, while I am making the negative comments I am making—when a producer or producers question me about the program, I advised every producer they should sign up under the national program because there was nothing else. I would hope what will occur and it may occur sooner than many of us realize, to show the deficiencies in the plan, there will be political action at the provincial level and the various provinces that will then force the Ministers, yourself and your colleagues, back to the table to say, hey, maybe we have to redraw this plan because we are going to be under the gun.

Mr. Findlay: At least you have got Saskatchewan in the chute.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, the Minister says at least we have Saskatchewan in the chute. I am not sure you have them in the chute, you may have them in a corral but you have not got them in the chute yet. The election is not over in Saskatchewan. Quite frankly, I think the herd is running around the corral; you have not got them into the chute yet. That is the way I would describe Saskatchewan. You have them into the corral, but hang onto that gate because it can burst open any day, and that is the way I would characterize the situation with Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate to the Minister, and give him credit on the areas of compensation, even though it may appear I stand here with some embarrassment on the question of the special program of summer fallow for the Interlake. I, quite frankly, will never renege on the position that I took on that issue because of what I consider, and I will always consider, the inequality of treatment of Manitoba versus Alberta under that program. If additional payments could have been made to the farmers of Alberta under the special program, clearly there really is no indication as to why Manitoba farmers were singled out to say, Manitobans you are going to have to pay 50 percent while we will pay 100 percent of additional coverage for Alberta farmers under irrigation.

* (1620)

The beekeeping industry, Mr. Chairman, required the assistance. I am not sure what has transpired in the

last year. I do know that with what President Reagan did by removing the school honey program, the United States dumped about, if I am not mistaken, 100 million pounds of honey on the marketplace, depressed the honey market totally, and caused the ripple effect into Canada forcing many of our producers into bankruptcy or near bankruptcy. I do not know why there would have been a 100 colony deductible under that program. Perhaps the Minister, when we get into the area, will in fact clarify that whole area. Those areas of assistance I give credit to.

I continue to be very negative on the School Tax Reduction program for farmers. A year has passed. We continue not to plug the loophole to provide more than \$2 million of benefits to non-farming interests in and outside of Manitoba. If we wanted to deal with the Conservative complaint of providing assistance to widows who owned land and did not get the benefits of the program, then we should have plugged those loopholes or allowed that distinction to be made.

Clearly this Minister cannot stand here and defend, while Manitoba farmers are under financial pressure, an increase of 10 percent. That is at least a quarter of a million dollars in excess of \$2 million that he was paying out to people who came to Manitoba and speculated in farm land in the late '70s and early '80s, who now are the beneficiaries of \$2 million of income, coming from the Manitoba Treasury, leaving this province or at least leaving the farm community. That is where I am very critical of the Minister of Agriculture.

The program, while it provides proportionate benefits to the tax paid, but in terms of the type of farmers, the larger the farm you are the greater the benefit, it does not provide a benefit. It is equal per acre, but it is not—there are many small-time farmers who lease a large portion of their operations who are ineligible for this program. Yet they will not get any more than 25 percent, even with a 10 percent increase. There are many of those farmers who will get less this year than they received two years ago. There are many of those farmers. The Minister will have to get up in this House and acknowledge that.

If you look at a farmer in Armstrong, there was a couple of old fellows who just retired. They had three quarter sections of land that they owned, marginal land, but they leased six or seven quarter-sections of land. Now from the Crown land they will receive it, but if it is privately leased they will not receive that benefit. So they will receive the 25 percent on three quarter sections of land in Armstrong which may give them \$200.00. They were eligible for \$500 two years ago and this year they would be eligible for \$220.00.

Mr. Findlay: Why do they not negotiate a different agreement?

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, the Minister says, so why do they not negotiate an agreement. The Minister knows how much clout a farmer has in negotiating an agreement at an arm's length. Very little. Very little clout when there is a demand—

Mr. Findlay: If you do not like the breaks, you do not have to take them.

Mr. Uruski: Well, here is the true conservatism coming out. If they do not like the price, they can leave it. There may be some instances where that will work, but when the farmer has had a lease agreement, has built his operation and capitalized his operation on counting on that leased land, there is very little negotiating room left if there is demand for the land base. The Minister knows that wherever there is demand, the room for maneuverability is not that great.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to raise the question of grain transportation on two levels. The one level is the hope that this Minister becomes an advocate on behalf of Churchill, on behalf of the single inland port in this country to continue the demand that at least 3 percent of the grains sold out of this country go through Churchill.

Mr. Findlay: And not at the farmers' expense.

Mr. Uruski: The Minister says as long as it is not at the farmers' expense.

The Minister well knows that he will not have the support of the Wheat Pools because they do own port facilities. If I were the Wheat Pool, I would want to protect my own facility, there is no doubt about it. Clearly for the farmers' benefit, Churchill is a lesser cost port for European shipments than is the seaway.

I see my time has expired and I will look forward to hitting some of the other areas on grain transportation as we go into the other areas of the department.

* (1630)

Mr. Chairman: I would remind Members of the committee that debate on the Minister's Salary, Item 1.(a), is deferred until all other items in the Estimates of this department are passed.

At this time, we would invite the Minister's staff to take their places in the Chamber.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce the two gentlemen who have just joined us, Les Baseraba, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister; and Greg Fern, Acting Director of Program Analysis. I open the floor to questions from the critics.

Mr. Chairman: The item before the committee is 1.(b) Administration and Finance, Executive Support: (1) Salaries \$354,100; (2) Other Expenditures \$122,600; and (3) Policy Studies \$117,900—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairman, there are relatively few questions that I have in here in this areas and I think that we probably can move through them fairly quickly, but there are one or two that I would like to touch on.

The one under Personnel, the five administrative support where the increase from one year to the other has been a little over 10 percent, can the Minister indicate, is this primarily because of change of personnel? It would seem that it is well beyond the

level of pay increases that would be through the Government Employees' Association.

I am referring to the \$540,600 last year, and five again at \$156,400 which is something like \$16,000 which is—what?—an 11 percent increase.- (Interjection)- Yes, that is on page 21, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, it would appear that it is salary adjustments plus increase in maternity allowance for maternity leave.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I also noticed in this particular area, and there are one or two others, the managerial and the professional and technical support, the cost for it has gone down. I would just ask the Minister, I understand there are quite a number of retirements occurring within the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, is there a stated policy of movement up from within or in fact is the Minister able to recruit for senior personnel from outside? I get the impression, and it may be a wrong one, that the managerial and professional costs have declined in quite a few sections within the department, which leads me to suspect that perhaps there is not the infusion of senior personnel from outside, and this is one way of keeping the cap on the salary component of the department.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, it is primarily due to the persons coming into the positions who are coming in at a lower salary range because of the qualifications basically, I guess, and classification. There has been no change in the recruitment policy for staff at any level in the department.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I do not want to prolong this indefinitely, Mr. Chairman, but looking at this page where you have got four personnel involved in each of the two years, the two managerial has gone from \$135,500 to \$126,700.00. The two professional technical has gone from \$76,500 to \$71,000, and then you go over to the next page, the same thing has happened.

I can only infer from that, there has been quite a significant change in personnel over that period of time because that is the case of four personnel there and seven on the next page, and in each case there has been a substantial reduction in the overall cost of the senior personnel in those two areas. I am not quite satisfied that I understand the Minister's explanation.

Mr. Findlay: Primarily because in the fiscal year '88-89 they were not there for the entire year, especially EAs and SAs, as the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) pointed out, really started in June, so they missed the first two or three months of the year.

Mr. Laurie Evans: The cost is higher in the previous fiscal year than you are anticipating for the next one, in those cases. What I am referring to, Mr. Minister, and maybe I am not clear but your managerial two positions cost you \$135,000 last year, and this year they are costing you \$126,000.00. The professional technical below, two positions at \$76,500, this year they are costing you \$71,000.00. Then you go over to the next page and you have a total of seven people

in more or less the same categories, and there again you are saving something like \$15,000 over that range. I would expect it to be going the other way unless there has been a significant change in the personnel

Mr. Findlay: Yes, we will get this straightened out yet. They were budgeted in there in the previous year for people who had been in there prior, and the actual people that are in the position now are paid less than had been budgeted the previous year. Again at the managerial level, the Deputy Minister and the policy adviser are the two managerial personnel in there. I guess we could give you a better explanation when we get a chance to just look at the specifics of the case, but it is a matter of budget. There have been no changes in there in personnel at all.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairman, I am satisfied with the explanation. I am not concerned there is any funny business going on here, but what I am saying is that the Minister probably could have made his budget look better, in terms of identifying that his personnel in some cases have cost him less than they have in the previous year. It will be interesting to see what the actual expenditure was as opposed to the budgeted expenditure, and I suspect that there will be quite a bit less in the actual than there was in the budgeted.

I would like to move on though, Mr. Chairman, to the item under Supplies and Services where it is indicated that there is \$117,000, \$118,000 being spent on Policy Studies. Could the Minister be a little more specific as to exactly what those Policy Studies are and what stage are they at, and what are they doing for the department in terms of improving the managerial style or capacity?

Mr. Findlay: Which year are you referring to?

Mr. Laurie Evans: I am looking at \$127,900 last year and \$131,900 this year on page 21, and then you have the little star saying \$117,900 of this amount represents Policy Studies, but I have not seen anywhere where these policies per se were spelled out.

Mr. Findlay: For this particular year under the Policy Studies we will be using a good portion, if not all of that money, for studies that will be originating from the Minister's Advisory Council, primarily looking at the methods of payment under the Crow benefit change or program, whatever is laid before us by the federal Government. I can tell him right now that the Minister's Advisory Council has already initiated one preliminary study and they will probably have about three different studies done by consultants on various kinds of questions that they are going to raise.

With regard to where the money was used last year, most of it was used, in fact all of it pretty well was used for dealing with the milk lab suit.

* (1640)

Mr. Laurie Evans: If I understand the Minister correctly then, this is money that is available to the Agricultural Advisory Council, I believe is what you have called them,

to do their study. Would the Minister regard this as being tantamount to contracting out?

Mr. Findlay: The money is being contracted out, yes.

Mr. Laurie Evans: My understanding was that the members of the Advisory Council are volunteer appointments that are on a per diem with no salary or stipend paid to them. Am I correct in that?

Mr. Findlay: The Advisory Council has made a decision that they want certain kinds of information brought forward. They have raised some questions and they, in turn, have then recommended that a certain kind of contract be given, a consulting contract be given. That contract has been given and we are funding it, so it is not going to the Minister's Advisory Council. It is going to the consultant that they have chosen to hire.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I would have to infer from that, Mr. Chairman, that the expertise that is necessary to do that type of research is not currently present within the Minister's department. Is that correct?

Mr. Findlay: It will act as a supplement to the expertise within the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Highways, and the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I have no further questions on 1.(b).

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, can I ask the Minister, in 1988, can he give me a breakdown of the monies and how it was spent on the milk lab suit and how the \$117,000 expenditure would have been broken down? Where would the money primarily have gone? Is that for legal fees and expert witness fees? What would the breakdown be?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, I am afraid we do not have a breakdown of the categories under which it was spent, but we can get it for him for next day.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, on the advisory committee, since the Minister now has set up the advisory committee to his office, what role does the Minister play on this advisory committee and any of his staff? What are the functions and how does he relate to this advisory committee?

Mr. Findlay: I can tell him, to this point there has been two meetings. I went to the first meeting, we had a two-way discussion. The second meeting I went for a very short period. At the beginning, they wanted to ask some more questions and then I departed. They continued their meeting for the remainder—another two or three hours.

With regard to staff, the Deputy Minister is a Member of the Minister's Advisory Council. Heather Gregory is acting as a resource person to assist in terms of whatever needs to be done between meetings and in terms of getting stuff together, and doing sort of routine work. There are two people who will be there on a

continuous basis from the department. I will only be there when they want to discuss issues with me or bring to my attention results that they would like me to be aware of.

Mr. Uruski: How does the Minister see the council functioning? Does he see that as, clearly, an arm's length advisory group or will he be placing, as he has done with the Crow benefit study, an issue before them and asking them for input and advice?

I want to say that I am glad that there are staff from the department there so that studies that may be undertaken by the advisory committee are not really a re-invention of the wheel of information that may be contained within Government and then going out and hiring consultants to come back to Government and gather all the information for them. That would be, clearly, a waste. I ask the Minister, how does he see the ongoing relationship between himself and that council?

Mr. Findlay: I can tell the Member that I perceive it as trying to keep it at arm's length so that they can independently analyze the question relative to the information that comes forward, and the nature of the question as it unfolds from the federal level as other provinces may react to it. We try to position ourselves in this province in a unified voice if we can, in dealing with it if it comes down to the splitting up of the Crow benefit, in terms of whether it is on one year or over the coming years, relative to distance of transportation to an export point, whether it is west, north or east.

I have said to the Members that, yes, we are all together attempting to come to a unified position on the question, but that does not bind any Member there from having to voice his opinion in his own organization, say his Pool, or whether it is UMM. They are not bound by what happens there. Hopefully, through the course of discussion and analysis, I say a unified position that we could all support for the good of the economy of the Province of Manitoba can evolve. I can assure the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) that the participants want that to happen also, that the debate that occurred last time was, by and large, fairly destructive in terms of alienating one group versus another. I would like to be able to prevent that from happening this time and have the Crow benefit payment maintained in a fashion that is good for the agriculture production in the province. We see it as being a payment that is needed because of our distance, particularly our distance from tidewater in this province. As a province producing grain and exporting, or as a location in the world producing grain for export, we are the furthest from the sea of anybody. So we have some certain disadvantages that we need to look after.

We cannot say, oh, we will give up the Crow benefit and farmers will pay the cost of getting grain to an export position. That is just impossible. If that money is going to flow into here, let us have it used in a fashion that can hopefully help the export grain. It can maybe help in maintaining the livestock industry if that money can be used to add as an incentive for livestock production, or it can be used as an incentive for secondary processing of grain before it is exported.

Those are the kind of options hopefully we can maximize our ability to gain benefit from. If we can do it in a unified position among all the interested groups of the province, I think we will have achieved something important.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to note that the committee, in effect, will have at least in its own mind the freedom to express dissenting views, and that while it would help the Government if there was a unified voice, not necessarily is the Minister going to try and influence it to become a unified voice. I want to just point out on the issue of the Crow benefit that there will be I think a fair bit of dilemma for the Conservative Party, at least across this country. The dilemma is, of course, with the desire of the Alberta Government. At least they have come out strongly in favour of the Crow benefit being paid to farmers. The Saskatchewan Government and the Manitoba Government are basically taking a look and see attitude.

I do not think there has been any clear position enunciated, that versus what is occurring now at the international level of GATT, and the pressures coming on the negotiators to view the whole question of subsidies and the determination that will ultimately have to come about as to what is the Crow benefit. Is it a subsidy to farmers or is it, in fact, a transportation subsidy or an export subsidy? That will be the determining factor. If it is on both sides, if it is an export subsidy or a subsidy to farmers, those two areas will be viewed as countervailable, I believe, in terms of everything that I have read in the papers now as to what is happening.

The one area that is at the present time at least being defended vociferously by the chief commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board and others within Government, is that the Crow benefit today continues to be a transportation subsidy because of the distance of the tidewater of Canada, and it is not a direct support to farmers. It is the need to get the grain to port, to tidewater, and of course cannot be attributed as an export subsidy or a direct subsidy to farmers which allows them to compete to a greater extent for grain markets, but it becomes a transportation subsidy now.

* (1650)

It may ultimately be viewed that all subsidies go out the window. Then the question and the study may want to take a look at that question as to how one would use, if that money is still available because I think that is still a question, whether that money will be available if that determination is made, that it is a subsidy. A subsidy is a subsidy. Then the debate may be academic, that the money will be cut off. That would be a blow, I believe, to Manitoba in particular but the entire western Canada, and one that will have to be viewed and worked on very definitively.

The other area I would like to ask the Minister whether the Advisory Committee will be playing a role in, is in the review of the federally announced crop insurance meetings and changes, whether the Minister will be getting the views of this committee on the possibility of changes and funding, and any other areas that may be coming up at the present time.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, I can tell the Member that on the first meeting I laid out a number of issues I felt were important, that they could look at to be able to advise my office, the department, and what direction we should take, and the Crow was one of them.

Certainly the position that we should be advocating provincially with regard to GATT is one—what we should be doing in the way of education for young producers and active producers in Manitoba, because I am somewhat disturbed at the decline in the enrollment in degree and diploma at a point in time when we are facing more technological challenge or change in agriculture than probably any other industry.

We have less and less people going for that level of education. Granted, we have a number of courses offered by ACC that are out there playing a role, but overall do we have enough educational opportunities presented to our farm community? Are the staff of the department doing a sufficient job or should there be more and concentrated efforts made in the educational area?

The crop insurance issue is clearly there too, if they so choose to address it. It is one that is right here right now and some decisions are going to happen quickly. There has been a fairly extensive round of consultation with regard to getting input from producers and their organizations on that question. I cannot tell you what the results of the past few days meetings were with the producers.

I have opened the door to all issues, any and all issues they want to address, and advised myself and the department on. The Crow was the one they have chosen to act on most directly because they see the economic impact, as you mentioned, of changing the method of payment and whether the payment is there at all.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, just one other point. I raised the question of Churchill. Would the vehicle of the advisory group be to re-raise as part of the agricultural community the question of the inland port, its costs, and bring about the kind of support for Manitoba, for the Port of Churchill, which I have to say is supported by farmers in Saskatchewan and Alberta, but clearly there have been dissenting voices in Manitoba. Maybe the advisory committee might be prepared to look at this question, in light of the committee that has been in this Legislature, to work jointly and bring about a fully unified voice for the Port of Churchill on behalf of Manitobans.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, clearly the door is open if they should so choose to look at the Port of Churchill and do some kind of analysis to develop positions or opinions on various ramifications of what may lie ahead for that port. We are completely open to that and, as the Member knows, the position of our Government is that we support the Port of Churchill. We support the ability to maintain the community of Churchill but I do not think it has to rely strictly on exporting grain. There has to be other activities, whether it is in tourism or importing through that position. That is also going to be a part of maintaining the Port of Churchill. I have

always said that, and I said it too again when he was talking.

I believe in the Port of Churchill but I do not think farmers should take a lower price for their grain simply because they are forced to export through Churchill. If we can get the people who are buying our grain to pick it up there at a fair and reasonable price to our farmers, then we have achieved what we want, but right now I feel there is some pressure out there probably from some companies saying we will pick it up at Churchill but for less money. We should not give in to that and if we have grain that we can sell through there—yes, there is a large catchment basin and certainly this year I think in that catchment basin we will have a good production of barley and feed grains that can well move through that port and into the Eastern Europe area. I look forward to better days for that port.

I say with the icebreakers we have, and we have all known, the length of period for shipping through there can clearly be extended once the economic circumstances are in the right perspective. I think the Port of Churchill has a future, a fairly good future, if we can build on the grain export potential with the other activities of tourism and importing through that port.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I get a hint from the Minister that there seems to be some debate, or at least some notion out there yet, that the cost of shipping through the Port of Churchill to, of course, its European destinations, that the cost of Churchill is higher versus Lakehead.

I get that hint and maybe I am wrong in reading that into the Minister's recent comments. Perhaps he would like to clarify that because from what I know, and maybe I am mistaken for everything that I have read, the cost of shipping through Churchill is clearly distance-wise and cost-wise less expensive than the Lakehead. The question of who owns the facilities and the desire of the companies and the farmers' own company, the Pool, they would want to ship through there, but in terms of hard economic costs of shipping and the distance and the shipping rate is in fact lower through Churchill and therefore bringing the farmers a greater return. I got the hint from the Minister that there is possibly some difference of opinion out there on that question.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, I want to make it clear to the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) that in no way am I implying that the costs are greater internally. All things being equal, yes. There are studies that show it is probably cheaper on a cost side to get it to the export position by going through Churchill.

What we have heard is from the other side that, yes, we will pick up grain through Thunder Bay or the transfer elevators of the East Coast on the St. Lawrence. We will pick it up for X dollars, but if you want us to go into Churchill it is \$10 less. That is the kind of pressure that is coming from the other end. Clearly, everybody around the world reads what is going on and they see the pressure we are trying to force things through there. They know that if they offer a little less, we will give

in and sell it to them, and the profit goes from the farmer's pocket into the shipper's pocket or the purchaser's pocket.

So that is what we are fighting, saying all things being equal, I think the Port of Churchill has an advantage for the economy of the province and for the producers in the catch basin area. But no way are we saying that it is more expensive, all things being equal, to go through Churchill. We are just saying that the buyers through there are looking at it and on a little bit of negotiating pressure that is on their side right now, attempting to purchase grain at a lower cost there. I say that the farmers should not be subsidizing the port by taking less for his grain. We want him to get as much as he can and that is the mission of the Wheat Board, and I defend that mission. I will not interfere with that mission.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I do not disagree with the Minister's comment regarding the mission of the Wheat Board, but as well, I believe that there is some room for maneuverability there. Clearly, I think we, as a province, should be stating a pretty firm case on the need to maintain that port as well.

Mr. Chairman, can I ask the Minister whether his department is going to be undertaking any policy studies in this coming year or continuing any others that may have been in motion? He has indicated that basically last year it was strictly the milk lab suit and this year the Ministerial Budget Committee. Are there any studies that the Minister and his own department will be undertaking?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, I guess a quick answer to the question is right now the Minister's Advisory Council, the support to them in terms of studies is the major one. I can tell him we have also had inquiries about our participating in a study looking at the Japanese oilseed tariff removal, as to what impact that will have on producer prices here in Canada, western Canada particularly.

There is some allegation by the crushers that if the Japanese Canola tariff is taken off in Japan, it represents some \$35 a tonne. I am not sure of that figure, it is around that, but the oilseed crushers in western Canada say they can purchase oilseed for \$35 a tonne less here in western Canada and therefore they are in favour of that oilseed tariff removal. So there is some desire in western Canada to do some kind of a study to determine where the price should go relative to the rule of that tariff.

We all believe in the removal of tariffs because that means more exports, but we do not want to have the producers here taking less for their oilseeds because of that. So it is kind of an anomaly, and I think needs a little bit of work.

Mr. Chairman: The hour being five o'clock, it is time for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION
COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. William Chornopyski (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply considered certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS
SECOND READING
BILL NO. 13—THE MANITOBA
INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL
AMENDMENT ACT

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk) presented Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba, for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mrs. Charles: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to introduce this Bill once again, as it had been entertained last Session and could not be passed during that Session.

I am very proud, as critic for Culture, Heritage and Recreation, to put this Bill forward once again. I am particularly proud to be the critic for Culture, Heritage and Recreation, which encompasses so many factions of our culture and heritage, indeed, and lately in particular, we have been stressing the multicultural aspect of this portfolio.

Multiculturalism in Manitoba as in Canada and hopefully the world, will be the trend for the future. We have suffered through many centuries where in individual countries and nations, we have thought one sex or one nationality has predominance over the other. We are now, I think, a grown world, a matured world, where we can accept the very many aspects of our world, and indeed the people are the most important aspect that we can ever have, for the people is where our heart is found.

In Manitoba, we are very proud to have representing our province almost every country of this world and heritage. We are very proud to have representing almost every religion in this world in our province. I would hope that each of us will learn from those who have suffered, who have experienced and have learned from their own backgrounds in other countries and have brought them into our nation. Certainly each and every Member of us, with the exclusion of one, is a newcomer to this country and that only the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) can claim this as his homeland and that his race has some ownership of our country in that their origins are here in Canada.

It is unfortunate still that our founding nations are not given more respect than they have, both by Governments, but particularly by the people because we still are a country and a people of white anglo-saxon background in many cases, who are not yet willing to accept what the differences can mean to us, that we are still suspicious of those who are different, of those who may not have the same religious background, the same racial background or indeed the same heritage or traditions that we share. I look forward, as I am sure every Member does, to the day of complete understanding, where we do not find it suspicious when someone thinks different than we but when we accept that difference and learn from it.

I have been touched many times in this portfolio already by instances and declarations that have been given at various meetings and functions. I cannot help but think of one instance when we are meeting with the Ahmadiya Muslims, where they were talking of a meeting they held in which during the meeting they asked for prayers, and at that point one member broke into tears because never before had he been allowed to be called into prayer in an open forum, because their religion is not allowed in their home nation.

We should be proud of ourselves, as Canadians, to have formed a country that even with difficulties we are learning to accept and we are willing to accept that which is different. We have made our mistakes in the past, some of them we are trying to correct, some of them we are still trying to correct and some of them we have yet to correct.

We are very pleased to see the federal Government acknowledge the wrongs done during the Second World War when internment of our Japanese Canadians took place. We still have to recognize other wrongs that have been committed and are still being committed to isolated communities because they do not conform to what we see as the way that our country should be.

Indeed, there is no description of Canada. We cannot describe a Canadian and if anything makes us unique that, in itself, makes us unique. We are indescribable, and I think that means we are a better people in that we do not will ourselves to be one and the same, that we allow ourselves to be varied and different.

* (1710)

Therefore, it was with great pride that I have been attending, in many cases, functions and events of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. Wisely Government in the past supported by the present has seen fit to have, as an advisory capacity, the Manitoba Intercultural Council. Many of the nations and peoples coming to our country are not comfortable with settling into what we have seen and see as our rights and practices of every day. Many new immigrants, and indeed especially the refugees, cannot assimilate into our society as easily as we would think and I have had expressed to me, on many occasions, what some of those problems can be and are.

We have situations where, although we think we are very explicit in what the rights and privileges are of our new Canadians, they do not accept them as their

rights and privileges because they have never been able to see freedom, or experience freedom. Just the other night I was hearing from a member of the Intercultural Council how people, I believe they mentioned in the Interlake as well, were not applying for services. They did not realize they had to reapply for their licence every year, their driver's licence. In the country they came from you bought your licence once and that was it. Nobody, and I can see it happen, nobody saw fit to explain the procedures of licensing your vehicle and licensing yourself to drive. In the same way, they were not applying for pensions, they were not applying for health care because they did not know. What we take for granted cannot always be taken for granted by newcomers to this land.

Nor is it going to be very easily taken for granted from those who do not speak our language. We have a wonderful experience with our newcomers in this country in that they are trying so hard to learn one of our two official languages. It is not that easy when you are coming, in many cases, in such a condition that to survive is all that is really on your mind first of hand, and to settle in and to learn how to get your children into school, how to have your children prosper, how to shop at the grocery store, how to get health care. So learning the second language, if it is difficult for them to access the learning facilities, is not willingly done or easily done for those people. We have to make sure they have all opportunities. As much as they want them, they may not have the time or the understanding of how to service them.

That is where I see the Manitoba Intercultural Council, in one of its many roles, could come into play. It is because of these newcomers coming to our nation, in particular I think, that we have to look at how they can take advantage of all that we offer as Canadians. No more than, but as much as we have as Canadians. They are not able to do that when they have to come up front against the Government because, in many circumstances, Government or the procedures of Government are the reasons why they have left their home nations.

We certainly have seen, in the early '80s, late '70s and early '80s, the Vietnamese boat people coming over. I have had that wonderful experience of taking one of these families in as friends, and particularly one of their—what was at first their son—we soon learned to be, because of the circumstances they had to have in leaving their country, was indeed their nephew and not their son. We had this young fellow practically live with us for four years and I learned so much from him. I understand more completely why our nation and our way of doing things is not easily understood by these people. We assume so much.

I remember trying to teach him social studies and how Captain Cook's travel around the world was so much a part of our background. He just did not seem to be understanding this. I tried as simple English as I could possibly get, and at times that is not too difficult for me, but I tried to explain as easily as possible how Captain Cook was finding, exploring and landing in these lands and discovering them. It suddenly came to my attention that what was bothering him was that

one of the countries Captain Cook discovered was Vietnam. He could not understand how his country could be discovered when they were there all along.

I had to bring it back into the world of how we see things. That is, if a white Englishman did not find your country, you were not discovered yet, you did not exist. It was that simplifying of the nation, of our learning techniques that brought me to understand what the problems are of new immigrants, of new refugees, of new Canadians. They do not understand our background and our heritage and they have many more difficulties because of that.

It is for this reason I believe and my Party believes that the Manitoba Intercultural Council should be as separate from the Government as possible, because they need to be understood by their peers. They are a body that very rightly so is elected by their peers. Their various heritage groups, cultural groups get together on a biannual basis, choose which peers they wish to represent them, and these are the people who form the board and the council of course, as we well know during these past few days, with the appointees of Government.

Traditionally these appointees, and I think properly so, should be appointed in order to fill in community gaps, communities that perhaps have not been able to come forward to the biennial assembly and find their place in the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I regret having those appointees made not in the manner that I think would be best suiting of the representation, but in somewhat of an ad hoc basis and certainly before the elections took place.

I think it would be more fitting if we did these appointments after the elections took place so that we could indeed fill in those cultural groups and those heritage groups that are not represented on the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I also think that these representatives should be named as members and allow the communities to select the appointees to the council.

In general, I believe that we should keep the Manitoba Intercultural Council as much a body of peers and as far away from politics and Government as possible. For this reason, we are introducing this Bill which will allow the Manitoba Intercultural Council to provide funding directly through its own body to the membership, and indeed to any cultural or heritage group that wishes to come forward and apply to the Intercultural Council. I really firmly believe that this is the right way to go and I hope the Government will take a second look. We will not in any way hold it against them if they change their minds.

I hope they will, and support this Bill because if the Manitoba Intercultural Council is able to do its own funding, it is more likely these groups will come to them for the funding that they need. If we insist upon having Government hold the power of whether groups do or do not get funding, then the wiser, the more politically astute groups are more likely, not necessarily, but more likely to be the ones that are heard, more likely to be the ones that end up with the funding. Those that are organized enough, that are wise enough, that have been able to have as much training to learn the process of

how to lobby Government, are probably the ones that are able and capable enough of raising their own funding to some degree.

It is those communities, whether they are rural or northern or in Winnipeg, that are smaller, that are trying to gather together in some organization. It may be because of their newness to the country, it may be because of their diversity and numbers not settling in one place, it may be for many reasons that they cannot get together and become their own self-funding agency, that they have to have a body that will perhaps approach them and say you have a right to apply for funding. We have to have a council that has the freedom, separate from Government, to do this. I do not see that in any way by politicizing the funding board through appointees that this will make it easier. I think it is a backward step. I hope that this Bill will be given serious considerations by all Members in this House and will be supported. Within the Bill itself gives the ability for the council to elect its own chairperson and president. I believe, as well, this will give it its own self-governing.

I urge each Member here to support this Bill because we do have to have a firm, solid, multicultural background, a background that is in consultation with the people and not just for the people. I urge you to support it and look forward to further discussion on the Bill.

* (1720)

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), that debate be adjourned.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): Mr. Speaker, leave? I would ask to be able to put some comments on the record.

With leave, Mr. Speaker, I would like to be leaving the Bill standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). I would like to have leave to be able to put some comments.

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

It has been moved by the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), that debate remain in your name, that debate be adjourned. Now by leave, do we have leave so that the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) can speak? (Agreed)

The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko).

Mr. Minenko: It is a pleasure for me to address the second time in the last 12 months the contents of this Bill and bring it to the attention of the Chamber.

The Liberal Party believes that multiculturalism is a fundamental value of Manitoba and society, that the display, the acceptance and appreciation of our cultural

diversity enhances our quality of life and indeed is a source of strength for all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has three aspects to it, three elements to allow a council, which has been set up by a previous Government, set up in an imperfect way, an imperfect way that Government, ultimately, controls the direction of this council. This Bill attempts to address, with three amendments to the present Act, three aspects to it, allowing this body to become an independent body, become a body that has become truly representative of the community it represents to Government.

The Liberal Party feels that only through an arm's length and dependent organization, such as the Manitoba Intercultural Council, can the views of the various communities of the ethnic cultural community here in Manitoba, be truly represented to this Government, and indeed is concerned when, for example, the chairperson of this committee, of this council, is selected by the Government of the Day.

It is also of concern that the senior staff person of this council is also selected by the Government of the Day. I still find it incredible that an organization of such importance would still not be allowed by a Government to select its own senior staff person. Who is that staffperson then responsible to? Is it responsible to the former Government that set this council up or is that staffperson then responsible to the present Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson)? Does that person, he or she, take instructions from the Minister instead of the council?

The third aspect to this Bill is providing the council with the authority to disburse funds that are to be provided to the council through the Lotteries grant system.

One of the things I was able to participate in last fall was a meeting of the Manitoba Intercultural Council when the council was reviewing the various recommendations of the Multiculturalism Task Force Report. One of their concerns was the recommendation, which seemingly this Government accepted, to take from the council any responsibility with the disbursing of funds.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is the third negative aspect of this council where Government seems to be able to dispense its largesse and it certainly appears, from the record of this Government and the intention, that they intend to disburse that largesse through their own elements in the bureaucracy and in the department. There is some concern there. Who better to make decisions with respect to the distribution of vital funds to any community than members representing that community?

Does this Minister, does this Government, believe that members of this council cannot disburse those funds in a fashion and in accordance to any rules of accountability and responsibility? It certainly seems that the Government, by its actions to date, certainly questions this ability. I think it is of concern to not only us in the Liberal Party, and I see from various comments in the papers that perhaps the Members of the New

Democratic Party may join us in supporting this Bill, but that is yet to be seen seeing not a murmur was heard from them last fall.

How can a council continue on without having that ability to disburse funds? We have learned from them that too infrequently have they been asked for their opinion on various issues affecting Manitobans. How often has the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) asked the council for their views on any issue or any new program? Undoubtedly, programs within the Minister's responsibility affect thousands, if not tens of thousands, of people that perhaps the Manitoba Intercultural Council could offer some advice.

We look to some of the other ministries. How about the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst)? How often has he asked the Manitoba Intercultural Council for their views on various issues affecting the economy? How about the Business Start Program that this Government has accepted as one of their jewels? Has he really asked the council as to how best to be able to provide the information about this Business Start Program? How will the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) encourage people to take part in the Venture Capital Program when even now people are unfamiliar with the programs available? I would suggest to this Government that the Manitoba Intercultural Council is such a vehicle—how best to approach various elements in the ethnocultural communities to take advantage of some of these programs.

I look further to the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey). Undoubtedly there are seniors who would use the services of this Government, and certainly I believe the Manitoba Intercultural Council could provide the Minister responsible for Seniors with some advice on how some of their programs in the Seniors Directorate could be applicable to their communities.

Mr. Speaker, you look through each of the Minister's responsibilities and departments and I am sure this role, the advisory role, can indeed be made into an important role for the council. We certainly will be looking forward to this Government who seemed to have said, we will take away your ability to disburse funds, and we will use you in your advisory capacity. Indeed not only the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) as the Liberal Critic for Culture, Heritage and Recreation will be watching this Government to ensure and see how often they have asked the council for their opinion, but each and every critic on this side of the House will be watching to ensure that each of the departments takes advantage of this storehouse of knowledge and information in this council.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we believe that it is indeed important for any elected body of officials, and in this situation the council is largely elected by members of their own communities to sit on the council—how can the Government continue in a democratic society, in a democratic council as we have here, appointing the chairperson or presiding officer of this council? We have seen over the last several weeks how students in China have truly put their lives and careers on the line to ensure that a democratic

system can at least begin to be seen in China, yet here in Manitoba we have a Government appointing an important person to the council.

In conclusion I would just like to say the Liberal Party believes the Manitoba Intercultural Council should be made a much more independent and arm's-length body than it is at the present time. We would certainly look to Members of this Chamber on both sides of the House, but certainly at least in the Opposition, and we look to our seatmates to our left from the New Democratic Party to support this Bill, to ensure that all ethnic communities in Manitoba are represented before Government in a way that they should be. Thank you.

* (1730)

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak in support of this Bill. Having been a critic in the past for Culture, Heritage and Recreation, I certainly look forward to the speedy passage of this particular Bill, Bill No. 13. I certainly like the purpose of the Bill, to ensure that the presiding member of the Manitoba Intercultural Council will be elected from the membership of that council. As well, if the Bill is passed it will ensure that the senior staff person at the Manitoba Intercultural Council, that is the executive secretary as it is currently named, will be employed and hired by the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

As well, the third purpose of this Bill is to provide the council with the authority to disburse the funds that are provided to the council through the Lotteries grant system. I believe this is only fair. It seems that if we trust these people who are elected by their communities, in some cases appointed, to be representatives of the various ethnocultural communities around Winnipeg, certainly we have enough faith in them that they can pick their own representatives, to also elect their own president from amongst themselves. Having said that, I think we should also have enough faith in them, enough trust in them to realize that they have the capability to hire their own personnel as well.

When it comes to the disbursement of funds, certainly I think there is a need that they be independent of Government in order to be able to disburse these funds in a fair manner, in a non-political manner, and that they are not beholden to whomever may be in power for their funding and for their money.

Hopefully this amendment will pass unanimously. It would be better for it this way than to have to wait for several years for another Government, a Liberal Government to pass this, because it is a commitment from this caucus and this Party to do just that. The very reason for this commitment is the one that I have just outlined, to give the MIC its independence to operate freely. Actually, this Bill should have been set up in this way originally. I understand, too, as the Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) mentioned, that the New Democratic Party may be considering supporting this Bill. It is unfortunate that they did not set it up that way originally, but hopefully they have learned from their mistake and will join us in passing this very important piece of legislation. Hopefully, the Conservative Government will do so as well.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier that I spent a couple of years as critic for Culture, Heritage and Recreation. I had the opportunity back then of attending a multitude of various functions. I often ran into my now Leader at those various functions too. We kept bumping into each other, so we have known each other for quite some time.

Mr. Speaker, although I was quite familiar with the recreation aspect of the department and some parts of the cultural and the heritage parts, by attending the various multicultural functions not only opened my eyes and ears but also opened up my soul to the concerns of some of these people, especially the new immigrants. We all know that Canada is a country built on immigrants. Although my colleague, the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), says that we all come from somewhere else except for the aboriginal people, that is not quite technically correct either because they did originate from the Orient at one time through the Bering Strait by Alaska. One could say that both the Americas have been populated by immigrants. At one time it was essentially basically western Europeans, eastern Europeans. Now it is from all over the world. That is a good thing. Multiculturalism has been a fundamental basic and tenet of our society for quite some time. It has become basic.

I certainly found it to be a good thing. It has certainly been good for me anyways, but without getting to specifics I think that for Manitoba and Canada as a whole, the more various ideas, the more variety you get from the different parts of the world, the more you contribute to our cultural mosaic.

We in this country, unlike the United States, have decided that we prefer to have a mosaic rather than a melting pot. Although even the United States even though they often mention and they talk about their melting pot, even there you go to various States whether it be Louisiana, Minnesota, the people from various parts of the world, which have populated at different regions, have held on to their traditions and cultures. Although theoretically they are a melting pot, unofficially they have a mosaic there too. They have their folk festivals. They have their versions of Folkloramas, as Winnipeg has become famous for.

Talking about Folklorama, that is an example of the cultural aspect, the show-piece, so to speak, of what the immigrants of this country can do, but there is a lot more to it than that. These people, having come to this country, also bring their talents, their abilities, their education and certainly their contribution to our economic way of life, our economy as a whole because not only do they come here and fill much needed employment, which we are sometimes lacking—I am talking about specifically professional and skilled workers—but they also become consumers, thereby creating a demand for goods and services, thereby creating business, thereby creating jobs. So people who choose the argument that they take away jobs, that is a fallacy. The fact is they contribute to the economy and they contribute to employment.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I believe that given the fact that all of these different groups in our society, whether they be of European, African, West Indian, Aboriginal

ancestry, there is a variety of talented and skilled people. They are able to elect their representatives to this council, therefore certainly to God we can trust them to elect their own president, to hire their own personnel.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council is certainly supportive of these measures because, as I mentioned earlier, it will give them the independence they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from the Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) when he first introduced his Bill on November 28, 1988, whereupon he said: "We believe that to be most effective, the Manitoba Intercultural Council must be an arm's-length independent organization. Part of that independence includes having a presiding officer elected by the council and an executive secretary employed by that council." Fortunately, at that time, the Bill did not pass.

So it has been reintroduced by the new critic for Culture, Heritage and Recreation and given the fact that it has been introduced early, we are in debate in principle right now, second reading. It would be nice to see it passed before the end of June. However, that may not be possible due to time constraints and agreements but hopefully by the time in the fall and certainly before winter, this Bill can receive third reading, Royal Assent, and indeed become effective at that point.

Mr. Speaker, I, and my colleagues, will be supporting this Bill. I encourage and certainly look forward to the support of the other two Parties in this House on this Bill. I would hope that it gets speedy passage and that it is not stood or delayed by Members of the other Party. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1740)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to also address the issue of what we believe is to be an extremely important Bill and an amendment to The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act.

I think we have to go back and look into history as to why we established such a council in the first instance. I think the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) has given clear evidence of the reasons why some people within our community do not feel as welcome in our society as do others. We have taken a systematic approach in this country which is quite different from that south of the border, and we talked about a mosaic as opposed to a melting pot.

When we talk about the American history, as I spoke often to high school students about and talked about the melting pot theory, it was when someone came to the United States they dropped their culture and their heritage and their languages that they had, whether they came from Europe, or from Asia, or from Africa, and they adopted a whole new set of cultural traditions and language.

I remember my mother telling me of my own grandmother who decided, in 1905, that regrettably there was not enough future for her children. There were at that point 17, my mother was to be the 18th, that there was not enough future for her children in a

small fishing village in Cape Breton. So she decided that her children should move to the United States and so they emigrated. They left Canada and they landed in Boston. My mother, not yet born, never heard her mother speak French because when my grandmother decided she would take this move, her children would be moving to an English-speaking country and they would be forced, therefore, to speak only English. So my grandmother, from the day that she landed in Boston, other than apparently to say her prayers and to go to mass on Sundays, always spoke only in English to her children. So my mother, whose name was Vivienne and who certainly had French ancestry, did not speak French.

Oh, what a different cultural tradition and heritage we have had in this nation where we have said to individuals coming to Canada, bring with you your language, your culture, your heritage traditions and we will welcome those and together we will meld a new nation. We have often been pointed to, by many nations, as being unique in that respect. But part of that uniqueness has meant that we must have respect for one another. In order to have respect we must have protection. One way to protect is through organizations such as the Manitoba Intercultural Council where people from different ethnic origins can come together to contribute to the mosaic that is Canada.

The Intercultural Council established in Manitoba was to have several functions. First and foremost, it was to advise the Government on policy affecting multiculturalism in the Province of Manitoba. That multiculturalism aspect in terms of advice can be many faceted. It can be, for example, advice to the Department of Education on how we can approach multiculturalism within our school system. It can be advice to the Government on how it can support the creation in some cases or the promotion in others of cultural traditions, be it language, be it dance, be it folk arts of another variety, be it arts and their crafts, in whatever aspect that may occur. It can also of course be a vehicle for the Government to reach out to the community and ask them how they feel the Government is doing in its approach to multiculturalism and the protection of a variety of heritages.

For some reason however, reasons known only perhaps to the Government of the Day, this council was established under different sets of rules than councils very similar in nature. For example, the Manitoba Arts Council was established but the Government had a much more hands-off relationship with the Manitoba Arts Council. It was established with a funding module, which the Intercultural Council in its first instance was not, although under the previous administration it was certainly given powers to fund.

For some reason, there did not seem to be a trust relationship with this council. I cannot see that is an exaggeration of the fact because if a trust relationship had existed, why would the Government want to appoint the chairperson? Why would the Government want to appoint the executive director? Yet, that is exactly what the Government of the Day wished to do.

I think it is time to recognize that the Intercultural Council has come of age and that it must be treated

with the same respect and with the same dignity of councils similarly formed, that if you are going to hold an annual general meeting in which individuals were going to be elected and at which a board was to be selected, a management board, then that same group of individuals capable of electing board members were surely capable of electing the chairperson of that particular board, and that it was not necessary for the Government to superimpose upon this council their choice of chairperson, other than of course if there was some political reason for why one would want to do so. Perhaps that was the way in which the council was to be controlled, how the council was to be dictated to.

The same applies to the hiring of the executive director, because when Government hires the executive director, then obviously the lines of authority become very blurred. Who is this executive director to respond to? Is he or she to take instructions and orders from the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, to whom they are responsible in terms of hiring, or are they to take their directions from the council itself? Well, if one looks at the executive director of the Arts Council, one clearly evidences that is appointed by the Arts Council and there is no blurring of who that person reports to. That person reports clearly to the council.

With respect to the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the reporting function is very blurred. We believe it is time to recognize that this council has come of age, and to allow them not only to elect their own Chair but indeed to appoint their own executive director who would then be responsible only to the council and not to the Minister.

The third aspect which I think must be addressed, and therefore is in this particular piece of legislation, is the responsibility for funding. Now there has been an audit done of the Manitoba Intercultural Council and much ado has been made of this particular audit, but when one reads the audit very carefully the comments from the auditor are clearly that not all of the accounting procedures have been conducted in a way which meets the highest standards of auditing.

Mr. Speaker, I think there are many businesses, many Government agencies, which if their particular auditing principles were held up to the highest standards of auditing, would also find themselves not probably meeting that highest ranking that the Government seems to want from this particular intercultural council.

The Government acted properly. The Government said these are the standards we want you to follow and we want you to immediately put those principles into effect, and the Intercultural Council did exactly that. They said we recognize that perhaps our auditing has not been as regular as it should have been and, therefore, that is exactly what we are going to do, so having met the requirement as outlined by the Auditor, lo and behold, the Government now comes along and says, we do not want you to have any money, because you certainly cannot get into any trouble if you do not have any money, because if you do not have any way in which to fund the agencies, then you certainly cannot violate any of the auditing procedures.

* (1750)

Having established the auditing procedures, having had the council accept the new auditing procedures they, in essence, then took all of the monies away, so it did not matter of course whether they were going to be audited or not or what standards they ever met.

Why does the Government want to control the funding to the Manitoba Intercultural Council? Again, only the Government of the Day can answer that particular question, but it certainly is funding which holds great political leverage. It is funding that you can pass out to this arts group, this dance group, this language group and you can therefore expect that they will be very supportive of you in the next election campaign. That is exactly what we want to avoid, not only from this Government but from future Governments, that the grants are based on the needs of a particular cultural organization and not, Mr. Speaker, the needs of the Government of the Day.

I look forward to each and every Member of this House supporting a council which is non-partisan, a council which is non-political, a council which elects and chooses its own members, a council which chooses its own executive director and chairperson, and a council which cannot be used for only blatant political patronage.

Mr. Speaker: By leave, this matter will continue to stand in the name of the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson).

Is it the will of the House to call at six o'clock?

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to speak to Second Reading on Bill No. 21, The Unfair Business Practices Act.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Deputy Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, just for clarification, the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) was not wanting to speak on this particular Bill. We had agreed to leave it adjourned in the Honourable Minister's name. We are going to go on to the next Bill.

Mr. Speaker: Exactly. I understood the Honourable Member for Elmwood was going to speak on Bill No. 13.

BILL NO. 17—THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: Bill No. 17, The Employment Standards Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Thompson. (Stand)

BILL NO. 20—THE MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: Bill No. 20, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek. (Stand)

BILL NO. 21—THE UNFAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES ACT

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood) presented Bill No. 21, The Unfair Business Practices Act; Loi sur les pratiques commerciales déloyales for second reading, and be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, this Bill was called something else last year, Bill No. 25, and it is being reintroduced under the same name as Bill No. 21. I know that the previous Minister called it certain things and certainly the Liberal Party did too. I will make reference to those in due course.

I did want to point out, though, at the outset, that currently six provinces have such legislation: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, P.E.I., Newfoundland, and Saskatchewan, as of last fall, was reported to be coming on stream, but we have checked and they have not yet proceeded.

What do they know in these provinces that we do not, Mr. Speaker? I believe that this Government has finally seen the light over the winter. In their Throne Speech they announced that they would be bringing in some consumer legislation and it was left at that—just one line in the Throne Speech. What that entails, we have yet to see. We have some ideas that this Bill will be introduced, probably in a watered-down form, by the Minister, but nevertheless that will be progress in itself.

Some of you may have noticed that CBC ran a show on the Alberta beef store last night, indicating a very serious problem there with unfair business practices that this store appears to be following, using bait and switch selling techniques on meat, up-selling, and numerous other suggestions of improprieties. I want to point out to you that particular situation makes a perfect case for this type of legislation. In fact, it is the Premier's and the previous Minister's fault that this legislation is not now the law of Manitoba. I have a lot of faith that this new Minister, who is showing some real initiative in this area, albeit that he has less area to worry about now than last year, will in fact pay some attention to these areas and bring in this legislation. I do not know that this particular legislation will help out in this particular case of the Alberta beef store, but certainly if it provides a focus and an impetus for this Government to act a little more quickly, then so be it, and perhaps we will have it in place for the next Alberta beef store situation.

I did want to point out that last year the Government did try to, at the very end of the Session, have the Bill ruled out of order on the grounds that it was a money Bill. The Speaker came through with, what I consider, an excellent ruling stating that the Bills were fine and that they did not involve a direct expenditure of public funds. I know that the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) is certainly in agreement with that ruling.

An Honourable Member: He did not want the Bill.

Mr. Maloway: Of course he did not want the Bill but he is in agreement with the ruling. We feel that this Bill

will proceed in an unimpeded fashion this year, Mr. Speaker.

I might also point out that this type of legislation is absolutely necessary when dealing with a small number of bad operators. A lot of these operators are multinational. They jump borders. They operate, in this company's case, in Alaska, four states in the United States, and they tend to gravitate to jurisdictions that have little or no consumer protection laws. In other words, if you have six provinces out of 10 with an Unfair Business Practices Act, which gives the Consumers' Bureau enormous power to go in and seize records and order restitution and do a whole lot of other things. When you have six provinces with very tough laws, these companies stay away from those provinces. They are not going to come into a province and invest money and signage and leasing and advertising and so on if they know that they are going to be facing very, very tough laws.

So they tend to go to the provinces who have no such laws and hence, I would suggest to you that Manitoba, probably more so than these other provinces that I mentioned that have such laws, will be the recipients of more and more of these types of businesses. The small businesses, the legitimate businesses in our society really have no interest in seeing these businesses flourish. If you talk to any business who has been around for a number of years, they will tell you that they would be very, very pleased to see the end of rip-offs and the low end of the business market, that 1 percent or 2 percent or 3 percent, that make it bad for everyone else.

Now, having said that, I think that we can let us all out at one minute to six—

An Honourable Member: Oh, no.

Mr. Maloway: You think I should continue? - (Interjection)- Well, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) feels that I should take us right through to six.

An Honourable Member: Seven.

Mr. Maloway: Maybe even seven o'clock. We have never disagreed with the Minister that the department should try to educate the public and that there is some element of buyer beware out there. The fact of the matter is that you have to wonder why, after every warning that the Consumers' Bureau does give, a matter of weeks later, you find that the operators or perpetrators are back in business under another name operating in some other jurisdictions, maybe even the same jurisdiction, the same neighbourhood, doing the same thing. So obviously this education process that the department tries to say it is doing and doing well is not working and we need something stronger.

Mr. Speaker: When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have nine minutes remaining. The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stand adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning (Friday).