

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
2:30 o'clock, Friday, April 18, 1975

SUPPLY - CONSUMER, CORPORATE AND INTERNAL SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 15 of your Estimate books. Resolution 36(a) (1) - The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. MCKENZIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I just have a few comments that I'd like to direct to the attention of the Honourable Minister, and I well recognize that he is representing the consumers of this province and well, hopefully, he'll make sure that the consumers have a fair and interesting position with him as a Minister to help them with some of the consumer problems that we have in Manitoba and across Canada today.

On the other hand, I can recognize the conflict that he's in with the Minister of Labour who's in a different ball park and has a different thrust, or a different interest in the consumers. In fact, I wonder sometimes if the Minister of Labour is in fact serious about the consumers. And I well recognize the position of the First Minister who has said that he stands up now and will give us some guidance--(Interjection)--Maybe it's somebody trying out some new gadget for the Minister to see if it is acceptable under the Consumer Affairs Department.

But in all seriousness, I would like the Honourable Minister to stand up and . . . what is a fair wage today for a truck driver? What is a fair wage today for a plumber? What is a fair wage for a guy that's running a big caterpillar tractor and fixing roads? And looking it from a consumer level, because these are matters of conflict every day in our province today due to inflation and many other problems. And I know that the Minister is serious, and I do congratulate the Minister by the way for the way he's handling his estimates. He's giving us the answers that he can with his limited budget, and I know he hasn't got the kind of staff, especially compared to the Minister of Labour. But I wonder where he can guide the consumers in Cabinet when the Minister of Labour's got all the money, and all the expertise and the thrust, you know, due to his years in this city and this Chamber. When the Cabinet finally gets down to - you know, a vote is held, I'm sure the Minister of Consumer Affairs, his vote is counted one of the last in that Cabinet decision, or the thrust of this government, you know, and where their directions and where their interests are. So what is a fair wage for a plumber? What's a fair wage for a truck driver? What's a fair wage for a man that's operating a caterpillar tractor in Roblin constituency, or for the little guy that's sweeping the streets? And I'd like the Minister, if he is in fact in conflict with the Minister of Labour, or if in fact he's going to be able to carry his own department and help the consumers of this province get through this most difficult period that we're facing today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I had hoped that the Leader of the Opposition would have been back in time to continue his contribution which he was making at the time you interrupted him at 12:30, but unfortunately he's, I suppose, occupied elsewhere.

But that did give me the opportunity of listening carefully to the Member for Roblin, and having listened carefully I wondered why I bothered at all. What is more important to me, I wonder why he bothered at all, because what he said in effect was, we are having a terrible problem and the Minister of Labour has all the money, the Minister for Consumer Affairs has little voice, so what is a fair wage for various people. I believe that's what he said, I think I am . . . he is agreeing that's what he said. Well I don't know the connection, and I don't really know where the Minister of Labour gets all the money that he presumably has, although I still rib him about the fact that with the pensions he has acquired, he has earned more than I have ever since we came into government, whereas before we were in government, I could always say, well a lawyer earns a lot more than a railway man. So how much should a lawyer earn, and how much should an MLA earn, and how much should a doctor earn, and how much should a plumber earn? Well now I've posed all the profound questions that the Member for Roblin posed. Having posed them, the only answer that I could give is that I believe that a person should be enabled to earn that which he needs in order to enjoy fully the resources that we have in a community and to participate as a full member of society. That's what I think he needs earn. Frankly, I don't think he needs a Cadillac, and frankly I don't think he needs extra cars, or extra TV sets, or many things that I admit I own, because I have been in a higher income group for a long time.

So the question of how much a wage should be, I think is related to what are the needs.

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(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd) And frankly when I hear doctors - and we're into the situation now - on strike, parading on the picket line, which is their right to do, and demanding as high as, well over \$40,000 a year, I have to turn to say, not how much could you earn elsewhere but rather how much do you need? Just how much do you need? You need security, you need protection from illness, you need an opportunity to educate your children, but really how much do you need beyond that? I think that when our government, and previously the Conservative Government to a much lesser extent, and the Federal Liberal Government, started to ensure security in health areas, and we here carried it to the extent of free medical and free hospital, that to that extent we have removed a fear that a doctor or any other person legitimately has. And having done that, then I don't think we have to worry about a member of society, including the doctors, about their insecurity which they would otherwise feel about their health needs.

Having looked after that, we should be able to ensure a decent education, and I don't want to debate the Department of Education but may I say in passing, I think it's a pity that still today, and with all the good wishes on the part of our government, we still have a differential which keeps students out of the university on an economic basis, and we have - no fooling - the tuition fees themselves are not as important as the costs of going to school, as the costs of not working, as the denial of the opportunity for a person to help in his family, to earn a living for his family where it's needed, and there's a big differential. And to that extent he needs that, and we are denying him that. So I'd rather talk about what is a person, any person, be he that caterpillar operator, be he that plumber, I'm speaking of the trades referred to by the Honourable Member for Roblin, not how much do they need or deserve or should get, but rather what are the needs of people in society and I wish we could realize that that's an important thing we're involved in.

Mr. Chairman, I really wanted to deal with some of the things that were said by the Leader of the Opposition. Firstly, he suggested, almost emphatically, that I had been designated as the person who follows him. And I told him - I hollered it out and it may not be on record - but I said he has too much conceit to think that anybody bothered to decide that someone on this side would be designated to respond to him. On the other hand, I will give him this much credit that when I'm in the House and he is speaking I usually listen, and then I have to say that very often he says such things that provoke me into wanting to respond, so to that extent I have responded to matters that he has said. But to be his follower requires a mental state and a philosophic approach which I cannot accept. That is, I leave to members opposite to do to follow him, I cannot possibly be a follower of his leadership.

But more seriously, for one thing when I spoke as I did about advertising and about the manufacturing and the pushing of products that are non essentials, he said ah ha, the former Member from Crescentwood, Dr. Gonick, said things like that, and said therefore we should only have one factory producing toothbrushes and there would be a big saving, we should only have one colour. Therefore by that tenuous reasoning the Leader of the Opposition said, I must therefore be in agreement with what is said by the Member for Crescentwood, Dr. Gonick, and therefore he and I think along the same path. Well to some extent we do, to many extents we don't. But this kind of a bogeyman, because we know that from the day we were elected to government, Gonick was held up as the danger, the big danger, and that was just that much nonsense but it's still being perpetuated, since he was the big danger that anybody who agrees with him is equally a big danger. That's a red scare idea which I thought fell into disuse so many years ago that I'm surprised that people of a younger generation than mine are still using it.

But let's talk about that coloured toothbrush because we were talking about the concept of unnecessary production - and frankly I don't know how many colours toothbrushes ought to be in order to satisfy the society or the community. And I doubt very much if the amount of money that goes into pushing different coloured toothbrushes is essential to society or valuable or is such a thing that when we look for money in this Chamber we say, why aren't you spending money on a certain thing, whether we shouldn't stop for a moment and deplore the fact that money is being spent in order to produce varied coloured toothbrushes, and pushed in that way. Now if money is spent in that way, I think it's nonsense, and to the extent that the Leader of the Opposition said, "Oh, well, that's bad", I would say that the only justification in my mind for free competition - and I don't believe we have free competition, I think it is organized and ordered not by plan but happens not necessarily by design - but I think that competition produced

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(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd) by two competing firms manufacturing the same article should be to improve the price or the quality, and that's all frankly. I think that going beyond price or quality is already appealing to matters that are much less important for the economy. It may be fine at a time when we are all affluent; we haven't reached that stage yet.

Now the Leader of the Opposition said, I admit, and I can't quote him verbatim, but the Leader of the Opposition said about 12:25, "I know that inflation is not a matter that can be handled by the Western World" - I don't know if he used the verb "handled" but he certainly said something to the effect that the Western World is not alone capable of handling the problem of inflation. He said . . . "I know what a Provincial Government can do to fight inflation, it can cut taxes." Well, Mr. Chairman, what is the effect of cutting taxes. It puts back money in the hands of the taxpayer which the government is otherwise receiving and spending, so what it seems to be doing is to give back to the taxpayer the opportunity for the taxpayer to decide how to spend that money rather than the government. And I would suggest that if that were to be done then at least remove from the taxpayer the push to buy non essential goods, non productive goods. And I believe that to cut taxes is inflationary in that it pushes more money into the hands of the consumer, who therefore demands more goods and is obviously in a position to pay for more goods. Now on the other hand inflation does create the demand on the part of the worker, I mean the income producer, to demand more income to cope with inflation. And that working man that the Member for Roblin seemed concerned about who cannot meet his standard of living at the same level as he did before the inflation rise, therefore he either has to see a reduction in cost, or a reduction in standard of life, or more income, so naturally looks for more income and asks for more wages, and the inflationary spiral continues. But cutting taxes itself is not an answer to inflation.

I'm quoting now from someone else who said in a budget speech: "I believe the economy needs only temporary stimulation to ensure its recovery to a higher level of performance by the end of 1975." He says: "Automobile sales have been slow, and sales of major appliances and home furnishings have been affected by the housing slowdown." So then he says: "To stimulate consumer spending, the basic retail sales tax rate will be reduced from seven percent to five percent effective midnight this day, to be in effect till December 31, 1975. The benefits of this action will spread rapidly throughout the economy. Initially it will stimulate spending on cars, stoves, refrigerators, colour televisions, and so on. This increased activity will flow into distribution, manufacturing and other industries, and generate increased production and jobs." Mr. Chairman, he doesn't say that that is done to fight inflation. Indeed that is done, and now I'm not quoting you to fight the fear of recession. He is afraid of the unemployment figures, with good cause. We have a great many unemployed. Over 800,000 people in this country are unemployed. And that means that they are walking the streets, that they feel that they are not productive, that they are not able to support their families at a decent style, the welfare rolls mount, and governments have to be aware of it. So Darcy McKeough the Progressive Conservative Minister, Treasurer of Ontario, says that in order to stimulate consumer spending he is reducing taxation.

But the Leader of the Opposition said to fight inflation, governments should reduce taxes. And then he said government should reduce expenditures. All right to the extent government reduces expenditures, and to the extent that that removes work that is stimulated by government expenditures, that actually puts people out of work, increases unemployment, puts more people on the welfare rolls, government is again involved in having to handle that burden - although I suppose it costs less to keep people on welfare than it does to give them high paid jobs, but not really less. Not really less, because as part of the society, as part of the community a gainfully employed person is a productive person who produces things, doesn't just sit back and live on welfare. So that that's a false economy to talk in those terms. What is important though is that direction in which the spending takes place. Shall it be in the hands of the individual, or shall it be in the hands of government?

You know the Leader of the Opposition no doubt by saying cut taxation, cut spending, would not say to the manufacturers, stop producing as much as you were, keep on producing. I'm sure he'd say that. As a matter of fact I would expect him to say, stimulate them by giving them incentives to produce more. And I think they will then go back and start producing more and more useless, or less useful products for society, and then the advertisers will get busy and start pushing it, and they'll tell you that if you have a 1975, no I'm sorry, 1973 model car,

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(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd) which may be running very well, by golly exchange it. Look at the styles, look at the horsepower, look at the colour, look how we've improved things. Change your car, move it around. And that to me is non-productive, and that to me is the main object of advertising, push goods. I mean that's what they're there for. I don't say that in derogation of their job, I, you know, that's the role they've taken on, they enjoy doing it, and inherently there's nothing wrong with it. But at a time of inflation, of a cost of living that keeps increasing, there has to be some sort of planning, and the suggestions made by the Leader of the Opposition to me are not acceptable.

So let me just read into the record what I think is acceptable, and I perforce have to quote myself because in the five minutes left to me, I can only turn to something I knew, which is something I said not too long ago. But I'd like to put it on the record here. It was a contribution I made at a conference called by the Conference Board in Canada, which was held April 2nd of this year here in Winnipeg, and as one of the panelists I made a presentation. I'd like to read something I said along these lines. I suggested that the Conference Board having all sorts of econometric models - they have the capacity to develop econometric models - might be interested in attempting to ascertain how the consumer price index would change if a billion dollars more were spent on old age pensions for example instead of on tax concessions for foreign-owned resource corporations, which is federal policy. And I said, can we figure out in some way some measure of what it will do to the economy to stimulate it, to spend a billion dollars with increased pensions rather than a billion dollars to foreign-owned resource corporations. And I also suggested that it would be interesting to compare the impact of it on the consumer price index and on the unemployment rate if, say, \$500 million were transferred to a special job creation plan instead of being directed to capital intensive industries through fast write-offs, which is federal policy today.

And then I went on to say that the Federal Government could also develop a policy to curb wasteful and inefficient advertising expenditures, particularly at a time of basic raw material shortages. Some of the more obvious examples are the oil companies which spends millions of dollars to persuade the motorists to buy from one chain rather than another, the automobile companies which do the same, and the major food and personal and household goods retailers, who do the same. The only discernible impact of such advertising is higher prices. The consumer must pay for the cost of the product and the advertising. In addition much of today's consumption-oriented advertising is particularly undesirable in that it can lead to distortion in society's choices, away from socially desirable non consumption-oriented expenditures.

And at the same time the Federal Government could consider some measures designed to redirect credit availability. For example, financial institutions could be asked to set aside a greater share of their loan funds for more essential purposes, such as housing and consumer durables rather than inflationary non-essential style or luxury oriented goods and services. Now that means, of course, if we say that we would rather see credit moneys made available for housing and for the fridges and stoves, and all the other items that go into new housing, than into cars, obviously it means that people now producing cars which I think could well . . . we could survive a year of non-production of cars probably, and still do well. In other words, I'm suggesting that most cars today that are being traded this very day could probably last another year without too much expense to society. But those people will be out of work, that's clear. Well that doesn't mean that we have to keep them working at something that is unnecessary but it does mean that we have to have a proper plan to see to it that the jobs they lose are replaced by jobs which are more socially needed. And therefore you need a change, you need a time.

I remember speaking to a member of parliament, a British Labour Member of Parliament, who came from an area which produced munitions, and her constituency of a large number of workers in a munitions plant and I said, "I think it is a terrible pity that your constituents are working to develop tools that are designed to kill when they could be designed to produce houses, the same skill, the same labours." And she said, "That's true, but the big problem is that they earn more money producing weapons of war than they earn producing houses." And she said that's their problem, how can they adjust to that. So we come back to the Member for Roblin and I say, how much should a munition worker earn and how much should a house builder, a carpenter earn? To me the answer has to be, what he needs to live fully in society.

Let me conclude, I know others wish to speak. I want to read two short paragraphs from

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(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd) the notes that our First Minister used at the Federal-Provincial Conference of First Ministers on April 10th when he spoke, this month. And this is part of the notes he used, and which were distributed. "In general our government would argue for a gradual but deliberate reallocation of an increasing proportion of our scarce resources towards purposes which have a high economic or social development priority. This is particularly important in terms of developing alternative energy sources where the huge capital investment involved requires careful co-ordination and phasing, but it applies in all areas of our economy. There can be no rational excuse, for example, for spending millions of dollars in a hundred-storey revolving restaurant when there are acute shortages of housing and health and education facilities in many regions of our country.

"It is clear that we must deal with unemployment especially by job creation in socially useful projects such as housing, not luxury recreation facilities, energy not travel to foreign countries, and public transit, not fancy cars, and freeways and beltways."

And that is the point that I tried to make earlier when the Leader of the Opposition responded, and which I make now, and that is that we ought to be more interested in attempting to redirect the use of our capital funds, especially at a time of both inflation and threatened recession, in times of unemployment and rising costs, and therefore we have to talk about productivity in a useful way, socially useful way, and frankly the marketplace which is supported by the Conservative Party as being the one that develops the best method of redistribution of that kind of social input, is not the one I trust. And with all the faults I've seen of governments, and I include the NDP with the Conservatives and the Liberals and the Social Credit, I would rather trust the governments and their responsiveness to the people and the responsibility, I would rather trust them than the marketplace which is still busy producing the coloured bathtubs and the coloured toothpastes, the toothbrushes, and all the other items which make of the consumer a foil for their desire to increase their profits and increase their assets.

So I come back to the Member for Roblin and say, "Okay, you ask how much does a plumber earn?" I have to ask, "How much should the manufacturer of useless, or let me say, non-useful items of consumption earn? How much did he earn?" And if you say the free market, well then why are you worried about the earnings of the plumber and accuse the Minister of Labour of having some influence on that, and why aren't you talking about the doctor, how much should the doctor earn? And the Member for Roblin says he's talking about them all.

Well, let's talk about them all. Let's talk about the profits that are being made by multi-national corporations, let's talk about the profits that are being made by industry; let us remember statistically that where today we are noticing the high demands of labour of all kinds for wages, it follows by two years the tremendously increased profits of the corporations in Canada. And that is the record. And that is what we've been debating at conferences of the Provincial-Federal Ministers of the Conference Board, such as I was. It was the fact that the profits were allowed to rise tremendously in the last few years that labour is catching up, because the cycle-economists will - don't believe me, I'm not an economist, I'm just voicing what other economists say - but most economists say and agree, that the cycle is that when there is a shortage of goods created the manufacturer gets in there fast, the corporation, the merchandiser, the manufacturer, makes the money, makes the profit, increases the profit, and then the consumer feels the pinch, and then the consumer feels, I've got to catch up because my standard of living is dropping.

And that I think is a basic problem and let me tell you, no government in this country has come up with a solution. Not the NDP, not the Liberal Governments, and not the Conservative Governments; and let's get it clear, there is a government on the east of Manitoba that's Conservative, and there's a government on the west of Saskatchewan that's Conservative, neither of them have come with a solution to the problem. So let's not be so glib about saying, you are wrong, you don't know what you're doing as the--(Interjection)--

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, I never said that at all.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Roblin is right. I wish he'd been here to listen to his leader, he would have heard him say it.--(Interjection)--Well, you may be talking about yourself but I seem to have an interest in talking beyond the confines of the Member for Roblin.

And I was interrupted and I'd already said "as", and I was going to continue to say "as the Leader of the Opposition had suggested" that this Minister has to know what he's doing

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(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd) because after he has a big role to play. He has a role to play. Let's recognize it. But let's not start by accusing him about not doing something which no other minister in this country, as far as I know, has been able to do and that is to effectively mount a campaign.

Now I want to close with the one suggestion which I think has merit, and that that is the one about the fear, the cynical fear, which I share with the Leader of the Opposition, that when people convert from our present system of measurement to metric - and he said it and I agree with him, but he said it - there is the great danger that the person who does the conversion takes the advantage of marking it up rather than marking it down, or marking it equal. And he is saying to our Minister, "You watch that, because it's likely to happen." And I agree it's likely to happen. How our Minister is going to be able to control the manufacturer in Toronto who marks up on the change of metric, I don't know. I don't know how he's going to deal when he deals with a national grocery chain whose purchasing may well be in Quebec or in California for all I know, how he will be able to control, that I don't know. But if you think that the free market will create that freedom, don't fool yourselves; and gentlemen opposite, don't tell that to your leader because he won't believe you. And if you tell it to anybody else, they won't believe you, maybe you'll believe yourselves.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, it's very interesting to listen to the Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Mr. Chairman, I always respect the great member. I respect his interests in this province, his interests in the people, and his debates, and the subject matter that he provides for the debate.

But, Mr. Speaker, today we're dealing with another department, not his department. Unfortunately he's no longer a Member of the Treasury Bench and what we in the Opposition are trying to do is get some government statements, government policies, on certain matters that deals with the Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs, who in my opinion is quite capable of looking after himself. And we don't have to have the Honourable Member for St. Johns who is now not espousing government policy, all he's doing is espousing his own personal interests in this province, and he's twice been on his feet for a long - I guess he went the full limit, Mr. Chairman, both times - speaking from a non government position, speaking from a backbencher's position, when we on the opposition are trying to get something from the Consumer Affairs Branch. And let me again remind you, Mr. Chairman, this Minister over here is quite capable of looking after himself. Why the Minister for St. Johns has got to stand up and throw a strawman back and forth and across at us guys, who are trying hopefully to get through this department today, and I thought at one time we were going to get through this and let the Minister have a good weekend, but I doubt it very much now, because the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Johns has raised a horde of questions. I've got pages of stuff but I don't want the Honourable Member for St. Johns giving me the answers, because he's speaking as a backbencher, not government policy. He's speaking for his own private personal interest. I want the Minister of Consumer Affairs to respond to our questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. CHERNIACK: I heard the member say that I am speaking from a matter of my own personal interest. I represent a constituency, which I suspect is larger than that of the Member of Roblin. I have not only a right but an obligation to express an opinion on behalf of the people who have elected me and then gave me the right to sit here. I ask him to withdraw that statement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: I wish the Honourable Member would move a little quickly. Look, I'm speaking for the people of Manitoba. --(Interjection)--And I want this Minister who represents --(Interjection)--I want this Minister, Mr. Chairman, who represents the people of Manitoba to respond, not the Member for St. Johns, because God help us in this province, Mr. Chairman, when St. Johns constituency is going to rule Manitoba. That will be a disaster. But still, the honourable member he still thinks he's sitting on the Treasury Benches. He thinks he's still got all that thrust, and he's still got the pencil to write the cheques, but unfortunately he hasn't got that - at least I don't think he has it - if my interpretation is now that he's Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance, or I don't know what the connotation is, but

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(MR. McKENZIE cont'd) . . . nevertheless--(Interjection)--I want the Minister of Consumer Affairs to give us some of the answers, and I'm going to raise these questions again, and I hope the Honourable Member for St. Johns will restrain himself and let us in the opposition get back to where we started to the Minister of Consumer Affairs and his department . . .

And, Mr. Chairman, I wonder, again to get back to wages and price controls and I well recognize in the last federal election that the Leader of the National Party of the Conservative Party, he started out on income and prices control, and that was considered a very important issue in the last federal election. Unfortunately the media twisted it around and somehow got the thing into a wages and price control at the last federal election. And the average man on the street got caught in that bind, and there we were. Now we have the First Minister of this province who's standing, and he's eulogizing, has already made public statements, supporting the concept of my national leader, that he basically supports income and prices control. And I suggest to you again this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and to the committee, that this Minister over here has some thoughts on the subject matter, and we'd like to hear them. We don't want to hear what the Member for St. Johns is going to tell us about in the constituency of St. Johns. We want some statements from the government. What is the First Minister talking about? What is he going to do for the people of the province? And when the legislation does come before us, or the policy comes before us, it'll be the Minister that's sitting across here today who'll be eulogizing that prices and controls that we're talking about. And gosh, I don't think, Mr. Chairman, that there's a more important time in the history of this province, and basic to all Canada, where we in Manitoba have to stand up and say, "What are we talking about"? What is the Premier of this province talking about when he's talking about income and prices control? Because it's a very interesting subject, I think, to almost everybody in this province, the small wage earner, the guy that's on welfare, the guy that's the plumber, the guy that doctors, the people that's on strike out at the University, and the whole horde of people who are wanting to know how are we going to somehow help them solve these problems that are so important today. And if we don't do something real soon we're going to bring this province, not only this province but Canada to its knees, because we can't continue the way we're going today. So I hope that the Minister will.

What is your position on prices and wage controls, or income and price controls? Six of one, half a dozen of the other, where do we stand? Are we prepared now to stand up in this debate and continue the debate and finally come up with a policy, we'll go that far, and that's it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. GREEN: If the member would permit a question?

MR. McKENZIE: Certainly.

MR. GREEN: You indicated that the people were bamboozled by the media in respect of Mr. Stanfield's position in the last election and therefore they somehow didn't respond to it. When he says that the people were bamboozled, could he explain why in Manitoba almost every constituency showed an increase in the Conservative Party vote.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, I would think that basically, firstly in Manitoba we with our rural representation were able to get it across to the people what the Honourable Robert Stanfield was talking about.--(Interjection)--No, because we were able to . . . but an awful lot of people on the street didn't understand what it was all about.--(Interjection)--But I do in all sincerity. Again I go back and I ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs to try and interpret what's the First Minister talking about? What is this policy that he's got in his Cabinet room there or in his office - and I'm sure the Minister of Consumer Affairs has sat around the table and discussed it. If the Premier when the statement's made - it's a Cabinet decision and you're familiar with it, and can we not be filled in on a little bit of it, or somewhere where you're going, or what thrust you have on behalf of the consumers in this subject matter that the First Minister is talking about?

And the Member for St. Johns, he gets in this harangue about the toothbrushes and the toothpastes and, you know, Cy Gonick used to eulogize, as my leader said here earlier, that philosophy. And I guess there's a conflict going on now in the Canadian Dimension between the Member for St. Johns and the former Member for Crescentwood, Mr. Gonick. But I say to the government and to the Minister, reduce the taxes and let the little man on the street spend his own money. It's that simple, because they're productive people. The little man on

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(MR. McKENZIE cont'd) the street when you let him spend his own money, he'll spend that money, and somebody that's producing goods and services and you can collect your taxes then.

But government spending of money, and this is - you know I don't know why this government don't understand. When government spends tax dollars basically it's in non productive items and that is the real guts of inflation. And look at it. In this country today, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of the committee, almost 50 percent of the gross national product of this country is government spending, almost 50 percent. And I say that the day that that registers 51 percent, we're on the disaster course, because then we will have state control, everybody will be putting on green overalls and working for the state, because then the state at the federal level and the provincial level--(Interjection)--Well certainly they control 51 percent of the gross national product, and you think that isn't a sick society, Mr. Chairman, I say it is. And I think--(Interjection)--Well, now the Socialists all laugh about that philosophy. But just go back and do a little homework on it, Mr. Chairman, and recognize that almost 50 percent of the gross national product of this country today is spent by the Federal Government and the Provincial Governments of Canada. And the day that that arrives at 51 percent, more than half the people of this country will be working for the state. And that in my opinion is a sick society, because of the reason that the state does not produce productive items.

What does the state do productively? Make work programs, you know, ta-da, ta-da --(Interjection)--Well, the list is that long. And we talk about inflation, Mr. Speaker. You go over and look at the problems in Great Britain today and where did that inflationary trend start? They're now in the 30 percent inflationary factor in the Old Country. And did you read the budget statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other night who says, "Now they recognize that this is a left wing government that they have. That the whole thing is a spiral of wages, and the demands on the public purse has got, that the place is a disaster." And he doesn't know how he's going to . . . He says, we'll tax them - well, you're going to have to pay 10 cents on a beer over there now, such enormous taxation, and it's not going to solve the problem, because the state's going to end up with all the money. And what can the state do with the money? Why doesn't the state reduce the taxes and give it back to the little man, and let him spend the money and then tax those dollars.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would like the Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs to spell out for us over here, what is the Premier talking about? What kind of income controls is he talking about? What kind of price controls is he talking about, because you dealt with it in Cabinet, and we would certainly like to know in the opposition, and the people in my constituency at Roblin, are both interested to know, what are you talking about?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I arise principally to respond to the Honourable Member from St. Johns' remarks, even though he's not in his chair, and of course that gives me the privilege of using that little technique that he likes to use so often with respect to my Leader with his reference, his sometimes not being in his chair, but I want to make them anyway, even though the Member for St. Johns having made his speech, chose to leave the Chamber at this time and not to listen to any rebuttal.

But I'm prompted to rise at this particular time on this Minister's Estimates, you know, to simply keep the record reasonably honest and to indicate, you know, that the kind of contribution made by the Member for St. Johns is used all too often by members opposite, and that is, that they point out to the flaws, and some of the inefficiencies, some of the problems, particularly in the area of consumers, and with the current marketplace; and he decries the fact that do we really need red, white or blue or yellow or green toothbrushes, or what the colour of our bathtub should be, or could we, you know, is this really necessary, or can we drive our existing models of cars for another year; do we really need to buy that model or new model this year. Well, that's fair game, Mr. Chairman, but I'm suggesting to you, Mr. Chairman, to use that kind of a tactic against the market, free marketplace, is just as, you know, as much of a scare tactic as we use from time to time about the big "red" scare that we see, the green overalls, and what have you, that we see emanating from members opposite. Because leaving it just on that basis, presenting just that one side of the coin, leaves out of course the other side of the coin. In other words, if you don't want to have multi-coloured toothbrushes you are going to have to, Mr. Minister, be prepared to send out

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(MR. ENNS cont'd) an edict telling the people that henceforth you shall only have this colour of toothbrush, that henceforth you shall only bathe in this colour of bathtub, that henceforth you shall only drive or be able to buy cars, or trade in your cars, every third year, or after you've 50,000 miles or 100,000 miles on your present vehicles, no matter whether it's stranded or broken down at 25,000 miles, as is sometimes known to happen.

What I'm trying to say, Mr. Chairman, is it's fine and dandy for the Member for St. Johns to point out some of the problems in the laissez-faire marketplace that we have today. And certainly they're there. I can't help but agree with him that that's not germane to any particular government whether it's a Conservative Government east or west of us, or whether it's the Liberal Government or a New Democratic Party Government. But he presents the one side of the coin, bemoans the fact that perhaps some of our provincial and national spending, whether it's in building revolving restaurants and 100-storey towers, when there's an obvious need for public housing; whether it's wishfully or wastefully encouraging the consumer to buy products that really perhaps they would be better off without. And I couldn't agree with him more. You know; I shudder every time my good wife comes home from a shopping trip and I see some of the garbage that's in the grocery cart. I mean I really can do without some of the mumble-jumble breakfast cereals that, you know; that somehow or other find their way into my home. I suppose if we could all, if we were prepared to accept an edict from the Minister of Consumer Affairs that as of tomorrow, we will all eat in this province nothing else but Red River cereal in the morning, then you you know, that's fine. But what the honourable members opposite and the Minister of St. Johns skillfully avoided was precisely of course the other side of the coin. You know it's fine and dandy to stand up on a Friday afternoon and castigate the free marketplace for some of its ills, for some of its deficiencies, for some of its shortfalls, but he notably, notably makes no mention of the kind of things that are necessary, the kind of trade restrictions, the kind of very basic and fundamental personal freedoms that he would have to trample on on the part of, not just his people that he probably represents in St. Johns, but all the people that my friend from Roblin represents, which includes all the Province of Manitoba. He'd have to trample on some pretty fundamental freedoms, you know, as to what kind of breakfast I would like to enjoy, as to what kind of a toothbrush I want to brush my teeth with, as to when or when not I do not want to exchange my car, and drive a car, and whether I should drive a car in the first instance.

So, Mr. Chairman, you know, let's at least put it on the record that it's fun and games for members opposite to poke holes at some of the problems that we have, admittedly have in the marketplace today. The fact of the matter is, one surely has to judge it in its over-all and its total performance. And it doesn't come off that badly, despite all the inadequacies contained in the system.

The fact that we have some blatant areas of abuse that have to be corrected, I think is understood by all. It's for that reason that we are prepared to vote this Minister his appropriations for his department. It's for that reason that we have over the years established, you know, a much larger Department of Corporate and Consumer Affairs at the federal level. It's for that reason that we, you know I think with a reasonable amount of responsibility have attempted to take out of the more blatant abuses that occur, offer protection against that percentage figure, and I suggest to you that in all instances it is reasonably low, in fact very low, of the wilful abuser in the free marketplace, and that for which we in this Chamber, or in the Federal House legislate against. Now that is surely the sole reason for the Minister's existence, for his presentation of his estimates here in this Chamber.

But you know there seems to be, Mr. Chairman, the kind of under-current that erupts every now and then, and it erupts from notable sources, such as the former Minister of Finance of this province now enjoying the backbench of that group opposite, when they all of a sudden use an occasion like this to make a fairly massive indictment against the whole system without offering their alternatives. And the alternatives are there, they're known; the alternative is massive government intervention on the part of every facet of life in this province, in this country. That is the only alternative. If you think that multi-coloured toothbrushes is a terrible waste of our country's resources and you're going to do something about it, well obviously you're going to have to legislate about it. Now does this Minister of Corporate and Consumer Affairs really want to go down in history as being known as the Minister that has legislated colour out of toothbrushes . . .

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A MEMBER: What about toilet paper?

MR. ENNS: . . . or colour out of toilet paper, or standardization of bathtubs. You know, while the Minister can smile and laugh, and we treat the subject facetiously. But the former Minister of Finance, the Member for St. Johns wasn't facetious when he was speaking to us a few moments ago. He laid out all the ills of the market, the laissez-faire marketplace to us. And he was dead serious, but he offered, and was careful to offer no solutions, solutions that I know are in his mind, and perhaps are in the minds of most members opposite. Those you carefully cloak, those you carefully keep under wraps from the public of Manitoba, because they are, the solutions of course are as obvious as the nose on anyone's face, because the solution is simple government regulation upon government regulation, a massive amount of government control, a massive amount of government say-so as to what the people do with their resources, namely their disposable income.

Now I think government has a responsibility in trying to guide; I think that government has a responsibility in trying to inform - and I think we're doing that in ever-increasing amounts - I think government has a responsibility in entering into those areas of research where perhaps on the competitive marketplace the private sector won't do it, properly bring out the fullest amount of information with respect to products, service. I think it's government's responsibility at all times to forever keep the population as best informed as they can be under any given circumstances. And I say that, I say as opposite from my friend the Honourable Member for St. Johns, that that is still the kind of climate that I would like to live under, that most Manitobans would like to live under. And I'll accept the fact that when I look at the array of breakfast cereals in my supermarket store that maybe they don't all have to be there, that we could do with just one brand. And I accept the fact that perhaps we don't need five or six or eight or fifteen multicolored hued toothbrushes, and that perhaps we could do with just one standard brand. With bathtubs I'm in more difficulty. There is this great measure of energy conservation has been suggested in some quarters, the federal quarters, that we should take to bathing together more frequently or more than just one person bathing to conserve hot water, and that may require at least for those that are so disposed that you'd have at least two sizes of bathtubs.

But, Mr. Chairman, the questions raised by my honourable friend the Member for St. Johns really begs the question when he chastises in general the marketplace of today, for it's known, and for it's very visible problems, and some of its inefficiencies, and some of its waste. He does not have the courage, nor do I hear too many members opposite having the courage to suggest the only acceptable, the only visible alternative to curtailing that kind of current inefficiencies in the marketplace. They're there, and they're practiced, they're practiced by other jurisdictions in this world. Now if those are the ones that you are suggesting that we should practice, I think the Minister of Corporate and Consumer Affairs ought to tell us that those are in fact the kind of solutions that he sees to further protecting the consumer.

On the other hand I think he has a responsibility in suggesting, in repudiating the remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Johns suggesting that his job, as he sees it, is to attempt to the best extent possible regulate and legislate against the flagrant abuses, the blatant abuses within the system - and there are some that exist - to act perhaps as a watchdog in terms of these abuses with the staff and the moneys that we are now voting him to do that work with, but to at least give us some indication as to his general position as he sees the marketplace within which he has to operate as a Minister, with whom the industries have to operate as their Minister of Corporate and Consumer Affairs. Is it government policy, as my honourable friend the Member from Roblin asked a little while ago, that the kind of tone of the debate, the contribution made by the Member for St. Johns, in effect regulates and influences the Ministers and the government's opinion right now about the marketplace, or is it not?

Now, Mr. Chairman, my purpose in rising only was to at least indicate to the honourable member, and for the record to indicate that there is of course always the other side of the coin. If you're not happy about two colours in toothbrushes and you want only one, then somebody's going to have to pass a law, and if my friends opposite are about to pass those kind of laws then I think the people of Manitoba ought to know about it. I think that's only being fair. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I rise only to try to gain some form of

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(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd) satisfaction on the numerous fears that have been all of a sudden thrown up in this House this afternoon. Normally on Friday afternoons I prefer to approach in a more passive and quiet way, but we started off this morning by the ex-Minister of Finance suggesting that we're all going to be using the same toothbrush, or at least having the same colour toothbrush, and I was just sort of beginning to adjust my thought to having to get rid of my pink and blue toothbrush to conform to whatever sort of colour the Minister of Finance was going to decide for me, and we had the Member from Roblin all of a sudden insist that we're going to start wearing, all of us were going to be wearing green overalls - which is going to clash totally with all my outfits, and I don't know what I'm going to do about it. And then, and then, Mr. Chairman, we have the Member from Lakeside, who I have listened to with rapt attention on numerous occasions, talk about the joys of free enterprise, insisting that I was going to have to give up my Special K and start eating Red River Cereal, and I thought that once we've reached this stage in the proceedings where we have sort of reached the stage where everything is being standardized and determined for us, that I simply had to rise in protest, if nothing else, so that I can go back to my bathtub this evening, whatever colour bathtub it is, and I want to insist that the Member for Lakeside is not invited to join me.

A MEMBER: Standardize the politicians.

MR. AXWORTHY: That's right, and we also standardize the politicians. But I think that it is necessary, Mr. Chairman, for those of us who had simply planned this afternoon to listen in some quiet reception to this to have all the specter of little sort of assembly lines turning out all kinds of products for us to consume, all of the same variety and the same colour and the same kind, to at least register our concern, and hope that we can, as we keep asking the Minister . . . I now have an absolutely new perspective on the Minister of Consumer Affairs because he is now obviously the economic guru of this government, because he has been asked to explain everything from toothbrushes to wage and price policies, to Mr. Stanfield's bamboozling, or Mr. Stanfield was bamboozled, I'm not too sure, he could correct it. But whatever it is, we now realize that the real power behind the Throne is, that it is the Minister of Consumer Affairs, and that all this time that he has been sitting silent over these last months on that second row of benches, he's really been the man who's been writing all those papers, and that is one thing we've certainly found out from our description.

But I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, on one question, which again I find some confusing remarks being made, and that is that we somehow have created a dichotomy in here, that the ex-Minister of Finance, the Member for St. Johns, is saying that he wants to determine what we're going to buy, and how we're going to buy it, and what we're going to pay for it. And we've had other members from this side of the House say no we must start relying on the good old marketplace, the laissez-faire marketplace. And I find myself, Mr. Chairman, in something of a quandary because when we talk about that dichotomy, I'm not sure what we're talking about any more because my own assessment, I suppose from a Liberal perspective, is that in a large part the marketplace has disappeared, and that far too many economic decisions are being made as a planned economy where there's a high degree of collusion between large corporations and large governments and large trade unions. Those who are making decisions, and the marketplace has really - sure we still use the marketplace to sell hamburgers and hot dogs, and I guess there's the odd store, small stores that work that way, but basically we do have a form of planned economy, it's a large corporate organizational economy and they all get together on these sort of things. And that is, in many cases, who is making decisions and so to try to suggest that somehow it is a clear-cut case between the laissez-faire free enterprise marketplace and government determination and control, is not true. Because that is not the way our economy is developed, at least to my perspective.

I think that the real danger we face in present-day society is that all the big organizations really in fact are ganging up, and that the individual - and I as a Liberal still have a strong sense of the rights of the individual or the place of the individual in society. He is the one, he or she is the one who are suffering constantly, because that is the real question: What kind of counterveiling power, what kind of ability do they have to counteract the tremendous focus of combined economic and political power that is constantly growing . . . and this is not just true for Liberals and Conservatives when they're in Federal Government to get together, but we can make a pretty good case in this province about the collusion or getting together of big organizations. I suppose we've been debating some interesting cases in this Chamber

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(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd) . . . about the role of Manitoba Hydro and its agreements and non-agreements with big manufacturers, and the kind of agreements that draw up with large unions and so I think the position I'd like to put forward to the Minister of Consumer Affairs while he is preparing his new economic treatise, which he is obviously being asked to do, is to suggest to him that one of the primary roles of any government, and this government in particular because it's the one we're concerned about, is to try to rewrite in part the rules of society so that we can in fact gain some of the marketplace back. Because I happen to believe that there are a great many transactions in this society which can best be allocated through the pricing mechanism, which is the market mechanism. That is really in many cases how you can allocate resources most effectively, and if given a choice between, in this great toothbrush debate, and I suppose if I may digress, Mr. Chairman, I can see I will take great pride some day when I can refer to my grandchildren and say, that I was there when the great toothbrush debate took place on that Friday afternoon, this sort of turning point in the economic history of Manitoba, at least I was sitting in the same Chamber when the toothbrush became the symbol for our society. But the point I would want to make is, if we're trying to make a choice between what you do with toothbrushes, I suppose I would still prefer to have a toothbrush which is allocated by some price mechanism, that if there's enough people prepared to pay a price for it they're going to buy it, as opposed to having somebody there deciding how many and in what way. Because the results, Mr. Chairman, are very instructive I suppose where economies have tried that, that is that you end up with toothbrushes without bristles and green overalls with one pantleg missing and probably sort of boxes of cereal without anything in them, and frankly when you try to make sort of abstract judgments about what consumers want based upon some production figures or by some magic crystal ball whatever the aperçu in the production machinery that we have tried in places like eastern Europe they usually end up sort of misjudging badly so we end up with far too many toothbrushes or not enough or whatever the case may be. I think there still is a very important requirement for us to recognize, and that is that the ability of using the pricing mechanism to allocate resources to determine what kind of goods and services go to whom is one of the more effective methods we have yet devised for determining how we are going to use the bag of resources that we have.

And the question we must face, Mr. Chairman, is whether in fact that allocation, that mechanism works very well. I would suggest that it isn't, that it really is badly distorted and that we really live in a split level economy where the major production items, many big goods, whether you're talking about land or cars or whatever, are really determined by oligopoly control of a large kind and that we leave sort of the smaller areas to the little market, to what the Member from Roblin calls the little man, that that is really a much secondary part of the economy, it doesn't really determine the basic question of goods and services in society, and I suppose if you really want to get into a deep analysis of the economics of Canada or of the world in general I suppose you'd say that one of the reasons why we do have inflation as well is that the corporate economy, the government corporate economy really creates inflation simply because of its bad planning, because of that large scale organizational planning, and I don't think anyone has come up with an answer to that particular problem. Mr. Chairman, all we have to say is that many economists, Galbraith and so on have been writing about it, but to paraphrase the old question, you put, you know, three economists in a room and you get five different opinions, I think is probably an accurate appraisal, only exceeded by what happens in this Chamber.

But I would like, Mr. Chairman, if I might to pick up one line of thought which may be a little more pertinent to the concerns of our Minister, I will not ask him to give us the reworkings of the wealth of nations or Das Kapital or whatever other kind of treatise . . . might be required or whichever is his favourite book.

But I would suggest that there have been some very direct comments made in this somewhat varied debate that we have had this afternoon and this morning, that I think he should answer about the operation of his own department. Because the Leader of the Opposition did bring out an important point this morning; he said, "What are you doing?" And I think that that is the central question which there has been some defense made but we really haven't heard the answer. I think the three fundamental problems have been pointed out in terms of the operation of the Department of Consumer Affairs.

And the first question is, is the legislation you're working with good enough? Does it work? Is it effective? And I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the answer to that question

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(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd) is no. That frankly when the Member from St. Johns got up and gave us his history about how he and Maitland Steinkopf got together and sort of held hands over the committee table and devised new consumer legislation, I pay tribute to them as being pioneers, but I would simply say that what was devised in that period is no longer good enough. Because frankly the kind of protective practices acts and so on that we have in the Province of Manitoba is lagging far behind what is now being done in other provinces.

I would suggest that we look to provinces like British Columbia or Ontario or Quebec or Alberta which have brought in new Trades, sort of, Practices Acts which have a much more effective kind of legislative power to protect the consumer and help him to make a choice. Because I think that is really, the first is, is your legislation good enough and I would suggest it isn't. And I would point out, Mr. Chairman, for example, and I think the Minister has talked about introducing new legislation and that was one of the questions I wanted to ask him. Is he going to produce in this House a much more effective sort of trade deceptive act and trade practices act so that there can be things like, when we worry about advertising there can be a whole series of questions of what is the representation in advertising and that there will be teeth in the law to get at those deceptive practices and those restrictive practices, similar to what we now have in the Province of British Columbia or in Ontario.

And I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that along with that is the requirement for class action for consumers. I would suspect that perhaps the Minister of Mines and Resources might take objection to that because he opposed a proposal of mine last year to introduce class action requirements in the courts to protect consumer interests in environmental matters. But I think the ability to take class action under consumer practices that is now being operated in British Columbia is showing that for the first time the law has teeth and it can be used. So that would be question No. 1, is, we want to know does the Minister think his legislation is good enough, if it isn't is he prepared to bring in a much more effective sort of Trade Practices Act, modelled if you like, and perhaps even improving upon those which are now in place in three or four other provinces in this country.

The second question, Mr. Chairman, which I think is also important, is, does the Minister at the present time - does the Consumer Bureau really do the job? And that is another question I would like to raise because the Minister hasn't really described how many employees he has, he says he has a limited budget and all the rest of it. But there is this really very effective question that one of the roles, as I understand it, of the Consumer Bureau is to supply information to consumers about what their rights are, and I would simply suggest, Mr. Chairman, that most consumers do not know what their rights are, and the reason they don't is because of the style of operation of the Consumer Bureau which really is a sedentary kind of body sitting in office pushing out pamphlets. I certainly don't think that that simple exercise of - you're publishing I think the Minister said, 10,000 pamphlets or something a year on these acts is really the kind of educational program that's required to bring home to consumers really what their rights are. I've done some tests in my own area and have questioned people, do they know what their rights are in terms of the whole credit card issue that was brought up.

I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that 99.9 percent of Manitobans do not know that they do have some protection on credit cards, that the whole idea of having to receive an unsolicited credit card is really, in the Manitoba Act, is prohibited or there are reservations against it. Consumers don't know that. There are many practices still going on in this province of loan-sharking, of extreme credit practices where people, because of deficiencies in language or in education, are simply being totally completely manipulated and ripped off for large scale credit practices and buying of goods. There are many of these kinds of examples. I think the Minister knows them. So I simply suggest that his operation as a Consumer Bureau is not doing what it is supposed to do and therefore on that second question you have to come up with the answer that the job is not being done.

And the third point, Mr. Chairman, is this, one that has come through very loud and clear during these debates, and that is the complete and total confusion in the jurisdictional relationships between federal and provincial government. I think if we ever have to have an object lesson somehow of Federalism gone wrong it's in the consumer field; that every time we got a question he said, well you know, it's the old shell game, and I used the example before where you put a little peanut shell and everyone moves around and says, "It's not my

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(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd) . . . : responsibility." You just keep shifting it around, and you keep asking "whose responsibility is it." And I have gone through examples, Mr. Chairman, in my own case where you phone up the Federal Consumer Affairs Department with a problem on credit cards or advertising, they say, "Now, that's a provincial matter." And you phone the provincial and they say, "No, talk to the Federal people, or talk to the Consumers' Association, or talk to the Better Business Bureau."

And the fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, it was almost if someone sat down and designed a blueprint to say, Now how can we confuse the consumer. Maybe this whole thing is kind of windowdressing, we have to pretend we're going to protect them but we don't really want to do it, so let's just make sure he is totally confused. And let's do it by setting up all kinds of offices and all kinds of Acts and all kinds of people running around, so that all we can do is bounce them around like a pinball machine and before you know it he ends up going tilt, because he simply doesn't know how to get an answer.

I would really like to receive from the Minister an undertaking I guess, he's been quite generous in his undertakings in the last sort of day or so, I guess mainly because we have a very effective Funeral Act in the Province of Manitoba, but I'd like to see him produce for this House, if you like, a policy paper, green, white, yellow whatever, I guess we're still allowed to have colours on policy papers, even though we can't have them in toothbrushes, if only printed by the Queen's Printer, which would lay out some way of rationalizing the whole consumer practice in the Province of Manitoba, of having the federal and provincial, governments get together, if there are going to be storefront offices why can't we have storefront offices that combine both levels of the government? If there are going to be girls that are operating a consumer information service, why can't they combine. Is it so difficult to say that in a province of a little more than a million people that we cannot find that the two consumer organizations can't operate the same premises, can't sort of deal in the same problems, share the same personnel, combine resources, do it co-operatively so that there is one place to go, that there is one set of resources, there is one set of information rather than trying to provide for this interjurisdictional confusion. Because I think what is simply happening is that we are engaging in a very extreme self-defeating process, that for all the best intentions that we have of trying to aid and abet the consumer to operate his free choice, to still have some causative caveat emptor in the marketplace, then we are simply putting a whole area of really jurisdictional intergovernmental kinds of hurdles in his way to doing so.

So, Mr. Chairman, those are really the three remarks that I would like to zone in on directly to the Minister in relation to the operation of his Consumer Bureau, areas where I think that he could realistically take action both to get better legislation, (a) to improve the operation of his own Consumer Bureau, to have it being out there in the community dealing with people, not just through the office in a pamphlet, but directly meeting with school counsellors and home economists and community organizations and showing what kind of protections they have and allow them to become it. And thirdly, to work out a system that at least in the Province of Manitoba we can get rid of this kind of jurisdictional conflict, and if nothing else at least have combined operations so that there is some central places where people can go to get the answers that they want.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

--(Interjection)--

MR. TURNBULL: If the member just had a few remarks I'd be quite happy to listen to him but I do want to respond.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I wouldn't be long, if the Minister would. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be fairly brief but I think some of the subjects that have been brought up this afternoon are rather important.

I would like to say that it's amazing what a little thing like a toothbrush can do. It's absolutely amazing how the colour of a toothbrush could be something that brings to the attention of the Chamber here, the basic philosophy of the Member from St. Johns in that we should all possibly be using the same toothbrush. And the reason that I bring that up and the reason I'd like to speak at the present time is because I believe the Minister of Consumer Affairs in this province is a young man who I've had probably differences with and probably will have again, but firmly believe that has the quality of handling his office with the firmness that a Minister of Consumer Affairs should handle it.

I really don't want him to appoint the Member from St. Johns as the Deputy Minister in charge of one colour of toothbrushes. I would prefer that that doesn't happen. I don't want to see the Member from St. Johns sitting down there with the Deputy Ministers while we discuss the estimates of the coloured toothbrushes.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in Manitoba has quite a bit of weight on his shoulders. In fact an awful lot of weight on his shoulders. I'm not really concerned about B.C. legislation or Ontario legislation, and I'm not overly concerned about Federal legislation. What I am concerned about is the Minister of Consumer Affairs of Manitoba is a man who can look at anybody on that side of the House, on this side of the House, or any business, and say that I don't believe you are being fair to the people of this province, and if he believes that he will take it to the highest court, if necessary, to see that people in this province are treated fairly. And I think that that is what our Minister of Consumer Affairs can do and should do in this province. Businesses will accept a Minister of Consumer Affairs with open arms, because the good businesses, Mr. Chairman, are the businesses that will accept him with open arms, because they don't want, they don't want the guy that isn't a good businessman ruining the marketplace that we're all so proud of. And the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs can play an important role in that position.

I say that, I'm a businessman myself and I have no qualms about making the statement that we have had things ruined by bad businessmen and I don't believe in that at all. I don't think any of us do. So the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has a very large role to play in our economics. I wouldn't like him to be influenced by the Member for St. Johns for the other reasons that he said. What do people need? No, let's start talking, Mr. Chairman, on the basis of what people want. And let's give them the opportunity to have what they want. And we had a little discussion at noon hour today and I might say that during our discussion at noon hour today we could say whether it's "by negotiation" between management and labour, whether it's by mutual agreement that we all work to the point that people can have the opportunity to have what they want. And you know I could think of nothing worse in my home, or our home I should say, than having all the same coloured toothbrushes. I think that we would be in a fight every morning as to who took my toothbrush. As a matter of fact I don't like to admit it, we have an old toothbrush that we've had around for a little while and we brush it up once in awhile and when my dog J. J. 's bad breath comes along my young daughter grabs him and throws him down on the floor and brushes his teeth. Now I certainly don't want that toothbrush to end up in my bailiwick.

The Member from St. Johns speaks very seriously about this type of thing. I know that there was a person, I don't like to use the name in this House, who said we should all drive one car, you know, and it just doesn't work. It will never work, because you know what will happen if we all have the same coloured toothbrush, all of a sudden some guy in the black market will buy a red toothbrush and walk down the street bragging to people that I'm more important than you because I've got a red toothbrush.

The Minister of Consumer Affairs has the opportunity in this province, if he wants to

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(MR. F. JOHNSTON cont'd) take the time, to find out about plastics. It takes no more money to make a red toothbrush than a yellow toothbrush. All they do is put a different colour resin in. Then when they run another ton line they put a different texture of bristle in because some people like a soft one or a hard toothbrush. Then they put them at the end and before they pack them in packages they say to themselves, well you know really we would like to offer the people who sell toothbrushes, we would like -

A MEMBER: They should have packed it up . . .

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Yes. A different colour within -- you see -- a different colour type of toothbrush, mainly because I don't want to use my wife's toothbrush, what have you. So the Minister from St. Johns, as we have called him several times this afternoon, seems to have taken the position of the previous member from Crescentwood, Mr. Gonick, who believed in one factory for this or one factory for that or one factory for something else. And I say to the Minister of Consumer Affairs that he has the opportunity, and a very good opportunity, to be firm, be fair - and I must say that my involvement with the Consumer Bureau has only been on a couple of occasions, where the answers came back and there was fairness shown and I'd like it to continue that way. I don't think he needs all the legislation in the world to protect the people of Manitoba. And the marketplace is really, it is really governed by the people, not by the government.

I am sure that when we get down to Morden Fine Foods --(Interjection)-- It's all right, George. I'm sure that when we get down to Morden Fine Foods and the Government has an operation going there, they are going to try every way possible to have a product that will be comparable to everybody else's, or better than everybody else's, and sell it on the marketplace. We sincerely hope that the Saunders Aircraft will be such that it will compete in the marketplace for reasons of better, if you want to call it. Yes, we do, we want to get rid of that deficit Mr. Minister.

So quite frankly the only reason I wanted to say these few words is I don't want the Minister to be governed by the remarks from the Member from St. Johns, I want him to be governed by basically fairness to the businessmen and more important the people of Manitoba in the marketplace. I think that was the reason why this business of consumer and corporate affairs to help people was brought forward and has been brought forward over the years. And I would fully expect him, and I don't want to go back to toothbrushes again, that if you find three manufacturers making toothbrushes and they all get together and set the price, I'd expect that you should crucify them if they aren't doing that.

So, Mr. Minister, I believe in your consumer affairs, I believe business and people want you, and they want firmness and they'll respect you for it. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the words of the Member for Sturgeon Creek and that is the style that I'm attempting to use and develop in dealing with this wide-ranging portfolio, it is the style I am attempting to develop in dealing with the various problems that develop in that marketplace and it's the style I am attempting to develop and use with those individuals who are in the industries and businesses that have the most direct and serious consequences on consumers and renters.

I have to agree with the Member for Fort Rouge when he referred to the jurisdictional jungle with regard to consumer matters, and for that matter, matters affecting companies and corporations. There seems to me, being not a lawyer but a lay person, that there is a great need for clarification, especially for the public, of the differing responsibilities of the two levels of government, provincial and federal in this country. How that can best be achieved is a matter for conjecture, a study perhaps, but I really think that the various provinces, if not this one, wish to protect their jurisdiction in this area so much that any co-operative endeavour might not be easy to accomplish. It is a wild scene when it comes to consumer protection in Canada, and I have spent about a year and a half now, almost two years I guess, trying to wend my way through it and just pick out those areas where I think the Provincial Government of this province could be most effective.

The idea he mentioned of co-operative storefront offices is certainly one that has appealed to me and I would like to see it made effective. But the Federal Government frankly puts offices up with such rapidity that I can hardly keep up with where they're opening up let alone get on top of the situation sufficiently to suggest where we could co-operate. But the

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(MR. TURNBULL cont'd) idea is certainly a good one, it's one that I've had a look at, it's one that I would hope to work out, but you know the Federal Government doesn't help things, you just get to know one Federal Minister of Consumer Affairs and they give you another guy that you have to deal with, and that doesn't aid the process of negotiation.

The Member for Fort Rouge posed the worthy question of whether the Bureau does in fact do its job. I think that both with this question of whether the Bureau does its job and with the question of jurisdiction we can see, I can see anyway, some improvement in the future when I do hope to bring a Trade Practices Act which will do a number of things. One, and most important to my mind, it will enable the Provincial Government to act with dispatch on behalf of consumers, and hopefully it will contain provisions that will enable the Provincial Government to mount a class action, disregarding the Chapter 110 of our Statutes, to mount a class action on behalf of consumers should that be necessary. So I think the problems, many of the problems, that the Member for Fort Rouge alluded to in jurisdiction and the operation of the Bureau might be solved to a certain extent by the introduction of new legislation, and of course the staff and what not that would go along with it to do the job properly. I would hope that that new Act would clarify for Manitoba consumers what can be done on their behalf within the provincial jurisdiction.

I noted the study that the Member for Fort Rouge has referred to a couple of times now, a study which was done on a Federal Government Grant as I recall, a study that did examine consumer operations in the province, and I think suggested a number of things which I had thought of but had waited until I got the study until I took any action, and one of the things that we've done just recently in an attempt to make more consumers aware of their rights under the Act, is introduce pamphlets in different languages. Now the member thinks that perhaps distribution of pamphlets is not adequate, and I send this one across to him so that he can read it, but I can assure him that for new citizens in Manitoba these pamphlets I think will make much more clear to them what their positions are in the matter of contracts and other matters.

I have to agree with him that the mechanism of pricing in the marketplace does tend to distort distribution of goods and services throughout the economy, and have to agree with him, too, that in many cases it appears that prices are administered. You know, it appears that way. Proving it of course is a different matter, and I can cite to him if he wishes various cases that have come before the Combines Investigation Branch and they will tell you that identical pricing is no evidence of collusion. So that where do you go from there when the Combines Investigation Branch gives such a bald statement.

But if the marketplace is to be improved, if it can be improved, I think that we certainly could do away with a good deal of consumer protection. The fact of the matter is though, as members opposite are well aware, competition in the marketplace has been decreasing for decades. As a matter of fact you can go back to Theodore Roosevelt who claims there's only one thing wrong with free enterprise and consequently competition, and that is that we have never had it, it's never been there in the first place. And I think that that quotation from Theodore Roosevelt qualifies me for the title that the Member for Fort Rouge bestowed on me, that of economic guru for the Cabinet. I thought when he said guru that he was citing another word and I was about to jump up, but guru was the word.

I know that we have had some discussion, some of it with much feeling, on standardization of products in the marketplace. I find from the debate that's gone on today that I stand between the Member for St. Johns and some members opposite. Complete standardization seems to me to be a goal that would not be easily attained, but on the other hand the great variety of different sizes and styles of products in the marketplace also strikes me as being completely uneconomic, and I see the Member for Roblin shaking his head. He was a storekeeper and I'm sure it must have driven him almost up the wall to have to shelve all those different dry food breakfast cereals, not to mention the toothpaste and everything else and the space that the packaging takes up. So I think that on behalf of consumers there should be perhaps in the marketplace more standardization of sizes and presumably that would reduce costs somewhat. But complete standardization, not feasible in my opinion.

I enjoyed the manner with which the Member for Roblin made his contribution. I sympathize with him and I have to agree that when he speaks of the little man he touches a nerve in me, because one of the reasons, perhaps the reason we're all here, one of the reasons I'm here is that I have always felt that the little man somehow got it when it came to the distribution

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(MR. TURNBULL cont'd) of goods and services in this economy of ours. I have to point out to him that this government has introduced a method that I think is the most effective way of redistributing goods and services throughout the people of the province. And that is a system of tax credit that we have instituted. I can think of no better way for a provincial government to give the purchasing power to those people in the society, in our provincial society that need it, than a system of tax credit that is based on income.

Now I know that the Member for Roblin when the first tax credit plan was introduced was one of those who voted against it, but I suggest to him that if he examines his constituents, if he talks to a lot of them, he will find that those who are really the little people in his riding, that they are benefiting from those tax credit plans. And rather than have the government through this department or any other introduce a great variety of direct subsidies for various commodities in the marketplace I think that this system of a tax credit rebate is the most efficient. It involves the least administration, the least policing and is just simply the most effective.

He asked me what I thought a fair wage was, and I have to say that a fair wage is in fact that wage which would enable an individual to purchase those goods and services that he needs for his existence and his happiness. But, I cannot go any further than that in a definition of the term or of what I mean by a fair wage for the simple reason that as the MGEA and the Government are in the process of negotiation, and I am on the negotiating team, it would just not be politics, to use that word in a non-partisan sense, for me to disclose any more of what I mean by a fair wage to him.

I would like to deal with the allegations that the Member for River Heights made. He tends to come into the House, make statements and then take off, and I don't like to mention that he's not here but I have to, because frankly I don't see much point in carrying on a dialogue or a debate with an individual when he can't stay around to listen to what you've got to say. But if he had been made aware of the remarks that I made yesterday, I did indicate to him that I thought that the best way for this government to approach the problem of inflation and consequently to deal with it and therefore protect the people in our society was for this government, the other provincial governments and the Federal Government to co-operate on developing a system of wage price and profit restraints or controls. Now the elaboration of that can hardly be done by me alone. The problem of inflation is much bigger than this department, much bigger than this government, and if the wages, prices and profits controls or restraint system is to be worked out, I think it would have to be worked out by way of inter-governmental negotiation. But if we are to be faced with continuing double-digit inflation there is only one way to deal with it, if in fact government should attempt to deal with it, and that is through a co-operative approach to restrain these elements of inflation. The further remarks that I had with regard to those of the Member for River Heights I'll keep to myself until some other time when he is here and we can exchange opinion on this matter.

There was a question outstanding on the meat inquiry. I had been asked if there had been any contact between it, the provincial meat enquiry and federal agencies, and I'm informed that there have been communications between the provincial inquiry and the federal inquiry doing much the same work and there has been contact as well, communication as well between the provincial inquiry and that of the Food Prices Review Board.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. MINAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a few comments at this time, particularly with regards to standardization. My honourable colleague from Lakeside indicated about the standardization on the colour of the toothbrush and then went on to say the standardization on the colour of the toilet paper. I'm not too upset about that, but I'd sure hate to see the government standardize on the softness, particularly if it selects the standard that it presently has in this building.

But further to that, one finds it difficult to sit here and listen to the Honourable Minister talk about a gift, the rebate gift. And I heard a good definition of government grant on the local radio station about a month ago, I think it was Allan Willoughby had it, and he said a government grant was money that was taken off the people and given back to them and made it appear that it's a gift. And I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that why take it in the first place. Let the people of the province decide how they want to spend their money, not the government decide on how much they're going to get back and what they can spend it on. I think that's the

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(MR. MINAKER cont'd) basic philosophical difference between the present government and the people on our side. But I would like to ask the Honourable Minister, in his opening remarks the other day he indicated that he thought there should be a percentage differential increase. I think that was his exact words, on any present day increases of salaries. I think he called it a differential percentage. And if I understood him right, and I think I'm quoting him correctly because I wrote it down, he said he didn't necessarily feel there was anything wrong with a 20 percent increase for a \$6,000 a year or \$7,000 per year salaried employee, but he thought it was wrong that a \$25,000 per year income should receive a 20 percent increase. And I would ask the Honourable Minister, and I'm being quite serious here, that I have always understood that when a member of the government, particularly the Member of the Treasury Branch stands up and makes a statement of this type, that he is basically stating the policy of the government and not as an individual in his portfolio, because we heard him answer in his last answers to some of the questions that this problem of inflation and so forth was not just in his department but other departments of the government and they would have to work together. But it's always been my understanding that when a member of the government, particularly a minister, stands up and makes a statement like he did at the start of his presentation of the Estimates, he went on to restraints of price controls or at least controls of price in the marketplace and then he elaborated on this differential price increase, or differential salary increases, spent a bit of time on it, in fact he indicated he would go for a flat increase, maybe \$200 or \$400 or something like this. Would the minister at this time tell me, is that the policy of the government, because it's my understanding when a minister stands up that he is speaking the policy of the government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister for Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, the Member for St. James is asking if that's the policy of the government. I think it is, I think that the First Minister made a statement in Ottawa recently, April 9th - 10th to that effect and I certainly am not citing anything that departs from what he has already indicated in a general way is the policy of this government.

Now if the Member for St. James is saying is that policy always everywhere applied the same way, he knows perfectly well that can't always be done, because the process of negotiation, you know, sometimes will not accept that kind of standardization. But I nonetheless would like to see it applied, and it has been applied where I can make it apply within the areas that I am responsible for.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, if I understand the Minister correctly, he says it would apply when negotiations would allow it to apply. Now one starts to wonder, is the Honourable Minister talking about when the government is dealing with doctors, when the government is dealing with its employees that it employs, or is the Minister also referring to when it's a collective bargaining agent such as unions? Is this what he's saying, that if it's unions it doesn't count, but if it's people that the government employs or has direct control of how much income they can receive, is this what he's saying is then, when that occurs the government will enforce this proposed 20 percent, 10 percent increase or whatever at the lower level but not at the upper level?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I think that the Member for St. James must realize that the negotiation process is a rather delicate one and while you may go into negotiation seeking a particular end, a particular agreement, that doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to come out with it, and that applies to both sides in the negotiating process, if in fact it's going to be negotiation, and that's all I'm saying. I am in fact deferring to that free negotiation process. And if the member wants me to say that this government will impose, you know, a particular wage settlement across the board everywhere without any variations then I have to say to him that I don't think that would be practical. As simple as that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, then I would suggest what the Minister has indicated is that the government is prepared to deliver lip service but not really do anything about it, try and create the headlines and impressions that they're for restraining the salary increases, fight inflation and so forth but in the meantime turn around and talk out of the other side of their mouth. Because, Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether the Honourable Minister is aware

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(MR. MINAKER cont'd) of it but the construction trade this summer may possibly face a strike, it's hard to tell, but people like the plumbers and the electricians and the tin-smiths are looking for some 33 percent increase in the next two years. I don't know whether the Honourable Minister realizes it but the average person, the construction worker like the plumber and electrician these days with his present income is making in the order of some \$17,000 a year. This is assuming that he's working 2,000 hours a year, which is not out of the ordinary, that's somewhere in the order of a 40-hour week or less because they get paid overtime. And they are looking, if the increases come through with what they're requesting, that next year they'll be earning 25,000 a year and the following year they'll be earning \$28,000 a year. And we heard, the Minister just earlier, or the other day in his opening remarks said that he believed that anybody making \$25,000 a year should not get a 20 percent increase.

So I'm asking the honourable minister, where does it apply. Does it apply when it comes to doctors, does it apply when it comes to dentists, does it apply when it comes to employees of the government, because what is happening is that we have certain areas of our professions and so forth that are seeking these increases and all power to them. I have not made a decision one way or the other but the Minister has stood up and said that this is what we believe and we have assumed that this is what the government believes but then turns around and says well we don't really know about that.

So now what we're looking at, if you're involved in getting some repairs done on your house or building a new house, you'll be looking at somewhere in the order of 33 percent or 40 percent increases in labour costs for certain areas, in all the construction field, and I would suggest that these increases alone will result in excesses of \$500 per house without - you know we're talking about a small dwelling. So that when the Minister stands up and makes a statement at the start of his opening remarks that he's for a percentage differential increase depending on salaries, and we'd see what is happening in one area of our economy and then we'd see what the government is doing with the doctors in another area, I would suggest that really is the government being fair, because if a plumber is worth \$13.00 or \$14.00 an hour, that's what they're seeking, or an electrician or a tinsmith, they're looking at 33 percent increases in the next two years. That's what they're seeking. Is it out of the ordinary for doctors or other professions to seek increases? Let's find out from this government, are they talking tongue in cheek to try and gain the sympathy of the people that they are trying to conserve and to become a bit of a right-wing party because all of a sudden they find out that the people of the province are starting to think this way, because that is being hypocritical if they are and I suggest that it's not just a matter of saying now well it depends on negotiation and so on. Let's find out what the policy of this government is and stop trying to confuse the picture and try and point out that you're for trying to control prices and so forth when in actual fact you're not prepared to do anything.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister for Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I would like the Member for St. James to get it straight if he can. When there are to be differential percent increases applied and enforced by the government, clearly that would have to apply to those areas that are within the purview of governmental negotiational authority. If he wants to talk about those people that are outside of the government service, then clearly the government cannot impose those kinds of differential settlements or any other kind of settlement on those workers, be they professionals or working labourers or secretaries or whatever. Now clearly there is a distinction to be made here between those outside, completely outside the government service and those that are within it in one way or another, and surely the Member for St. James can keep clear in his mind the distinction between the two.

I would like to point out, I would like to read what the first Minister had to say at the recent conference in Ottawa. "With respect to wages we believe that equity requires that there be adequate compensation for cost of living and productivity changes without the lines which now occur because of after the fact wage settlement. This would guarantee that workers would not lose ground as a result of cyclical swings. Equity also requires that wage adjustments no longer take the form of simplistic across-the-board percentage increases for workers at widely differing salary levels. All other things equal, it is clearly unfair to award the same percentage increase to a \$6,000 a year clerk and a \$30,000 a year department manager." Is

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(MR. TURNBULL cont'd) . . . that sufficient? And there is no disagreement between the Premier and I on this matter and I think if the Member for St. James will keep straight the distinction I made for him earlier, the whole matter will be clear for him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, just with reference to the last remark that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate and Internal Services made. When he says there is no disagreement between himself and the First Minister on this point, it raises an interesting avenue of inquiry as far as I am concerned, because I would like to know precisely where the First Minister stands on this matter and since he's not in the Chamber I would not be able to ask him directly, but if there's no disagreement between himself and the Minister of Consumer Affairs, then presumably the Minister can answer, because the First Minister has been somewhat equivocal about his position on wage and price controls, particularly on wage restraints, particularly on the role that he expects organized labor to play in the battle against high costs and high prices.

I think that the First Minister, and presumably if he and the Minister of Consumer Affairs are in concert on this, the two honourable gentlemen started out on a plane that they thought was popular and perhaps realistic. Not that those two conditions necessarily are synonymous but in this case I think they thought they had a popular and a realistic approach. They have subsequently found that the labour movement is pretty unhappy, in fact I would suggest unhappy to the point almost of hostility with the kinds of restraints in the wage area that the First Minister has been referring to. So on the basis of what the Minister of Consumer Affairs has just said, I wonder if he can tell us what he envisages as the course that this government and his colleagues are prepared to take with a view to getting hold of the escalation, the escalating spiral of prices in the interest of the consumer and what kind of role he expects all segments of the economy to play in that battle and what kind of role, what kind of responsibility he expects the labour movement to play in that battle.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister for Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I have already indicated that wage settlements must follow the general economy. That has always been the case. As a matter of fact the working people have been having it put to them for years because of this particular process of negotiation. Prices rise, they have to pay those prices and then a year later or two years later or whenever their agreement runs out, if they happen to be lucky enough to be organized, they are then in a position of having to negotiate. And they negotiate almost on what has already occurred and that time lag I think has been detrimental to working people in this province and in this country. Now if the Honourable Member for Fort Garry feels that there should be some other process of negotiating then let him say what it is. I have I think stated fairly clearly the distinction between those negotiations that go on within government's control and those that are outside of the government's control. And I have indicated to him too that I do believe that wages are behind the inflationary spiral. I can say no more on that particular topic unless he's got some other question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SHERMAN: I don't dispute the essential point that the Minister has just made, that is that wages are behind prices in the cost-wage-price-spiral, I think that we're all aware of the statistical documentation for that argument, but the fact remains that wage earners, workers are consumers too. We're all consumers and the Minister through his department and Consumer Bureau is responsible for the welfare of consumers. That includes wage earners, it includes everybody in the whole of society and on the one hand, you know, we're talking here about trying to effect some rationalization, some order, some element of control for the sake of the consumer into the runaway situation that we are faced with in our economy. On the other hand we've got the clear statistical evidence, which I don't dispute, that wages in the labour movement generally are behind, are always in a catch up position vis-a-vis costs and prices.

The Minister asked me what kind of suggestions I have for negotiating our way through or out of that kind of a dilemma. I suggest to him that he is the Minister, this is the Department of Consumer Affairs, the First Minister and others in the front benches are his colleagues, I'm asking him what he suggests, what this government intends to do about putting the brakes on that spiral without expecting, nay demanding even, that the labour movement operate within some pretty stringent constraints itself. If we're going to perpetuate the situation where rather

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(MR. SHERMAN cont'd) large, rather expansive wage increases are invoked and are approved, how is the government going to get a handle on the situation that is imposing such hardships on the consumer today. Surely the Minister and his colleagues are considering this dilemma. They must have some ideas about what they're going to do. Is he sitting down with the Minister of Labour, is he sitting down with the First Minister, is he sitting down with representatives of the labour movement and asking them, seeking from them a consensus as to how to move? Because this problem has to be met or the consumer can't be protected.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister for Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I have very few minutes left, but I will tell him this. That as far as I'm concerned, any agreement on restraints in the marketplace will come first on profits and on prices and then if those can be achieved, on wages, and wages will be last if there's to be restraints imposed, for the reasons that I've indicated to him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member has one minute. Is it better if he is recognized during the next meeting of committee or does he wish to proceed?

MR. SHERMAN: I think it would be infinitely better if I were recognized at the next meeting of the committee, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GREEN: Fine. Committee rise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

MR. GREEN: I would ask the Chairman to remember that it was the Member for Fort Garry that is on the floor.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for St. Vital that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I gather that some of the members feel that nothing should be done to reduce the quality of the debate that we've had up until now, therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Fort Garry, that the House do now adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried and House accordingly adjourned until 2:30 Monday afternoon.