

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 22, 1979

Time: 2:30 p.m.

SUPPLY — MUNICIPAL AND URBAN AFFAIRS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Come to order. We're dealing with Resolution 94. 3.(d)—pass—the Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, when we were just concluding at noon, I think I'd asked most of the specific questions I wanted to raise, and I would like, perhaps, to make a more general comment about the formula of block funding that's been adopted by the government. As I've gone through the examination of these Estimates, and listened to the Minister, I detect what I believe to be a fundamental flaw in the approach that's being adopted, that the province has taken the position that simply by folding in all of the different conditional and grant programs into one block of money and allowing the municipality to make its own decisions on its own priorities, that that somehow will be sufficient to serve the needs of the City of Winnipeg, which at this stage in time encompasses close to 60 percent of the province. I would agree only in part with that thesis. You know, block funding is useful as a technique of sharing revenue for the operational day-by-day assistance and decisions that local government has to make. But I think that where it breaks down fundamentally is in the ability of the City of Winnipeg to acquire and support the kind of longer term investments, public work infrastructures and public service facilities, that are absolutely essential if the city is going to survive. And it is not correct for the province to absolve itself of responsibility in that area by saying "Well, we've given the block fund." Because I would say that the block funding should be also accompanied by a very specific commitment by the province in the way of an Urban Capital Fund or Urban Development Fund — whatever it may be — mainly because the city is so critical to provincial needs. And it is not just another isolated island, but is a very centre point to the provincial economy and certainly, as the city goes, oftentimes goes the rest of the province.

This is particularly true when you take the fact that there are areas of responsibility which must be shared by the province, transportation being a primary example of that, where they can't simply transfer the obligations and responsibilities to the municipalities and say "Now it's your job, you go ahead and do it." They don't do that for the rural municipalities. They do accept a full sharing and partnership in the supply of transportation systems. And they seem to be withdrawing that for the City of Winnipeg.

Now let me illustrate what I mean, because I think we're coming up to some very critical decision points in the City of Winnipeg, and if the province is taking a position of benign neglect — and I guess that's really about the best way of describing it — then the city is going to be totally hamstrung in its ability to maintain any kind of progress.

And I will pick an area which is well-known to the Minister himself, because I would suggest that in the area of urban transportation he is one of the people in the province who, by his background in city government, would know as much or more about it than most people. And while he was chairman of the Public Works Committee of city council, I think the city was making some very important steps towards developing an alternative system of public transit in the City of Winnipeg, which was going to be of real benefit not just in terms of the movement of people, but certainly in the whole area of energy conservation. If I understand the plan correctly, that the Minister and his colleagues at that time put together, was that there — to use the jargon, I guess, of the engineers — it had to be a multi-moduled network that would have within it two or three different kinds of transportation systems, each of them connected.

So that in the case of the substantial growth in the southern part of the city — southern, southwest, east part, St. Vital-Fort Garry area — we had to develop systems that would try to offset the major automobile usage on Pembina Highway and on St. Mary's Road. Because the continuous extension of arterial roads in those areas was simply going to end up in massive traffic snarls, as it already has along the Pembina strip, but also provide inordinate burdens in the downtown area for parking and absorption of all those cars.

Now, in order for that to work, the plan, as I understood it, was to have a proper collector

system in the suburban areas, such as the dial-a-bus; that that collecting system would then be tied into a fairly high-speed system such as the southwest transit corridor; and then once you got to your destination point in the downtown, there would then be a downtown circulation system which is called Dash. And I always saw those three components — the Dash system, the southwest corridor and the dial-a-bus system — as one and the same thing, that they were all designed both to provide an alternative in order to encourage the transfer of people from automobile usage to public transit, because it was providing what was absolutely necessary, which was convenience. I think that you'll find in most transportation studies that it's not necessarily just cost that affects usage, it is convenience, the amount of time that one has to wait for transportation. If it's a matter of choosing between a public system that gets you downtown in a half-an-hour and close to your office building, there's usually about a ten or fifteen minute time leeway that people will accept. If it goes beyond that, then they'll use their car.

Well, I thought that was a pretty good idea. And it was interesting, Mr. Chairman, that it was supported primarily by a series of public grants from the provincial government in different ways and means, including the study for the southwest corridor. What's happening now is that that system is substantially being dismantled. The steps forward that were made in the early and mid-1970's by the City of Winnipeg are now being dismantled primarily because of cost results. The dial-a-bus has been abandoned and taken down. The Dash system, I think, is on its last legs. I think all the signs of it will be eliminated by city council. They've increased the fare — in fact they've added a fare. They've certainly increased the headway time between bus stops. Which means that they're setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy, that the Dash system seems to have received its death sentence and will be eliminated. And the southwest corridor system has been shelved. So all those very progressive steps that were made are now put in abeyance, at best, and certainly eliminated at worst. So we're back where we were ten years ago, two steps forward has been accompanied by five steps backwards.

The reason for it is that there simply at this stage, in this age of restraint, doesn't seem to be anybody prepared to support the continuation or elaboration of that system. And yet, it is not something that I think can be washed away by saying, "Well, if the City of Winnipeg could do those things, there's enough money, they've got the block grant". I think the Minister knows that that's not true, that the block grant is just sufficient for keeping up with current needs, not with developing new approaches to it. Now as a consequence, I think two things are happening, (1) they come very much within the provincial jurisdiction that I don't think the province can absolve itself of.

One, is in the area of energy usage and conservation, and we know that the biggest consumer of energy resources in this province is automobiles, and it is a priority of this government, as I've understood it from the day it was elected, that it was trying to reduce the consumption of energy. And the Minister of Finance, Mr. Craik, made many eloquent speeches when he was in Opposition about the requirement to develop — semi-eloquent speeches, they weren't that eloquent — learned speeches, about the need for energy conservation, and it would seem to me that the present Minister of Urban Affairs, when he was a councillor, also was prone to that position, and made several statements on it. And it was a provincial responsibility to do it. So here we have an area which is very clearly defined as a provincial responsibility, and we have backed right out of that kind of commitment.

The second area is that the province very legitimately has a responsibility for the arterial roads that even run through the cities, and now they are folding that kind of grant system into the block grants so it kind of gets lost in the shuffle. It's very similar to what the Minister of Health was doing with the Health grants from the Federal Government, but as a result it's not being particularly committed to that kind of transportation usage and, in fact, what the Minister's going to be faced with is substantial pressures upon the maintenance of those Provincial Trunk Highway commitments, Trans-Canada, Highway 75 and so forth.

So here is a very clear indication about how the block funding system has broken down as far as its ability to enable the City of Winnipeg to do some degree of anticipation in response to major concerns in transportation and I think, Mr. Chairman, that that really is the flaw in the whole approach. I'm not against block funding as a technique for supporting the municipality in terms of its ongoing, day-by-day operational maintenance. I think that makes good sense because they should be allowed to make discretionary choices within the universe of that budget, but when it comes to very critical areas, like transportation, which are long term investments, heavy capital investments, and do require some degree of testing because they are going to be experimental and they're going to be costly during those experimental periods, I think the province has a direct responsibility for sharing it under a very specified funding program, and that is one of the commitments, and I would further suggest that, if they don't do that, they are going to substantially weaken the capacity of the City of Winnipeg to be an efficient urban area, to be an efficient urban system and that will have all kinds of repercussions in terms of economic growth and residential

settlement and everything else. If the transportation system snarls, breaks down, if energy consumption becomes a major problem then you're going to find yourself in a jackpot that you can't get out of.

Mr. Chairman, I would really suggest that the kind of perambulations we seem to be into, all these review committees and everything else, really are a waste of time right now, that you wouldn't have to have long, extended discussions, and take up all the time of your valuable staff in sitting down with City officials pondering over the fine lines if, in fact, the province would make a very specific commitment to some form of urban development capital assistance that may limit itself to transportation investments or infrastructure things like sewer and water and simply say that we'll use our capital borrowing power over a period of time to allow the city to undertake these kinds of longer term initiatives and investments. If we don't do that, then I think that we're really condemning the city to an impossible situation that it will never catch up because it simply doesn't have the financial resources to do so.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I — with respect to the concept, I want to point out to the Member for Fort Rouge that upon the announcement of the concept of block funding, members of council indicated, including the Deputy Mayor of the City that the concept was one which the city had been asking for and seeking for many years and was extremely pleased that this concept had been introduced, because now, within that block funding grant, they could proceed with projects according to the priorities of City Council, according to the priorities of the people who elected them, and I notice that the member referred to the traffic snarl on Pembina Highway and I referred to this earlier, the other evening, and I — perhaps the Member for Fort Rouge could read Hansard from that evening, where we had quite a discussion with the Member for Inkster about the interference of the previous provincial governments in the priorities of the City of Winnipeg when they refused to approve the extension of the Fort Garry-St. Vital bridge project from Pembina Highway to Waverley. And the fact that they didn't and made a conditional grant on a number of other routes that were not of the highest priority in the city, has contributed to the traffic snarl on Pembina Highway which he has referred to.

I have indicated, Mr. Chairman, that in establishing the block fund grant of +30 million for 1979, that we are committed to reviewing the amount of the block fund grant to the city during the course of this year in light of future capital requirements of the city in their five-year capital development program and whether or not, in the light of that program the base amount of the +30 million grant should be increased. I have also indicated to them that the province, through the review of the Winnipeg Development Plan, is involved in the review of the total development of the city, including transportation planning. And this is an area which again when it is, when that final report is received and dealt with by the city and by the province, I think makes the whole area of block funding grant again subject to review in the light of the long range future prospects and needs of the city of Winnipeg.

I note that he's referred to the southwestern transit study and that particular corridor, and I am familiar with that inasmuch as I was involved in City Council and the development of the whole concept of it. And this year, in considering that matter in the City of Winnipeg's budget. My understanding is that that project was just not included. I'm sure that it will continue to be considered by the city in the Development Plan Review and Transportation Planning and in their five-year capital development program.

In my own personal view, it's something that will have to be considered by the City of Winnipeg as the energy situation develops. And you could get into a long discussion about the merits of public transit and the advantages to a large metropolitan city that a public transit system has, but it certainly in my view is a concept that could be developed towards the southwest and then easterly into Transcona and northwesterly into the northwest section of the city.

I would remind the Member for Fort Rouge that in December of 1977, the Mayor of the City of Winnipeg and myself, and a couple of other Councillors went to Ottawa to meet with Mr. Oulette because we remembered, as we had during the past three years, the promises of the present Liberal Government in the spring election of 1974 towards assistance for public transit and he, no doubt, will concede that those promises for support for urban public transit systems — the purchases of buses, innovative programs, etc. — was completely ignored and unfulfilled during the past five years, since the election of 1974.

He may say that the Urban Transportation Assistance Program was developed as a policy to fulfill that requirement, but I say to him that the money allocated under the Urban Transportation Assistance Program merely used the moneys which were available under the Rail Relocation and . . . Crossing Funds put them into one pot and his federal government described that program as encompassing a tremendous range of projects, which was going to assist urban transportation problems. And the amount of money is simply and completely insufficient in order to provide any

real contribution towards the development of public transit systems.

I, however, Mr. Chairman, want to say that I regard the development of public transit systems, particularly in a large metropolitan area, as extremely important to the development of the city. We are involved, through the development plan review, in this area and will be continuing to meet with the city to review the amount of funding that will be necessary for City Council to fulfill the needs of the City of Winnipeg.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, the answer given by the Minister I think might be considered the proper one, but I don't find it particularly useful from the point of view of the sort of needs that are being expressed. I have a distinct feeling of that old Mexican song called "Manana" that somehow we'll fix the roof tomorrow because it's not going to rain. We really are putting a lot of things off much further down the road than we really should be and in the meantime you are beginning to accumulate some very serious problems, as he again knows quite full well. The Pembina Avenue strip is already overcapacity. It's not a matter of waiting it for it to become a problem; it is already running at higher volume than it was built for and unless something substantial is done to provide an alternative useage, say through the corridor, then somebody is going to start talking about putting double lanes down there just simply to handle the flow. Now, that's not something that's going to wait development plan reviews and new reviews of Capital, because there is always a time lag, even in construction; that is of three or four years.

So if I was to add up quickly the prognosis of the Minister as to when the Province and the City might be a position to make some decisions, we're talking anywhere from six to eight years on something happening. Within that six to eight years the growth pattern, if you look not at the development plan review but the actual growth pattern, the actual increment of subdivisions and population being added in that corridor, it is going up at about . . . I think last year there was over 1,000 new units built in that quadrant, in that, well one Community Committee area of Fort Garry-St. Norbert alone, and if you add up what happens in between places you are probably talking about 1,500 additional households in one year.

Now, let's add up some numbers quickly, just taking that one side. If it's six to eight years, we're talking about 8,000 to 10,000 additional families, maybe with two people working. We're probably talking of an increased traffic load of 10,000 to 15,000 road trips daily. Now does the Minister really think that the present system, without any substantial improvement is going to be able to handle that load? We know it won't. It's just impossible, and yet that's the kind of time gap that we're putting on any decision making or anything happening. I'm just doing it quickly. I don't pretend those are precise figures, but I think they're pretty much within the ballpark of what is actually happening. We're talking about a substantial increment of useage of road to home trips in that south-west corner. And then you could take the same numbers and add them up in the St. Vital side, again with nothing being done, and you're all of a sudden into very substantial commitments of what do you do.

Now, my point is that I would really urge the Minister not to fool around and wait any longer. I don't think we can afford to go through all these perambulations. I think the first starting point would be to work out, between he and his counterparts in the City level, both the proper mechanism for handling the problem and also looking at the Capital commitments that will be required.

You could take a look, for example, at other provinces. The Province of British Columbia has just finished establishing a joint transit authority with the City of Vancouver and with the Greater Vancouver Regional District. There again, it's something that they will combine efforts and share costs. The Province of Alberta has announced a massive Capital program for public transit — the development of the two LRT systems in the two major cities, plus substantial other assistance being done on a joint basis. The Province of Saskatchewan has done the same thing in their cities. Ontario has set up its own urban transit corporation where it has undertaken the full development of new high speed systems, as well as they were able to, and they are into major debates on those areas. Quebec has done the same thing.

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that most of the major provinces that have large urban areas within them have responded with some degree of quickness, or if not quickness at least, at this point in time, have responded with a degree of urgency that we haven't, and we're going to end up with an awful lot of people stacked up a couple of cars deep on all those streets, while we're doing these reviews and discussions and reassessments and all the rest of it. And that's why I would urge the Minister to take more specific action right now, and that if it requires setting up a, whether it's a joint authority or a joint planning committee and both sides saying how much Capital do w think we have got available over the next two or three years, and start making those decisions now.

I don't think he has to wait for the Development Plan Review. He knows what the requirements are. He, in fact, established those requirements four years ago when he was Chairman of Public

Works. So all we're simply doing is wasting time at this particular point, and to use the adage, Mr. Chairman, that I'm sure his Premier used: "When you waste time, you also waste money." And if this government is going to take some pride in its management abilities, it's not managing very well right now in this particular area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I thank the member for his comments and his concerns about the southwest rapid transit corridor, for which I share support with him. I wonder, if he would suggest, in view of the uncertainties that he may have in part contributed to over the Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass, in view of the fact we have submitted the southwest transit corridor to the federal government in order to determine whether it would be an eligible project under the UTAP funds, whether he would suggest that the +7.6 million presently allocated towards the Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass be reallocated for the southwest rapid transit corridor?

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, if we're reversing roles for the moment I'd be quite happy to answer that. Hopefully, to be in the position to reverse those roles in a more extended way in a short time, but I don't think it's a matter of what the mathematicians would call a zero sum game. I don't think you eliminate one and replace it with the other. In fact, I pointed out to the minister that even by his own description of the concept which was, I thought, kind of imaginative, where in fact there should be public transit corridors established throughout the City, that the best thing that could happen to fulfil that would be the relocation of the railroads. If you eliminated the CPR railroads you would have a major corridor for a public transit strip that would run from the central part of the City out westward and to the north, and it would be a very major asset, in fact take some of the pressure off all the traffic routes running into the western portion of the City. I think what we should be looking at is how do we open up different corridors, and not get into the very expensive business of having to reclaim developed land for roadways, to use existing railway corridors for those kinds of purposes, which is certainly what's been happening in cities like Calgary. So I would say that I don't see the relocation as a replacement to the southwest corridor; I see them as ultimately being part of the same kind of package. Now how you begin allocating the funds on that I guess I could go back to my earlier point, that I think we simply can't play this a little of a shell game and say it's the federal money that has got the commitments here and the municipality has commitments here because so far, Mr. Chairman, I haven't heard of any additional commitments from the Provincial Government in any of these programs. All they're simply doing is shifting around digits on the transfer funds that they take from the feds or give to the municipalities, but they're not really putting additional dollars into the pot on the part of the province. And that's what's really required.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the minister a number of questions. One comment that was made about grants to municipalities, etc., well perhaps I should leave that for later if that's not appropriate here — about general municipal grants. This would not be appropriate here so I'll leave that comment.

I wanted to ask the minister again, in view of some very serious reports that have appeared in the press, and I'm now going back to last October.

MR. MERCIER: We're on block funding here.

MR. DOERN: Yes, I believe this is related to block funding because I assume that the block funding is used for a purpose, and I assume that that purpose is to rectify certain problems and have some effect on the growth and the directions of the City of Winnipeg. I would like to ask the minister, in relation to his block funding concept, which is his baby, whether he thinks that he is giving the City the necessary tools and the necessary means to tackle very serious urban problems, and I refer to last fall a Winnipeg Development Plan Review came out and indicated things like this, and I'm quoting from an article by Susan Ruttan in the Tribune, "A 38 percent decline in the population in Winnipeg's core area between 1941 and 1976, 180 percent population increase in the suburbs, a large stock of older, poor quality housing in the inner City, social and racial problems, lack of policy or direction by City officials on the housing problem." I simply ask him in general, that given those serious problems, and he may not either recognize them or he may not agree with the findings of this report. He may say that the percentages are wrong or the problems aren't that serious, etc., but I assume that the minister would agree that there are in fact very serious fundamental

problems in terms of the City of Winnipeg, and I just ask him whether he feels that by providing the City with the kind of grant that they have, whether he feels that once having passed that money across the table his responsibility ends?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to repeat discussions that have gone on all today and yesterday. I would refer the member to Hansard of the proceedings earlier today, and today wherein we dealt with this problem.

MR. DOERN: I think I have to ask the minister for some comment. I have to say to him, does he feel any responsibility toward the City of Winnipeg over and above the dispensing of funds? Does he intend as minister, he's in a fairly powerful position, to represent the City in Cabinet and to help, help them wrestle with these problems or is it simply a case of transferring funds and then waiting until next year to inform the City of how many more dollars they will get? Are you going to have an ongoing urban program and policy?

MR. MERCIER: I would ask the member again to read Hansard, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DOERN: I have heard the answers of the minister, and I gather that then I will summarize his position. That it will be a hands-off position. That it will be a position whereby the minister sits back in his office and waits for correspondence or delegations, that he's not going to initiate any programs; he is only going to on occasion respond to programs, and therefore I regard that as either a lack of urban policy, no urban policy or a do-nothing program. I'd like to ask the minister this — he referred to this just a short while ago — the question of the dissatisfaction on the part of council with the +30 million base figure. He indicated in the Tribune January 30th that he was willing to reconsider the +30 million base figure, and a request from one councillor that the Transit System and Convention Centre deficits be excluded from the block grant. Can the minister report on any meetings that he had with the City in relation to these problems?

MR. MERCIER: I've already done so, Mr. Chairman, and he can read Hansard.

MR. DOERN: I would ask the minister whether he can hold out any hope to the taxpayers about the easing by the Province, of increases in the Education Foundation Grants? This is one of the major components and I believe that he has — the government has intimated that there's going to be some relief in that area and he's says it's going to be eased by the province. I mean is he going to give us any indication today that there's some tax relief . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MERCIER: I've already discussed that, Mr. Chairman, and I would ask him again to read Hansard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Well, we'll see whether we get any comments at all from the Minister today. I would like to know whether the Minister has made any comments about property tax rebates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MERCIER: We're on block funding.

MR. DOERN: I am asking him whether he has made any comments on property tax rebates.

MR. MERCIER: He's out of order, Mr. Chairman, we're on block funding.

MR. DOERN: Well, it isn't out of order, Mr. Chairman. Block funding is related to the municipal taxation field and relief for the taxpayers comes about by the amount of money that the province gives to the City of Winnipeg.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wonder if I could ask for guidance here. Was that the area we dealt with under Grants to Municipalities in Lieu of Taxes, Item 3.(c)?

A MEMBER: I doubt that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: My apologies. The Member for Elmwood

MR. DOERN: I want to say this to the minister that for the past two years, his government has frozen the property tax rebate scheme. I assume it's frozen this year. It was frozen last year and the result is that there are property tax increases in the City of Winnipeg ranging from +20 to +57 per house and I'm saying that this ss as a result of block funding, it's a result of block funding, it's a result of the services and the financial requirements of the city and I'm asking the minister whether he is holding out any hope to the city that in addition to block funding, that there's going to be educational tax relief.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I've already made some comment on that, a reference to it in the Throne Speech and it's an item that comes up in the Department of Finance.

MR. DOERN: But you, yourself, don't have anything to comment? Well, I'll try one item where maybe the minister will say something.

MR. MERCIER: Well, if you'd been here, you would have heard. If you prefer not to come into the committee, that's your problem, not mine. I'm not going to waste the valuable time of Members of the Committee, in repeating and repeating and repeating.

MR. DOERN: Are you sitting in on the Health Committee?

MR. MERCIER: No, I'm not, I'm right here.

MR. MERCIER: Well, make your choice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order please.

MR. MERCIER: Well, that's why they have Hansard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Item 3.(d) — the Member for Elmwood

MR. DOERN: I would like to ask the minister about the Assiniboine Park and Zoo. I wonder if he could indicate what the annual operating cost of that facility is?

MR. MERCIER: It goes up from year to year.

MR. DOERN: Well, I'd like a precise figure.

MR. MERCIER: Which year?

MR. DOERN: The last operating fiscal year.

MR. MERCIER: +2,813,886 is the figure we have for the operating cost last year.

MR. DOERN: Is that operating or does that include capital?

MR. MERCIER: Just operating.

MR. DOERN: Operating. That was paid for 100 percent by the province, is that correct?

MR. MERCIER: Right.

MR. DOERN: Right. And so, now, the province has decided to throw that into the package under block funding and you know, I have to say to the minister, you know, I recall when we sat on opposite sides of the table in provincial and city jurisdictions and so on that I regarded the decision of our government to take over that park as a very progressive step and one that was highly beneficial to the citizens of Winnipeg because I believe it is, in fact, a provincial park and that it is used by people from the City of Winnipeg and the entire Province of Manitoba as well as a very large

number of tourists. Now the minister has thrown that into the block grant and the city, as a result, is going to be faced with operating costs approaching 3 million and soon to pass that figure. I wonder when the minister made that decision, when he was considering what would comprise the block funding, whether he had any discussions, were there discussions with the city delegation about what components might be included in that base figure, or was that simply a decision and then the details were passed on?

MR. MERCIER: I've given members opposite a copy of my letter to the City of Winnipeg which outlined the program. Since then, the city and province have mutually agreed upon the determination of the agreement and the province has waived approximately +1 million in capital cost improvements to the Assiniboine Park Zoo.

MR. DOERN: I'm asking the minister another question. I'm just saying to him when he arrived at the magic figure of 30 million, were there discussions with the city in terms of what would be contained in that figure, or what would be comprised in that figure, or did he simply decide on a general figure, what would the components be, and then sent it on to the city? Was there any dialogue before or was it simply a policy decision and then it was transmitted to the city and then the city responded?

MR. MERCIER: It was a policy decision, decided upon and transmitted to the city.

MR. DOERN: And, now is it true to say that the city is dissatisfied with those arrangements and that it is coming back to the province and asking that certain figures included in certain programs included be broken out?

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll repeat what I've said on numerous times in the absence of the Member for Elmwood that the City of Winnipeg indicated that the amount of block funding for this year was sufficient and that they requested the government to review the base amount for future years, that they liked the concept and we've agreed to review the amount during this year with the City before arriving at a figure for next year.

MR. DOERN: Is the minister saying that the program is now in place and that there will be no revisions of it for 12 months?

MR. MERCIER: There will be no revisions in it for this fiscal year, that's correct we will review it with the city for forthcoming years as they requested. They didn't request revisions for this year.

MR. DOERN: There's no opportunity then to change any of the basic . . .

MR. MERCIER: There was no request by the city to revise it this year.

MR. DOERN: Oh, there hasn't been. I see. Well, then these are erroneous press reports, I gather, indicating that there was dissatisfaction with what was included and that there's been statements in the press indicating that some councillors were dissatisfied with the Convention Centre being included and transit deficits. But the minister doesn't recognize that, or is he saying that those were not formal requests? Those are just observations by members of council.

MR. MERCIER: I can only assume that.

MR. DOERN: And those are not formal, there has been no formal request by the City to change the basic block funding at this time.

MR. MERCIER: For this year, no.

MR. DOERN: I would then like to switch to the McGregor-Sherbrook overpass and ask the minister if he could . . .

MR. MERCIER: This is block funding.

MR. DOERN: I see, okay. Where would that come into then, because I just heard you discussing it with the Member for Fort Rouge in regard to UTAP funds. How did that get in there?

MR. MERCIER: An error in procedure.

MR. DOERN: I'd like to know where it logically falls in the page here. Otherwise, I'd like to discuss it right now.

MR. MERCIER: There is no place where it logically falls.

MR. DOERN: Perhaps, I can make a point or two now. I have to say, first of all, I prefer to disagree with the minister, which is natural and logical, but in this case, I have to disagree with my friend from Fort Rouge, and I just wanted to make a comment on his actions and then ask the minister . . .

A MEMBER: When his estimates come up, why don't you . . .

MR. DOERN: I will. My problem there is that I anticipate a Clark government, and I then have to wait for a Clark government to be replaced by another Liberal government, at which time my honourable friend will be a federal Cabinet Minister. So it's at least a decade away, and I really can't wait that long.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Fort Rouge's Estimates come up on Page 3, Item (4)(b).

MR. DOERN: 3.(4)(b)? This can only be bad news. "Leader of the second Opposition Party ."

I wanted to ask for sort of an up-to-the-minute recap on the McGregor-Sherbrook Overpass vis-a-vis the province. Now, in so doing, I have to say to the Member for Fort Rouge that I deplore his actions in this particular sequence of events, that I believe that there is a long-standing need within the city of Winnipeg for the McGregor-Sherbrook Overpass. I believe that's been well-documented and well-substantiated and that although there is some opposition to it, and although there are residents who oppose it — this is of course always a problem for any government, wherever you build a road, wherever you build a bridge, somebody doesn't like it, and so therefore I am not overly sensitive to the fact that there has been a delegation opposing it because if there has been a delegation opposing it, I believe that if a meeting were held in terms of all of those who support this requirement, you would probably have ten times, or a great deal more than that, number of supporters coming forth. I am somewhat familiar, Mr. Chairman, with the requirements of the north end of the city because I was born there and lived there until I was 17 years old.

My colleague, soon to be departed Member for Fort Rouge, from this political world, not from this world but this political world, also says he was born in the north-end, and we've had some interesting talks about that before. At any rate, I say that in terms of this project, this has been desired and required by the citizens of north Winnipeg and central Winnipeg for decades, and all of this talk of rail relocation is really, to a large extent, in my judgment, pie in the sky. It's a possibility, it's a logical possibility, it's technically possible, but I don't know whether we're going to live to see it. And the one thing that I say is that unfortunately, when the Member for Fort Rouge got involved in this particular issue, I believe that the price of his involvement has been +4 million, that it has cost provincial and city taxpayers +4 million. Now, I've heard of the +6 million man, but this is the member with the +4 million nose, and I believe that he is going to have to defend his action, as I would defend my position, but he will have to defend his action as to the cost of that particular project.

So I would like to say to the Minister, can he give us an up-to-the-minute report on the negotiations because every day I pick up the paper and read the latest, either from the Member for Fort Rouge or the Minister for Manitoba, the Honourable John Reid, who is making announcements every day, and the latest announcement, which came in today's paper was that UTAP funds could not be held back and that it was impossible for the government to withhold the +7.6 million in UTAP funding, even if we missed the deadline.

So could the Minister, for the benefit of the committee and myself in particular, outline where those negotiations are, and also what the province's position is on that issue.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I hate to say it again but we went into a very detailed discussion of this project earlier today, and rather than repeat at least 40 minutes of discussion, it really will be in Hansard reporting on discussions earlier today. We went into a great deal of detail and if the member could review that in Hansard and still have any questions, I'd be glad to answer them.

MR. DOERN: Then I would ask the Minister whether he could provide us with draft copies of Hansard

by Monday, because this official record may be another week to ten days away. THE DEPARTMENT MAY BE OVER. I just ask him right now whether he can assure us that he could provide us with, say, all the draft copies, if not finished, the draft copies of the debates in this committee, because there's been continual references made, the last few days to read Hansard, etc., read Hansard, read Hansard, and there's people coming and going as you can see. I ask him whether he could provide our Caucus and the Member for Fort Rouge with copies of what has taken place to date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the members of the committee, I'm informed that the copies of Hansard will be available on Monday. I would also at this time like to caution members of committee about constant repetition. The problem of whether members have been here during the time of discussion or not, I don't know whether they apply to the committee as such. My only concern is about the area of repetition. The Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: I would just ask the Minister then, he'll give us that assurance, and I assume that includes today's proceedings as well. Today's will be available Monday.

MR. MERCIER: I can't give the assurance, Mr. Chairman. I believe you, after consultation with the Clerk and the reporter are giving the advice that Hansard of today's proceedings will be available on Monday at the opening of Session that day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: he Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: I'm not aware of other Hansards from this Committee, like yesterday and so on, being made available yet. I'm talking about all of them including today's.

MR. MERCIER: I don't think they'd print today's before yesterday's.

MR. DOERN: Yes, I assumed that. I'm talking about rough drafts.

MR. MERCIER: This will be the formal Hansard report.

MR. DOERN: The formal Hansard report. And I'm just saying if this formal report is not ready Monday, could we have the rough draft?

MR. CHAIRMAN: : I am informed, to the members of the committee that rough drafts cannot be asked for from the Minister. They have to be asked for from the Speaker of the House. The Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Well, perhaps we'll do that, then Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3.(d)—pass; 3.(e)—pass; Resolution — the Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Well, again, could I have an explanation of 3.(e). We now have block funding which includes Transit grants and now we have the item here. Is this covering transportation systems outside of the City of Winnipeg or is there still some money left in here for Winnipeg itself?

MR. MERCIER: These are in Brandon, Flin Flon and Thompson.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3.(e)—pass; Resolution 94 Resolve that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$45,763,300 for Municipal and Urban Affairs, Municipal Budget and Finance— pass; Resolution 95 (4)(a) Salaries—pass; (4)(b)—pass — the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Yes, I wonder if the Minister would take a few moments to explain to us what his intentions are with respect to assessment given the fact that we have had the court case in Dauphin involving assessment and where we find ourselves in a very awkward position at the present time and beyond that whether there is any thought in proceeding further to correct other anomalies in the assessment system that are obvious, I'm sure, to all of us here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, the Dauphin case of which I do not yet have a transcript of

the judgment but expect to receive it pretty shortly is only one indication of the difficulties there are in assessment. If this committee were meeting two or three from now, I believe I would be in a position to announce the position we wish to take in regard to assessment. We have indicated previously, we've had a sub-committee of Cabinet reviewing this problem area since last fall and are in the process of making recommendations to my colleagues in Cabinet so I hope within the next two or three weeks we'll be in a position to make an announcement to deal with this area.

MR. USKIW: I'm wondering the Minister can give us the options of action that he foresees. That is as between — now I don't even know if an appeal is still open to the Minister on the original case or have we passed limitation?

MR. MERCIER: No appeal.

MR. USKIW: There is no appeal. That's been decided. So, the question then is what do we do about our situation in essence.

MR. MERCIER: Right.

MR. USKIW: I see. Would the Minister then consider given that he recognizes that there are a number of problems in the assessment system whether it wouldn't be advisable to either look at it from the point of view of the legislature as a whole involving all parties or perhaps even a commission that would look at the assessment field and to bring down some recommendations so that we might have some fairly indepth studies done of the assessment system and the alternatives open to us?

MR. MERCIER: I believe, Mr. Chairman, that those are the two alternatives, a legislative committee or an independent commission. It is a very involved complex subject and that might indicate my own personal view but we hope to resolve that in the next few weeks.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I think it's fair to say that probably the concerns are on both sides. I don't think it's an ideological question as such.

MR. MERCIER: No, Mr. Chairman, I'm in total agreement with the member. As he well knows, union of Manitoba Municipalities, the City of Winnipeg, Urban Association and many individuals now realize the problems and the necessity of dealing with this particular subject and I don't really believe that it is one in which there is political differences at this point in time. There may eventually be in the kinds of changes that are made, but certainly I think it's recognized by everybody, I'm sure by all members of the legislature now, that it is a problem which has to be dealt with.

MR. USKIW: That's reasonable, Mr. Chairman to leave it at that point. I would like to ask the Minister, however, whether there has been any improvement with respect to the level of assessment services that we are able to provide to municipalities who, as I recall it, have been several years behind in reassessment which causes a great deal of difficulty when the assessments do finally come around because of the big leaps in values and so on.

MR. MERCIER: No, there's been no change in the level of service.

MR. USKIW: What would the backlog be, Mr. Chairman? How far behind are we in a given situation.

MR. MERCIER: About 100 municipalities.

MR. USKIW: And how far are they in arrears as far as assessment is concerned?

MR. MERCIER: About 100 municipalities behind the statutory five year period.

MR. USKIW: Is the Minister then contemplating perhaps beefing up his assessment branch in order to catch up with that situation?

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, one of the difficulties is the time lag that is required to hire and train an assessor. What I would like to see looked at in a review of assessment are other

means of maintaining records up to date through perhaps computerized operations through the Land Titles Offices and that sort of method.

MR. USKIW: Are these alternative procedures studied, are they being studied, are they in limbo?

MR. MERCIER: They are being looked at, some other jurisdictions have been addressing themselves to that and they are being reviewed by our department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Minnedosa.

MR. DAVID BLAKE: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry I missed the other article where I probably should have raised this although it's not that important an item and the Minister could probably give me some answer now that he has the assessment people here. I'm wondering what direction is given to the assessment branches that we have throughout the province on providing information to people in the, say the real estate field, that are looking for parcels of land, for example, where they might want to know cultivated acreage and various other information relating to figures that are necessary to them in lying their trade and making their livelihood. Is there any direction from the department as to what information will become available to them, or what information they must seek ministerial authority for the assessment branch to provide?

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, what information is available is in the Municipal Office on the assessment roll. That is the only information which they are entitled to get.

MR. BLAKE: What information would this provide them on a parcel of land for example in the rural area?

MR. MERCIER: Well, that's basically the assessment of the land, of the buildings, the acreage. . .

MR. BLAKE: It would include cultivated acreage?

MR. MERCIER: Well, no, it wouldn't say whether it's cultivated. It would say what the acreage is.

MR. BLAKE: It would seem that it's been a general practice to provide cultivated acreage and it seems now that this is not the case, that this has to be pried out of the Assessment Offices with a crowbar. I just wondered if there had been some change in direction to the municipal officers?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I haven't had this problem raised with me before. My understanding of that is the only information that's made available and the assessors are working for the municipalities. That's for whom we cover about 75 percent of our cost and that's where the responsibility lies and I don't believe the practice is to get involved in giving out more information than that.

MR. BLAKE: It would seem that we may have a particular problem then with one Municipal Office because it appears that one real estate agent is provided with all the information that he requires such as cultivated acreage and various other things that they require to know whereas another one isn't and he has to provide everything in a written form and then doesn't get it in all cases. He's had to write to the department seeking some clarification on what the guidelines were for the particular head of the assessment branch to provide the information.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, perhaps the member could advise me of the location and the assessment office in question and we can review the practice in that area.

MR. BLAKE: I'll do that, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin.

MR. J. WALLY MCKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, the Dauphin case, the Queen's Bench decision, some tell me it was an oral decision, it wasn't a written decision by the judge.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I've been asking for some time when we were going to get the transcript. I'm told we've now got it and if the member would like a copy, we'll forward him a copy of it.

MR. MCKENZIE: Then, that would certainly make a decision on the operation or the way that your office would work would hinge on whether that was an oral or a written decision by the judge, or would it?

MR. MERCIER: Well, no, Mr. Chairman, it's really just a decision in that case based on the circumstances of that particular case.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(b)—pass; the Member for Rock Lake.

MR. HENRY J. EINARSON: Mr. Chairman, I was away for a few minutes and I just wondered if it is in order to request some information in regards to the problem where a father sells the farm to his son and the father by agreement has his home on the son's home quarter section. When the son went to pay his taxes he could not get the property credit tax deduction at the time he paid his taxes, and it was told that he would have to wait until he filed his income tax return to get that money. Is this a change in regulations and the farmer in question was wondering why this was necessary, because there was two homes on the same quarter section. If that's sufficient information, I wonder if the minister could give us an explanation on that.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, that's more appropriately a question to be put to the Minister of Finance. My understanding of it is that the only way you can recover the rebate is to file his income tax and recover it that way.

MR. EINARSON: Then, Mr. Chairman, is there not a change in the Municipal Assessment Act in regards to this problem?

MR. MERCIER: No, it's a property tax credit question which is the responsibility of the Minister of Finance.

MR. EINARSON: Yes, I realize that, Mr. Chairman, through you, Mr. Chairman to the Minister but. . . So this matter has nothing to do with the Minister of Municipal Affairs or under the Municipal Act?

MR. MERCIER: No.

MR. EINARSON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: I'd like to ask through you, Sir, the Minister, insofar as the assessment offices are concerned is there any move in this budget to decentralize or shift some of the offices in the rural areas.

MR. MERCIER: No, Mr. Chairman, I believe they are almost fully decentralized now.

MR. URUSKI: There is no intent of moving any of the offices from where they are situated now to other locations.

MR. MERCIER: No.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (4)(b)—pass; Resolution 95: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding +2,834,000 for Municipal and Urban Affairs, Municipal Assessments—pass; Resolution No. 96, Item 5. Municipal Services and Research, 5.(a) Salaries—pass — the Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I noted in the recent press statement that the R.M. of

Lawrence obtained full municipal status in, I believe, last fall. Could the Minister indicate where the department is at with respect to the other LGDs and what stage are they at, or if the department is also involved in the negotiations with respect to the returning of Crown lands to the LGDs and where those negotiations are at, and whether or not other LGDs are in the process of moving to full municipal status?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, there are about three questions there. The first one, with respect to the RM of St. Lawrence, they are moving to full municipal status effective July 1st of this year. Public meetings were held in the municipality and we've met with the Council, etc. An election should be in June.

With respect to LGDs, we have been, during the past year, reviewing that whole area and dealing with the Minister of Highways, as I'm sure the member is aware of the treatment some of those LGDs received from the Department of Highways, which sometimes may be an impediment to persuading some of them to convert to full municipal status and we're attempting to deal with that at this time.

The return of LGD lands held in trust is being dealt with through officials meeting with each LGD on a one-to-one basis and those meetings have been going on since early last fall.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have there been any agreements reached with respect to the land question, Mr. Chairman?

MR. MERCIER: One in the LG of Reynolds.

MR. URUSKI: Could the Minister indicate how much land was involved within that LGD and what is the nature of the agreement that has been reached? There were several alternatives, if I recall, that were open to the government to pursue whether the agreement is in one stage or in one direction, or there are several options being put into the agreement. What I'm getting at is: Is the land strictly turned over to the LGD; is it being purchased by the province; is there a cash difference. There were several options that were open. Could the Minister indicate, in this case here where you have reached an agreement, what has transpired?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, in that particular case, the majority of the lands were returned to the LGD. There were some exchanges where the lands were encumbered. We are following the policy that was adopted by the previous government with respect to the LGD lands held in trust.

MR. URUSKI: Could the Minister indicate, in cases where the lands were under lifetime agricultural leasehold, is the lessee protected in terms of his leasehold rights with the province, in this case, or have the lands been transferred — when they have been transferred to the LGD, has there been a change in the leaseholder's status and rights?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I don't know how, even if we wanted to, we could effect a lease for life. It seems to me, not only legally but morally, you couldn't change that situation.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: I have one further question in connection with that. Is the province going to play a role with respect to the question of the lessee, who has a lifetime lease, or whatever term, but where the LGD decides to sell the LGD land, is there any provision in the agreement that the original lessee has an opportunity to purchase, if it is put up for sale, or what are the guarantees to protect the rights of the lessees?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that the direction in which the LGDs themselves are trying to move is to take steps to protect the interests of those lessees, to offer land for sale to them.

MR. USKIW: . . . the Minister couldn't elaborate on the procedures that are being used.

MR. MERCIER: The negotiations and discussions haven't gone that far yet.

MR. USKIW: Is there provincial input as to how that is going to be carried out?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, the committee of officials is composed of people from Agriculture, Mines and our department, and the lead department is Arriculture that would have a concern there, and it would seem to me, even under the circumstances you cite that that lessee would certainly have no danger of losing his lease.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 5.(a)—pass; 5.(b)—pass — the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: What explains the reduction in the expenditures in this item?

MR. MERCIER: This is that double billing in computer costs, isn't it? That we talked about earlier.

MR. USKIW: It wasn't recorded, I don't think.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Minister repeat his answer, please.

MR. USKIW: The reason for the reduction in the amount.

MR. MERCIER: Okay, it was that double billing, well, we were going to try to get him a simpler answer, weren't we. Apparently there was what, 123,000 that was billed from Assessment to Municipal Services, who in turn billed it to Assessment . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: 5.(b)—pass; Resolution No. 96: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding +762,400 for Municipal and Urban Affairs, Municipal Services and Research—pass; Resolution No. 97, Item 6. Municipal Planning Services, 6.(a) Salaries—pass — the Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: I wanted to ask the Minister again about a question I raised with him in the House, and that is there has been an announcement made about a large development in the Winnipeg Beach area, where a golf course is going to be subdivided and several hundred units will be developed for cottages or condominiums, etc. Could the Minister indicate — let's assume that things go well and the project is approved, etc., etc. — does it come forward to him as Minister of Municipal Affairs and does he have an involvement?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, my information is that there has been no application yet submitted to the Council of the Town of Winnipeg Beach. If it is a subdivision approved by the town, then it would come to the department as the approving authority. If there is a rezoning, then it's dealt with locally at a public hearing and I believe there are appeals to the Municipal Board.

MR. DOERN: In terms of the beach, the public beach and the restaurant, etc., does that fall under the Minister of Tourism or under yourself, or who is responsible there?

MR. MERCIER: Probably the Minister of Mines, I believe he has Parks.

MR. DOERN: Under Parks.

MR. MERCIER: Yes.

MR. DOERN: I'm simply trying to relate it in this way and ask who would have the responsibility — I assume it would be yourself — to insure that if the development takes place that some consideration would be given in relation to the capacity of the public beach or the ability of the area to handle a large influx of new summer residents. I don't know, and I'm sure none of us knows at this time, just how this development will take place, whether it will take place, how many hundreds of people will move in there. I'm just saying that I assume that if it goes forward, and if there is a development, that the Minister, in conjunction with his colleague, the Minister of Mines, responsible for Parks, will consider the public welfare in terms of whether there would be any adverse effects on the public beach, which is the responsibility of the provincial government.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, with respect to effects on the public beach, if he is just referring to the beach of course, the golf course is separated from the beach by the townsite development

and the railway, then more cottages, then the highway, so it won't affect access to the beach, which I believe is one of the questions perhaps the member made in the House. We will certainly assist the town in attempting to provide them with all the information they require in order to make their planning decision.

MR. DOERN: I would just like to draw a parallel. There was concern in the Big Whiteshell that if the condominium development went forward there that it might sort of overload the lake, that by allowing a large condominium development it might diminish the value of the area and might interfere with the pleasure and the property of the people who owned cottages in that area. And I'm simply making this parallel, namely that if hundreds more people go into the immediate vicinity, and since they are in fact not right on the lakefront, I assume that they would be using the public beach.

I'm simply saying that I assume that the town, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Parks would all be concerned to ensure that the lake area and the public beach in particular aren't overloaded, so that you don't suddenly wind up with overdevelopment and overuse of public facilities. And I'm saying, does the Minister have a role to play in that regard, and if he's giving ultimate approval, would that be one of the factors that would go into his decision?

MR. MERCIER: The member has raised a number of concerns, the overdevelopment of the sewage facilities, or whatever, certainly any application for a subdivision is processed through a number of departments, including the Department of Mines, which would make their comments on that particular issue, and I assume that they would also make comments on whether or not there was any overloading, as the member might suggest, of the public beach facilities.

MR. DOERN: So I'm just saying then, you, as the ultimate power in terms of approval, will take those factors into consideration.

MR. MERCIER: Of course, you have to remember in those circumstances if it were to be an application for a subdivision, and we don't know the form yet that this would take, but if it were to be an application for a subdivision approved by the Town Council, we, in the department, would have the authority to approve it or reject it. As the approving authority, if we rejected it then there could be an appeal to the Municipal Board.

MR. DOERN: Then I simply make the statement that I urge the Minister, assuming the project goes forward and it's not just a possibility but they are moving forward on it, that he give serious consideration to protecting the public interest. I'm not saying that this project is good or bad. All I'm saying is that the Minister has to make sure that he doesn't allow too many people and too much development, which might detract from people enjoying a very long and established and popular beach resort.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6(a)—pass; 6(b)—pass — the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: I wonder if the Minister can tell us just how many planning districts that we have established to date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MERCIER: Nine. Mr. Chairman, we have a map that I could give to the member that would show him where they are.

MR. USKIW: Out of the nine districts, Mr. Chairman, how many are, shall we say, fully under autonomous control and decision-making at this point in time?

MR. MERCIER: There are none, Mr. Chairman, because they have not yet completed their development plans.

MR. USKIW: All right. Can the Minister then tell me how many are near the point where they will be making their own decisions with respect to the applications for zoning and subdivision or lot splits, or whatever?

MR. MERCIER: I believe, Mr. Chairman, that Selkirk and Brokenhead, which were the first two that were approved, would be getting pretty close to that stage. And the one down at the bottom,

Morden-Stanley.

MR. USKIW: Would the Minister then explain to me just what that really means? Does that mean that there will be absolutely no provincial interference in the decisions of those districts?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, what it would mean is that they would be the approving authority to approve everything in conformity with their development plan, which would be approved by the Provincial Land Use Committee. Now, if they did something which varied from the development plan which had been approved by the Land Use Committee then that would be in direct contravention to the plan, obviously, and the province might have to take some steps.

The other thing I should put on the record, Mr. Chairman, is that there is still an appeal from their decision. They would become the approving authority, as I am now, and just as someone can appeal from my decision to the Municipal Board someone can appeal from their decision to the Municipal Board.

MR. USKIW: That is a change, then, is it not?

MR. MERCIER: Yes.

MR. USKIW: I didn't recall that as being part of it.

MR. MERCIER: That would resolve your concern that you expressed last year.

MR. USKIW: Yes, yes. I thought that was not the intent last year and that's why I raised it again. Well, I'm happy to hear that there is an appeal procedure. That doesn't always satisfy a given situation.

My concern, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that this is a very cumbersome mechanism that we have in the Municipal Planning Branch. It's a very cumbersome mechanism. With all the good intentions in the world it does, from time to time, bog down and injure people who have very legitimate aspirations and applications before Planning Districts or the Provincial Planning Authority. I say that from our own experience in government, which of course was in the early stages of The Planning Act, and hopefully some of these things are going to be resolved.

My big fear, Mr. Chairman, is that when you have a large bureaucracy that is involved that you sometimes fall into the trap of a bureaucratic nightmare, or perhaps I should use the right word, a bureaucratic dictatorship that kind of takes over the whole system. I'm really sincere when I say this, because I know it happens from time to time where, instead of getting very honest opinions, we have those honest opinions from time to time varied down the bureaucratic line and so the people who are making the final decision don't always have all of the facts as they are but as they want to be presented by one or two individuals in the chain. And this is something that I think can be very harmful to the people of this province.

We have a system, as I understand it, in determining land use policies and in considering applications, where each department has an input, each department makes its input as to its view on a particular application. I know that it's very tempting for one bureaucrat to try to convince another bureaucrat that the decision should be so, even though that is not going to be the honest decision of the one that is being asked to give an opinion. And when that happens the public is injured. I would like to know what kind of mechanism the Minister has to make sure that all of the information that he receives is honest information that has not been pressured. That is, information that came out not because of the desires of a planner who would like to see a certain pattern of development, but that that information is indeed the true feeling of every department who has made an input into that application.

MR. MERCIER: I wish I had that power, Mr. Chairman. I don't know how I could ever determine whether or not every opinion expressed by every department that has asked for comment on an application for subdivision is their true and honest opinion.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I think it's really a matter of procedure that perhaps . . .

MR. MERCIER: Maybe if I can expand, because I am reminded of something that I should have said. We do note that sometimes in some departments there is a pattern of comment that sometimes occurs on a number of applications that are different applications and almost becomes a standard comment. In those situations when you see that developing, then obviously it's time to look at the comments of that department and perhaps have some discussion with them and review that with

them.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I make those comments only because of our early experience in dealing with those kinds of situations.

MR. MERCIER: Yes, I appreciate that.

MR. USKIW: I merely want to impress on the Minister the importance of making sure that we don't set up a bureaucratic network that becomes almost impossible to penetrate, either by the Minister or anyone else, because indeed the decisions that are made there can have very serious impact on people, both financially, environmentally, and a whole host of other considerations that go into it.

This kind of authority is sometimes given very reluctantly, and should be so, but once it's given it has to be policed so that the public interest is always protected. And it seems to me that if the Minister was able to set up a mechanism of communication in such a way that the information that flows isn't filtered before it reaches the point of decision, that perhaps that might be a means of guarding against undue influence with respect to that decision.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the remarks made by the member, and I can say one of the difficulties I have with general comments — and I appreciate that at a Committee hearing you wouldn't want to . . .

MR. USKIW: I can make them specific, but I'd rather not.

MR. MERCIER: Right, but what I'm saying is that if you have specific examples I would appreciate your advice after the Committee is completed, because you have to deal with specifics to be able to assess the complaint. But the matter has been considered seriously in the past six months and in the past six months the review process has been done by my Assistant Deputy Minister, in order to monitor the situation completely, and I can only say that I hope that all Members of the Legislature, if they have complaints about the process, would bring them to my attention.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I would like to know how many applications are outstanding at the present time. What is the backlog?

MR. MERCIER: If I could undertake to get that information and give that to . . .

MR. USKIW: Well can the Minister at least indicate whether the backlog is diminishing or whether it's expanding? That would be helpful.

MR. MERCIER: Diminishing.

MR. USKIW: Well, that's a good sign, Mr. Chairman. The last time I believe it was still going the other way, as I recall it. But in any event, one of the other concerns that I have with respect to the whole business of planning has to be the possibility — perhaps it isn't occurring but I think it is — the possibility, in any event, that there is a lack of discretion that is used by the people involved in the decision-making.

I mean, as an example, Mr. Chairman, that once you decide on a plan of development or a zoning system, or plan, that there are people who seem to think that that is iron-clad and should never be varied, and there are those who use a bit of common sense and say, "Well, this argument makes a little bit of sense; we think we should vary this provision in this particular area." And my fear really was borne out over the last couple of years, but again, I qualify that by stating that those were early years in the planning process so I'm not going to belabour the point but only remind the Minister that that could be a problem to him and to everyone.

It seems to me that we can get hung up too much on deciding the use of resources to the exclusion of other uses, and perhaps, you know, we may have 57 viewpoints on that in the Legislative Assembly, I don't know, but I don't believe that it's in the public interest, quite frankly, to take a position that once you zone an area for a particular use that you just don't even consider other applications. I believe that applications should be considered on their particular merits, as opposed to a blanket yes or no position for the area.

For example, there are many areas in the countryside in which people would like to live, but who do not want to be involved in agriculture. I don't believe that it's necessary to go so far as to say that just because agriculture is the predominant thing that on that particular piece of wasteland

that we can't allow someone to build a home or a cottage simply because we might fear that the surrounding farmers in the area might worry about subsequent complaints as to their operations. I say that in the context of the Nuisance Act that we passed a few years ago, which provides that if a person arrives on the scene, establishes himself or herself on the scene after others have already been there, then they have no right to complain about nuisances that they walked into, if they were there before.

Given that there is that protection, then I don't think that if there is an area of property that is not suitable for whatever the zoning is in the area, that we should be too difficult in allowing people who may wish to live there, even though they may work elsewhere, they work in Winnipeg, for example, or Brandon, but they happen to prefer a rural location for their residence. I think to the extent that we can provide rural lot accommodation, I think we should make it possible and I fear that that is not the trend of thinking in the planning branch or in the department, that they would like to sort of put everyone in a straitjacket, either you're a urban person or you're rural and somehow we've got to cut out the in-betweens. There's where the area of discretion is very important, in my opinion, Mr. Chairman. I would sure not like to see us get carried away in that particular direction where someone wants to draw the blueprint for everyone and that's going to be the lifestyle, pre-determined from here to eternity. That's the trend that I did notice in the department and I simply point it out to the minister for his benefit, and hopefully for the benefit of all of us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister

MR. MERCIER: I appreciate the member's advice, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Flowing from those comments, I would like to ask how many rural residential lots have been approved in the last two years?

MR. MERCIER: We'll have to get that figure and supply it to the member.

MR. URUSKI: Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make sure that I understand the procedure of Appeals. Before the Planning District has been given full autonomy, is it correct that there is no appeal from a decision of the Municipal Council at the present time?

MR. MERCIER: If it's turned down, right.

MR. URUSKI: Well, of course, if it's turned down. There is no need to appeal if it's approved. So that there is no appeal?

MR. MERCIER: Right.

MR. URUSKI: However, if the council approves and the minister does not approve there is an appeal mechanism.

MR. MERCIER: Yes.

MR. URUSKI: And with respect to the Planning District, once it is approved, where the decisions are made completely by the district board, or actually, it initially I presume goes to council, council makes the decision and then the Planning District Board will then either approve the council decision or reject it, is that what is envisaged?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister

MR. MERCIER: Pardon me, I was trying to look at something. Could you repeat the question?

MR. URUSKI: When the District Board is fully autonomous, where the Board will make the final determination, I presume that the Board will look at all applications and make its recommendations to council and that council still will make the initial decision as to whether to approve or not approve an application? If council varies from the advice given to it by the District Board and shall we say, approves a subdivision which has been recommended by the Board for rejection, is the Board able to overrule that decision of council? Is that the process that is envisaged, the Board will still recommend to council?

MR. MERCIER: If there is a Planning District, my understanding is that decisions would be made by the Planning Board, and from the Planning Board there is an appeal.

MR. URUSKI: I'm glad I asked the question. Therefore, council itself will not be involved in the planning mechanism other than by its members that it has appointed to that Board.

MR. MERCIER: Yes.

MR. URUSKI: Fine. So there will only be one decision-making body in effect in the District Board to which there is an appeal to the Municipal Board.

MR. MERCIER: Yes.

MR. URUSKI: That's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Yes with respect to a specific, Mr. Chairman, perhaps the minister might help me on this one. Of the two early Planning Districts, St. Clements-Selkirk-St. Andrews and the Brokenhead area; with respect to Selkirk, is the department still overruling decisions made locally?

MR. MERCIER: We'd have to get the numbers. I know there have been some that have been . . .

MR. USKIW: Well, all right let me put it this way. When we were the government, Mr. Chairman, not too long ago and which we will be again before too long, we had a policy that we would not want to, as a provincial government, overrule a municipal decision. We tried to stick with that, we tried to stick with that. There may have been exceptions, I don't know. — (Interjection) — If there was a District Plan, yes. Even the preliminary statement was satisfactory to us at that time.

Now some applications were approved on that basis even though there was disagreement within the provincial government or the planning people, but I'm aware of a situation in the Selkirk Planning District where the council had given approval and subsequently the application was blocked somewhere in Winnipeg. The individual went back to the planner in Selkirk, Mr. Green, who himself indicated to this applicant that he has nothing to do with it because this was approved before he came on the scene. Yet the whole project has been blocked somewhere in the system in Winnipeg. So that's why I raised the question. Is the province now back into the position of overruling council's decision, even though there is a District and a Preliminary Planning mechanism at work there?

MR. MERCIER: There is no district plan yet.

MR. USKIW: Even though we didn't have the final plan, the last time we were involved, the last year, we were trying to avoid vetoing a municipal decision if they had even a preliminary statement or plan. So that in essence, as much as possible, we tried to stay out of conflict. This recent example contradicts that policy and that's why I'm wondering if there was a change of policy. Was there a change of policy?

MR. MERCIER: There has been no change in policy.

MR. USKIW: If there was no change of policy then I will have a problem in trying to follow up on this particular situation.

MR. MERCIER: If you'd like to give me the particulars . . .

MR. USKIW: I'll do that later on.

MR. MERCIER: . . . and we'll look it up.

MR. USKIW: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(b)—pass — the Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, before we leave that area. In looking at the district planning map, could the minister indicate with respect to the Western Interlake Planning District, the area of the arm of Eriksdale is still excluded from that board, has the municipal board made any recommendation with respect to this district and what is the status of it now?

MR. MERCIER: I can say we tried to encourage Eriksdale to participate and the municipal board approved the application for the Planning District with them absent. We're hopeful that some time in the future, they will join that Planning District.

MR. URUSKI: Could the minister indicate with respect to the eastern portion of the Interlake where the Bifrost, Riverton, Gimli areas are concerned, at what stage are those municipal councils at with respect to the formation of a district?

MR. MERCIER: There are discussions under way in that area, Mr. Chairman, there may be some resolutions in.

MR. URUSKI: In your Budget, with respect to the Districts, are there enough funds to cover agreements with the nine Districts that you have in place now?

MR. MERCIER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, as I indicated we have increased the amount of money available in the Budget for Planning Districts this year from +113,000 to +189,000 this year.

MR. URUSKI: Does that Budget cover any Districts which may yet be formed this year? Is there any intent of having any new Districts that are on the verge of being formed and will they require any funding before the fiscal year 1979-80 concludes?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, we're anticipating that there may very well be more Districts formed during the course of this year and we believe the cash that we, or the amount included in the Estimates will be sufficient to fund them on a cash flow basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(b) — the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman, with respect to that part of the province which is almost the whole province that does not have Planning Districts, what is the policy of the government with respect to approvals of application for lot splits or subdivisions or whatever? —(Interjection)—. No, it means the rest of the province. There are 9 Districts here that we have, but apart from those 9, what is the policy on any part of Manitoba?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, it's the same policy applied in and outside of the Planning Districts at the present time, which is the policy enunciated under the land use policy guidelines.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Perhaps, maybe the minister might be able to respond. If a person was wanting to build a home somewhere up along No. 6 highway beyond the prime agriculture area, what would be the attitude of the provincial government in granting him approval?

MR. MERCIER: Does the member have a specific case in mind?

MR. USKIW: Well, I think it applies generally, it could be anyone, anywhere in the province, that's why I put it that way.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, they all have to be assessed in relation to the land use policies and I hope, as you indicated earlier, that some common sense would be . . .

MR. USKIW: Well, all right. Okay that's the point I was hoping to get from the minister with the common sense statement.

Is it a matter of common sense that the trunk highways in Manitoba are not overly loaded with traffic and that therefore that should not be a reason why an individual would be denied an application for a building permit, not along the highway, I understand the Highways Department restrictions, but in a given area that might have access to the highway?

MR. MERCIER: Well, that's an area where we obviously have to deal with the Department of Highways and their interpretation of the land use policies and . . .

MR. USKIW: Well, let me give you the for instance, Mr. Minister, and I would appreciate a comment from you based on common sense. Would you agree that the No. 6 highway north of Winnipeg, way up in that St. Laurent area or Woodlands area, is too busy to allow for one more car to be added to it?

MR. MERCIER: I wouldn't think so.

MR. USKIW: You wouldn't think so. I didn't think so either, but the report said that that was the case. So that's why I raised the question, you see.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(b) — the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, no, I think it's worthwhile pursuing. I do this only for the benefit of the minister who is new and perhaps doesn't realize the implications of VIA decisions outside of Winnipeg. Some of our bureaucracy believe that you should contain all the people that want to work in Winnipeg within the boundaries of Winnipeg, and therefore that philosophy tells them that they must deny everything outside of that and so they're sometimes tempted to say to the minister, "Don't approve this one because we think it will add to the inefficiency of No. 6 Highway or No. 7 Highway or No. 8 Highway." I used No. 6 because that was an example that is real without revealing the party. It was real. And the Highways Department statement was — there were four lots involved — that by adding four lots that that would reduce the efficiency of No. 6 Highway in the area of Woodlands and I just didn't think that that met with common sense because there was no new accesses to the highway.

MR. MERCIER: Well, if the member would like to give me details I would like to review that —(Interjection)—

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ascertain what is happening around the City of Winnipeg in the area of the additional zone areas insofar as the formation of planning districts with respect to the numbers of developments in the R.M. or Ritchot or Tache or Springfield and where are they at with respect to the — there was a lot of unhappiness in the outer zone where the City of Winnipeg was doing the approvals I believe for the planning of subdivisions. At what stage are these areas because I believe there was amendment passed to allow these areas to form their planning districts. What stage are these areas at? Are they moving ahead in terms of doing or moving into their own planning districts or where are they. Are they remaining as they were? What's the, sort of the movement in that area?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I met as recently as Tuesday morning with representatives of the Additional Zone Association out of a concern they have with the proposal of the City of Winnipeg to annex large areas of the additional zone into the City of Winnipeg. They presented a brief to me showing and confirming what we already knew, that the proposed annexation meant in the case of a number of those municipalities a loss of large acreages, large amounts of assessment, large numbers of people.

The concern that I believe the City of Winnipeg has in expressing that desire for annexation is really one that they have control over the planning in that area. There's no reason on earth why they need to have the land for example that is in the R.M. of McDonald within the perimeter in their jurisdiction because it's so far away from development. It must be 50 or 60 years away from

development. So, there's no necessity, no requirement to have the land physically located within their boundaries other than for planning purposes. We agreed at the meeting that staff in my department would be meeting with each individual municipality to discuss with them their approach toward the annexation, their approach toward the possibility of forming planning districts, or toward planning. I have raised with them and suggested to them that what they should indeed all consider is whether or not they would like to be taken out of the additional zone, the additional zone planning responsibility of the City of Winnipeg. I frankly see no need for the planning authority in the additional zone anymore with the provincial land use policies in effect. The same planning control can go through using the provincial land use policies. As you know, we amended the City of Winnipeg Act last year to allow them to consider variations on their own which they are now starting to do.

But, we'll be meeting with them over the next few months to consider whether or not there are any minor boundary adjustments that they're prepared to agree to or support and what their approach would be toward either forming a planning district or toward the planning jurisdiction of the City of Winnipeg in the additional zone.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour of 4:30 having arrived, committee rise. The Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Just on one point, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister could consider the information that the Minister indicated that he would give to the members of this committee. Is it possible for example, the staffing information, the numbers on the districts, could that be given to the Clerk to be recorded into the committee hearings and transcribed so it would be put into the Hansard? If that is agreeable to members of the committee.

MR. MERCIER: We'll see what information we can have available by Monday. . .

MR. URUSKI: And then we can decide whether to put it in. That's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee rise.

SUPPLY — HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Abe Kovnats: Before we proceed I should like to draw the honourable members attention to the gallery where we have 100 Grade 10, Grade 11 and Grade 12 students from Kelvin High School. This school is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for River Heights and under the direction of Mr. Jim Alward and Mr. Bob Sookram and Miss Sharon Porter. I would like to welcome the students on behalf of the honourable members of the Legislature.

I would draw the honourable members' attention to Page 48 of the Main Estimates where we are in the Department of Health and Community Services: 3. Social Services and Community Health. The Item under discussion is (f) Home Economics Services (1) Salaries. The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before we broke for the noon break the Honourable Minister replied to some of the questions that I had asked prior to being prodded by the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks to reply.

Basically, Mr. Chairman, I guess the thing that we, as members on this side of the House want to know, while the Minister may be digesting this material, which is all well and good, what we are primarily interested in, Mr. Chairman, is knowing or finding out from the Minister, what he is prepared to do in the delivery of the service or what he intends to do. Does he intend to do anything this year or are we going to be waiting till next year and maybe having to get up again next year and make the same speeches on the same items. I think the Minister has agreed that delivery of the programs that this department is setting up is one of the real problems. If you have the program, and you don't have the delivery of that program, then it's not going to be of any use to any of the people who really need this service.

The Minister says that he agrees with what I had said. I thank him for that, but I want more from the Minister. I don't want to just share the same dream with him; I want to see that dream come to fruition and some reality. Is the Minister contemplating in this current Budget improved methods of being able to deliver the program on nutrition to the economically deprived, to prenatal mothers, post-natal care, and expand the program. You know, as I said when I was speaking before lunch that, according to the report from the department for the year 1977 and the year ending now — I imagine that hasn't increased that much — but a total of approximately 1900 pregnant women had received individual counselling or instruction in pre-natal nutrition sessions held with

the Department of Health Nursing Pre-natal series.

Now, I'm sure that there are many more people that we should be reaching. We should be reaching them through various means. As I stated before, one means we have is the Community Health Clinics, that's one; there could be the use of the Public Health Nurses, Doctors' offices, which I imagine they get some. But mainly what I am interested in in the plan is the idea, the thrust of this program is good, but many of the people who need the counselling in nutrition are people who don't come forward one way or another, and you have to, Mr. Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, the department has to go out and reach these people. If you're not reaching them with your program as you have now, and from what I can understand from your report there is a certain amount of program development, but it doesn't seem to be reaching the amount of people that it should be, and we are talking about future citizens of the Province of Manitoba. Citizens of this country 18 years hence down the road will be classed as adults, will be eligible and quite probable could be even elected to this Assembly. So we want to give these young people the opportunity of a good start in life and a healthy body also includes a healthy mind. But if we have no backup for the program of the department — and I'm not blaming this Minister; I'm blaming all the governments who have been in power — we have not emphasized enough the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

I know the Minister is very keen on preventative medicine, and this is the area where we can really make some emphasis on the preventative medicine that the Minister is so fond of talking about. When we see the program — if anything, we've done away with one staff man year — there's a cutback in the salaries, there's also a cutback in the expenditures. The problems that I am bringing to the Minister's attention this morning, if the Other Expenditures are cut that means that there will not be any probability of even making a supplement diet for people in a nutritional way. And not just sticking closely, exclusively with the pre-natal and the nutrition of those people, but there are other members, in other age groups in society that have to have nutritional guidance and help. I brought to the minister's attention this morning that these are many families of the working poor. Those on the minimum wage and the elderly, living say, on old age pension and guaranteed income supplement. Is there any program or any program delivery of the nutritional value to these people? Where does the minister deliver these services that he talks about? You know, it's well and good, maybe this isn't the department that delivers this service, but somewhere within his Estimates the people who are working in the field of the Home Economics services, developing nutritional education, developing money management, developing homemaking skills and housing, home economics resource centres. How are they delivering the actual service to the people who require it? I know the minister has an ideological bent that he says, "Well, we shouldn't be forcing these people to do these things."

But, if he would look at other jurisdictions in other countries, and especially if he would look at the U.K., which I referred to this morning, even Conservative governments there set up a program of nutritional aids and money management, and made it available to the general populace, and they didn't have that great hang-up that the minister seems to have. He seemed to be at great odds with the Member for Seven Oaks about how we delivered this service. We're not advocating a cradle to the grave scheme here, what we're advocating and trying to impress upon the minister is that it's all very well and good to have plans and schemes on paper, but if you don't deliver them to the clients that should be receiving that service, that is the real problem because then after all if you're just going to set up programs that are going to put pamphlets and booklets in doctors offices, in municipal halls and places like that, without any delivery of the service, then what are we in this field for, which is according to the item, "provides a central co-ordinating and development service in home management, budgeting, food buying and nutrition."

And I know that there are areas of the north that have real problems with nutrition. There are areas in the City of Winnipeg, in the core area of the City of Winnipeg, where they have real problems in nutrition. Even the schools have that problem, because of — I believe it was the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks said that the vending of junk foods in the schools is a serious problem. What is the Minister's department trying to do to combat the incessant repetition on television ads — there's one on right now from McDonalds. You know, where's the cheapest place to buy food for under +4.00 for a family of four, or something. Everybody runs to MacDonaldis. What is the Minister's department doing to combat that type of bombardment that is coming across to the general population. And that's not only for the working poor; that's for other people in society. We have the Chicken Delight outfit who are bombarding people with — everybody should be eating fried chicken — (Interjection) — and the Honourable Member for St. Johns says, "Let them eat cake." No, the Conservatives say, "Let them eat cake."

MR. DOMINO: There's no cake at McDonalds.

MR. JENKINS: Well, according to the ad I saw the other day they have cookies, so maybe the Conservatives are saying, "Let them eat cookies."

MR. DOMINO: Fortune cookies.

MR. JENKINS: But really, Mr. Minister, when you get down to it you have what probably is a very good nutritional program here in the Home Economics Department of your Estimates, but what we want to know is how you're delivering that program, how many people is it reaching, how successful is it?

The same thing with your Money Management Program: How many people are we reaching; how successful is it? What we're talking about in this department, Mr. Chairman, is the development of our most valuable resource that we have in this country — our human resources, our young people, and I think, as the Member for St. Boniface said, nutritional programs for the members of this Assembly isn't going to do us very much good at this time of life for us. I was examining the Honourable Member for St. Boniface's luncheon diet today to see if he was on any junk foods, and I can report to you, Mr. Chairman, that he had soup and other things — I didn't see any junk food. I'm not going to comment about the Member for Seven Oaks. I think he had cake.

But to be quite serious, Mr. Minister, a certain amount of levity is all right, but this is something that we, as members on this side of the House, feel is a serious problem and we want to know that you're not just going to pay lip service to it, say, "That's a nice thing. I'm going to read about it, read the members' comments." What we want to know is, when you read them and you digest them — you said you agreed with what I said this morning — what are you going to do about it? That is what we want to know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass — the Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I'm not necessarily inviting the Minister to make a long speech. We've been at it for a while, but I did ask him some questions and I'm very vitally interested in what's going on in the department, even if he can cut it short, but I'd like to have some information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: That's correct, Mr. Chairman. I did want to respond to what the Honourable Member for St. Boniface raised in the last few minutes before lunch hour.

Let me just say to the Member for Logan that every question that he has raised in the last fifteen minutes was raised at the start of the examination of this appropriation this morning by the Member for Seven Oaks or the Member for St. Boniface and I have answered those questions. So while I'm digesting what he had to say this morning, which I told him I would do, I hope he will digest what I had to say at 11 o'clock this morning which addressed every question he raised, which described what we were doing even to the point of seconding a member of our staff to the Task Force Study on Child and Maternal Care.

Now, the Member for St. Boniface raised some very important questions about junk foods and about nutrition teaching in the schools, and about inter-departmental liaison, and about fitness. And I do want to reply to them.

The nutrition program in the schools is part of the Health Curriculum Program, and it consists essentially, from our point of view from our end of the spectrum, in teaching teachers how to teach nutrition. That is a program and a direction that is continuing with vigour. The merits and the objectives and rationale for the program are not in dispute. The teachers who will be teaching that discipline, that course, in the health curriculum in the schools are taught how to deal with the nutrition package and the nutrition program and approach that is developed from our Home Economics Resource Centre, and out of this central office, and I don't dispute for one moment the urgent necessity of maintaining and reinforcing and intensifying that teaching process as quickly and reasonably and strongly as we can. But it is in the schools. It is in the curriculum. There is certainly no intention to do other than keep it there and intensify it there.

I agree with my honourable friend on the subject of junk foods and junk food vending machines in schools and other institutions and buildings, and community gathering places. I think that it's important that we reduce the presence of junk food vending machines in as many locales as we can and see that they are replaced with machines that dispense healthy foods, natural foods, insofar as that is possible. But we have not enacted or considered, up to this point in time, enacting legislation to do that.

I must say, Mr. Chairman, that I know there are some honourable members opposite who don't

like us for this, and the Honourable Member for St. Boniface is not one of them, because, quite frankly, I have always found the Honourable Member for St. Boniface a much stronger champion of the freedom of choice, free enterprise ethic than to any of the ethics that go to make up the philosophy of the New Democratic Party. But there are people opposite who would have us . . . As a matter of fact, I would include the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre in that category, too. He has always paid wide recognition and meaningful recognition to the free choice ethic.

There are members opposite, Mr. Chairman, who would have us enact laws to prevent this, prohibit that, force people to do such and such — take the McDonald's commercials off television. In my opinion, McDonald's commercials are among the best things on television; they are a lot better than half the programs on television. —(Interjection)— Especially since I left T.V., the Honourable Member for St. Johns says. Well, there were McDonald's commercials even in those days, and we used to compete.—(Interjection)— As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, if I had ever had a contract offered me to do some McDonald's commercials, I would have taken it and signed it, I can assure the Honourable Member for St. Johns of that. I never was given that opportunity.

I know that fast foods are not the best way to eat, they don't provide us with the greatest nutritional value, but for heaven's sake, if we're going to start getting into the area of dictating what commercials — there are some commercials on TV that I find very offensive, and I have talked to my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs about them, and in that category I put commercials for personal hygiene products number one on the list, but we have not considered enacting legislation to prohibit them. I think we have to do it through moral suasion if we can.

In any event, I am not interested in wasting either our time or our energy or our resources in disputing the merits of certain fast food commercials on television. We do not want to introduce any more rules, laws, or regulations than we have to; we do not want to encumber the people of Manitoba with any more regulatory control over their choices and the decision-making processes in their lives than they're already encumbered with, so if honourable members opposite want to persist in that tack, I can't do other than say that I reject that philosophic approach; it's a difference in philosophies; I can't buttress it with statistical documentation because there is no such documentation for a philosophical argument. That's their philosophy, this is ours.

Sir, the question of junk foods, though, and junk food vending machines is something that is of serious concern to me, to us, as it is to the Honourable Member for St. Boniface, particularly in areas and institutions and gathering places for young people, because it inculcates in them bad nutrition habits, which once established, as my honourable friend has suggested, are very hard for all of us to shake in later life. And I am working with my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in addressing that problem. We would like to see a change effected in that area through persuasion and through moral suasion rather than through legislation. We hope to be able to achieve it that way, if we can't achieve it that way then we'll have to come back to this committee and admit defeat. But I'm not prepared to admit defeat on that point yet.

The Honourable Member for St. Boniface has asked me about liaison and communication between different departments of government who have overlapping interests in fields such as this, and I want to just remind the committee once again that there has been established, there is in place, there is meeting on a regular basis, a Standing Committee of Cabinet designated as the Committee on Community Services, which includes five departments, including my own, it includes the Ministers of five departments, including myself, and we do meet to deal with problems and challenges precisely of this nature, the challenge of proper nutrition, fitness and lifestyles as it applies to the community generally.

So that involves the Department of Health and Community Services, it involves the Department of Fitness, Recreation and Sport, it certainly involves the Department of Education, it certainly involves the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and in fact also on that committee is the Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs and I believe the Minister of Urban Affairs so that we do have the cross-fertilization of departmental input to deal with these subjects that relate to common areas of challenge and common areas of interest. Fitness is in the category. Nutrition is in that category and we will collectively approach the problem areas and the subject areas in such a way as to be able to develop new objectives, develop new approaches and guidelines for building the consciousness of the need for fitness and good nutrition into our society at as early an age as possible. That means getting into the schools and getting into the elementary schools; that is something that my colleague, the Minister of Education and I have to do together. We're agreed, together with the Honourable Member for St. Boniface, that it must be done and I give him an undertaking that the Minister of Education and I will attempt to ensure absolutely that it is done.

MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to set the Honourable Minister's mind at rest. I at no time stated that I wanted censorship. Now, the Minister has amply put forward his argument, and he's the master of P.R. as I said before, he worked in public relations, and he put forward his argument very well, but the Honourable Minister has to realize that McDonald's, these other firms that are advertising, are advocating a certain nutritional food value to people.

I'm asking the Minister to use his considerable talents, buy some T.V. time from your own department and put on a short two or three minute blurb on T.V. advocating to people, especially to the younger people, that we should be having a good, nutritional program. And, I'm sure with the expertise that the Honourable Minister has in P.R., that he can counteract ads like McDonalds and I would admit that McDonalds do some very, very sharp advertising but they're not talking about nutritional food values for the working poor or even for anybody. I'm not saying that McDonalds has good food or bad food or indifferent food, I don't patronize them that much. But, surely the Minister can use the skills that he has, and he's the master of P.R. as I said before, and he's very good at singing jingles I understand. Perhaps he could sell his nutritional program on television. He can be the Yogi Bear of the A and W but to just through your hands up and say you can't compete with that group out there. I mean, after all, you have a responsibility to the young people of this country and this province in particular to get your point of view across. And, that is the best media to do it in because more people watch that idiot box than read your pamphlets or anything else.

So I call upon the Minister now to use the skills that he has and he has considerable skills in this field because that's been his life work I believe, in television and P.R. and what not. So, I would say to the Minister. . . —(Interjection)— Politics, well that's perhaps, P.R. too but nevertheless I would suggest to the Minister that at no time did I say that we should have censorship. If I had my druthers, I tell you, as far as television is concerned, I would much rather see something like is on Prairie Public Television, which I subscribe to and I wish we had something in this country that we could subscribe to. I hate sending my dollars down to support Prairie Public Television in North Dakota, but we don't have anything of a similar nature here in Manitoba and I think we should have and perhaps that's where we could maybe get our message across. Then, the Minister could run a program. —(Interjection)— Yes, get your own show on the road. But, to be serious, Mr. Minister, I at no time suggested that we should have censorship on T.V. I'm opposed to censorship period. I've always been opposed to censorship. They can sell their product but that doesn't excuse you, Mr. Minister, or your department or your government for putting your program on the air. That not only applies to the Health Department, that applies to all government departments who are supplying services to the public and you should be selling your program, telling people. And that applies to whatever political party or whatever political may be in power at the time. That if you have something that is of good value to the people, make it known and here is a program that is of worthwhile value. And I call upon you, Mr. Minister, use the skills that you have because you have considerable ones.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. J.R. (BUD) BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I've been sitting for a couple of years trying to understand the Minister of Health and he finally revealed himself to us. He talked about free choice. But, a few moments ago he finally came into his own and he got rid of this droll that he's been using to put us all to sleep here during the Estimates and he really got enthused when he was talking about selling hamburgers. And, it's come through to me finally that this whole approach to health services by the Conservative Government is selling "humbuggery" because this is what it is. Well, he talks about free choice. Last night, I know the chain of circumstances was such that the Minister could not be there but neither was their a representative of the government there, there were over 200 people at the Health Action Centre and this Minister talks about free choice. And, they're bound and determined that they're going to link health services to doctors' offices and fees for service because for this one health clinic alone, it represents an area of some 78,000 people, a very simple case was built by one of the people who is involved. A child had repeatedly gone to the Health Sciences Centre for treatment for scabies. They treated the child for scabies but they didn't treat the child for the cause of scabies until such time as that child went to one of these health centres and they looked at the cause of it and they dealt with the family and the diet of this particular individual and the conditions in which the child was being raised, then it was cured, the causes were dealt with. The government talks about free choice. What a bunch of gobbledegoop. They have no choice. There are no other alternatives. They are locking them into a system, that there is absolutely no choice.

When the Minister said earlier that I was one that opted for free choice he's absolutely right. If people wanted to go to chiropractors I'd let them. If people wanted to go to chiropodists I'd let them. But any groups that has reached the point of credibility within the treatment field, but

no, not with this government. They're pulling all of this back. They're threatening the people. They're intimidating the people. There is no choice. And when they talk about getting education into the schools as far as health is concerned, their actions speak louder than words.

One of the reporters here recently referred to the conspiracy of silence. And, I was sitting there last night at this particular meeting and listening to all of these people, and St. Andrew's Place, Mr. Chairman, I use as an example. The people in that community built this facility, not the New Democratic Party. All we could do was put out the philosophy that would provide an atmosphere in which such things could occur.

St. Andrew's Church burned down, and when the people in the community got together and they decided to build a complex which could fulfill the needs of that particular community. They built a multi-purpose building, they built a senior citizens residence, they put into this building a health service facility, they put in a day care facility, they put in a little store, grocery store, they put in a little second-hand clothing store; they did it, the people in the community did it. They set up a non-government Board of Directors to operate this whole complex. And the minister talks about free choice — they've got people going around talking to the people in the community of how they should deal with this place. He says he's monitoring it. They haven't talked to anybody in that community.

It just so happens that in this whole area all of the elected people are members of the New Democratic Party, but of course with the Conservatives, if anything smacks of NDP or socialism or social democracy it's bad, and as a result they talk to no one — no one. They haven't talked to the City Councillors of that area, they haven't talked to the members of the Legislative Assembly about that area, and surely to heavens, Mr. Chairman, for a politician to get elected in any particular area, he has to know what's going on in that area, but no one has talked to them. And I don't blame the staff, I don't blame the staff that he sends out in the area to talk to anybody because if a civil servant is seen talking to a member of the New Democratic Party it's almost the kiss of death, because the First Minister himself said publicly, "We'll go through the system and we'll ferret them out."

But this PR approach, and I am sorry I have to go after the member as an individual because I respect him as an individual, and I like him personally, but nevertheless he is being used as an instrument by the regressive, preservative government, who has gone back to 1966, dug out their old files, and they're operating in every instance — and I'll make the case when we get further down in the Estimates that this is so. But when he talks about free choice, free Manitoba — bull, excuse the expression, I don't know if that's parliamentary or not — because what they're doing is locking people in our area, and this one little area across the constituencies which are represented on this side of the House, represent some 78,000 people. And they're not giving us any choice, except to go down and sit at the Health Science Centre, take a number, take a number — just like a meat market, and sit there for an hour, two hours. He should have been there listening to the people last night, or had somebody on his behalf sitting there listening to them, instead of coming in here in his song and dance selling humbuggery, because that's all this government is doing, and they've used the best instrument they have because of his experience in PR, and the whole approach to health services in the Province of Manitoba is public relations, not protection of the public.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Winnipeg Centre usually talks very good sense, usually makes points that are certainly valid and should be acceptable, but I must say to my friend from Winnipeg Centre that he has certainly deviated from his record of performance today with those last remarks of his, because what he is saying, Mr. Chairman, has absolutely no foundation in fact and he knows it. It is not correct to say that we have not consulted either with politicians from the area, City Council or City Councillors from the area or people from the area. In fact yesterday, and it's only one occasion, yesterday senior officials in my department were in fact actually visiting in the community health centres themselves, and that is not the first time by any means, that there have either been consultations either at that end or this end with the people who belong, who consume the services of the community health centres, as well as those who direct them and serve on the boards.

You know, we've talked about this community health centres subject on virtually every item in these Estimates. We've ranged over to the extent that by the time we get to 3(t) there's going to be very little left to be said. That is what's happened on these Estimates, Mr. Chairman. Regardless of what item we're on, somebody wanders in after having been in the other committee or been in the Caucus Room working or being out serving one of his constituents — which is a legitimate, political obligation — they wander in here and inject themselves, catapult themselves into the debate

by sounding off on community health centres. It's been going on for a week now while the Honourable Member for St. Boniface and Seven Oaks and myself have attempted to debate the issues as they are laid out in the Estimates Book, item by item. I don't mind that but I think it should be noted for the record that it happens every hour through these particular Estimates, and the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre talks about children who go . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks on a point of privilege.

MR. MILLER: I wouldn't want the record to show that I, in any way, agree with what the minister is saying and by implication suggesting that I side with him in his remarks.

MR. SHERMAN: Well that's fine, Mr. Chairman, because I never suggested that. I gave the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks some credit for having stuck to the items on an appropriation by appropriation basis, but if he disputes that he's at liberty to do so.

The Member for Winnipeg Centre says that he raises a specific case of a specific individual, a child who had scabies, who couldn't be treated for the real reason at the Children's Clinic, at the Children's Centre because they wouldn't get at the reason, the cause of the scabies. I dispute that, Mr. Chairman, I don't know about that individual case. I'm prepared to sit down with my honourable friend and look into it. He knows from his own experience on the Treasury Benches that no government of any persuasion, with the gift of God, could attend in total compassion, total fairness to every single case that can arise because we're all subject to the human error and human judgments and human exasperations that arise in any situation down the line when a lot of people are involved. But I know from personal experience that the Children's Clinic, the Children's Centre at the Health Sciences Centre does seek out the causes of those afflictions, do send nurses . . . The Member for Seven Oaks shakes his head, he doesn't know what he's talking about. I know from personal experience — well, fine, he was shaking his head at something the Member for St. Johns was saying. Those nurses do go. —(Interjection)— No wonder he is shaking his head. They were talking about sex, they say, Mr. Chairman.

The nurses at the Children's Clinic, and my honourable friend from Winnipeg Centre knows, make a most dedicated and conscientious . . . And they deal with many difficult disadvantaged underprivileged cases, and he knows that, and make a most difficult dedicated effort, generally at their own expense in terms of time, and often at their own expense in terms of money, to go to the sources of those difficulties, to go to the sources of that illness and disease to try to remedy it at the source where the child lives. You can't always succeed in that. Maybe a nurse did that and failed in that, and somebody at the Community Health Centre did it and succeeded. Is that an indictment of the nurses and the service system at the Children's Clinic? I reject that entirely, Mr. Chairman.

The same applies to his comments about the direction of the Department of Health and Community Services. We have this year that is 7.2 percent higher than it was last year. That's better I believe, better than any other department in this government can say. That came about through concerted efforts, not entirely by me alone, but by the 33 members of our Caucus in support of me, but I played some small part in it. That doesn't reflect sitting back and allowing oneself to be used or to be manipulated. We wouldn't have had that 7.2 percent, because the province is not in fiscal or financial condition to provide it. We wouldn't have had it if I hadn't fought for it and my colleagues hadn't supported me in fighting for it.

It's a start; it's not the end. We know that. And I'd like to have 14 percent. It's a start. Hopefully, I'll get more next year. But to suggest that we're sitting back and allowing things just to slide simply is not true and I simply will not accept it unchallenged on the record, even from my great and good friend, the Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, first of all I wish to apologize to the Chair. I know how difficult it is to be in that position, but nevertheless when the Member for Minnedosa, from his seat, starts accusing me of being a headline hunter, it is rather provocative. —(Interjection)— But nevertheless the Minister has just demonstrated his ability in argument in trying to diffuse rather an emotional issue. But nevertheless one case doesn't make the point, I'm sure. I just mentioned one case to give the Minister something upon which to focus.

But, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to put on the record in no way am I criticizing the services at the Children's Centre, or at the General Hospital, I still call it — Health Sciences Centre — because these people do what they can, but nevertheless they are overloaded. The case is the

government's policy is not going to save the taxpayers money. It is going to cost them more money — more money — because they're locking it in to the fee for service basis, where everything has to go back to the doctor's office.

The policy of the Conservative Government has been enunciated over the years, and if the government is changing their policy then they should advise us. The Health Services Centre, the social service idea of providing more services through community clinics is the best system.

My colleague, the Member for Inkster, said last night that the government made a tactical error, that where we should have put one is out in Tuxedo, because they wouldn't let it disappear. It just so happens that we started where the need was greatest. But if you lock all of the system into the highly professionalized, organized — the biggest, the most powerful unions aren't the steelworkers and the rest of it; they're the doctors, the dentists, the professional people. And I don't want to get out of order, Mr. Chairman, but I'd love to get off on that tangent about organized power.

But nevertheless the case is that the philosophy of the government is to take us towards more professional types of service and rather using other alternatives. And all I rose to speak on is once again this government tries to make us out as a bunch of clucks, and maybe I help them, but nevertheless when you say "free choice", that's what we should have all across the board, that you're not locked into the most sophisticated type of service. You know, everybody in the country should not have to go to an ophthalmologist on every occasion. Certainly we need an ophthalmologist but if an Optician can solve the problem, they should go to an Optician. In the delivery of other health services, if it's a home environmental problem, you don't need a doctor; a doctor can do precious little. But please, Mr. Minister, don't keep going on this ludicrous argument that those people on this side of the House, all of them, are against free choice, because they're not. The philosophy of the government before was to move in the direction where people truly had a choice, truly had alternatives, and your colleagues, and you are but one, as you mentioned yourself, you have to deal with the results of the collective thinking. And this is what I was — perhaps using not the best choice of language — in selling to the public. And they are using you and your ability, which I respect, to get this false picture across to the province.

In the final analysis, though, the whole health services that you're trying to force us into . . . There is no choice, and it's going to cost us more, not less.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass; (f)—pass; (g) Health Education (1) Salaries—pass — the Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been waiting for a while, but learning a great deal while waiting to come to this item. I'd like to ask the Minister what studies are being conducted in order to reassess the department's attitude on the program named, "Building the Pieces Together?"

MR. SHERMAN: Nothing under this Branch at the present time, Mr. Chairman. The program "Building the Pieces Together" is in effect in all those school divisions who voted to have it. The materials are available to anyone asking for it. The only thing that has happened to "Building the Pieces Together" is that there were members, administrative personnel of the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba who were actively promoting the program in discussions and consultations with teachers and school trustees, essentially, that activity has been ordered suspended while we review the program and the objections that have been raised to it by some parents.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I don't have Hansard in front of me of five minutes ago, but I want to ask the Minister what I hope is the same question I asked before. Who is studying this program in the department?

MR. SHERMAN: The Directorate of the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba, the Department of Health and Community Services, essentially my office and the Department of Education, essentially the office of the Minister of Education.

That, Mr. Chairman, is the examination of "Building the Pieces Together" plus the discussions that will be necessary with parents on both sides of the question. It may go on for some months.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, once again, who is studying this program? Mr. Chairman, I'd better elaborate on this. The Minister has said more than once — and he has been consistent — that this program has been stopped insofar as the provision of assistance from whoever has been doing it, which I gather was the Alcoholism Foundation, whilst "suspended" was the word—

suspended, which means not stopped, nor started, but hanging somewhere in limbo— whilst research is taking place into the program. I asked the Minister twice, "Who is researching it?" I did not get an answer. The only named person I heard by designation was the Director of the Alcoholism Foundation. But I really want to know who is involved in doing this research because I want to know more about the extent of it before I launch into this discussion.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, the program has not been suspended. The availability of the materials has not been suspended. Those School Divisions that have it in place are still using it. What has been suspended is the promotion activity of the AFM, and there was some promotion of the program by the AFM. In other words, they were introducing the concept to School Divisions that didn't have it and informing the persons of influence in those School Divisions, both Trustees and Teachers, as to the program and as to the AFM's desire to have the program implemented in the schools if the Trustees saw fit to do so. That activity has ceased. That promotion has ceased, but the program itself is still in place and any Division asking for materials relative to it is still supplied those materials, but we do not have AFM personnel going out into School Divisions who do not have the program saying, "We have a program called Building the Pieces Together. Would you like to introduce it into your curriculum?"

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister has said on more than one occasion, and several times just in the last short while, used the word "suspended" and he also stated that the program was being studied— I think he used the word "researched", but maybe he likes the word "monitored"— but I had the impression— and I believe he intended us to have the impression— that there is a study going on which will result in a decision being made by the government in relation to this program. He's nodding his head. That being the case, I want to know who is doing it because I'm beginning to wonder if, indeed, it's being done at all and I don't think the Minister should leave me in the dark as to whether or not it's being done. My question is: Is it being done? My question is also: Who is doing it? My question is: How much effort is being put into the study? And my question is: When will we hear the results of that study?

MR. SHERMAN: It's correct I've used the term "suspended", Mr. Chairman, and I've used it in association with the term "promotion". The promotion has been suspended. Insofar as the study is concerned, it's a study that may go on until July. My answer to the Honourable Member is it is not being done by the Health Education Branch, although it may well be that that's where it should be done. At the present time it is being looked at by the Chairman and the Acting Managing Director of the Alcoholism Foundation, soon to be replaced by a permanent new Executive Director, by my department and myself, my Deputy-Minister and myself, and by the Minister of Education, and it will ultimately be looked at by Caucus and by Cabinet. That may take until July.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, it's helpful that the Minister has now given us some kind of a deadline. I didn't know that Caucus is involved in deciding on teaching tools and teaching programs, but if Caucus is, well, that's fine. I think that's a very healthy use of backbenchers. But Mr. Chairman, I do not yet know that someone is charged with the responsibility of reviewing this document, reviewing the program, and deciding whether or not to promote it. I now believe— and I'm drawing conclusions mostly from my failure in eliciting answers— that there's no active review, that it is being looked at casually and that, in the meantime, a program was stopped.

Mr. Chairman, think of this. Here this program has been explained, promoted to various School Divisions, who may or may not want to use it. The Alcoholism Foundation apparently thought it worthwhile doing, and this Minister has apparently said to them — and I've yet to get into the question of the independence of the Alcoholism Foundation — you shall stop promoting it, which means, Mr. Chairman, that in spite of what was spent to develop this, he's not saying it's a bad program, he's not saying it should not be used in the schools, he said it's up to them to use it. Who? It's up to School Trustees to use it. How do they find out about it? Well, the Alcoholism Foundation; you're not allowed to promote it. And I think from what he said that a decision has been made in advance because of certain complaints — and I've yet to find out what they are — as a result of which the promotion was ordered stopped by this Minister to the Alcoholism Foundation and I do not really believe that there is an ongoing, positive study taking place, and I'm saying that in spite of what the Minister may have intended. That's why I really want to know.

For example, a direct question is, has the Minister read this program yet, himself?

MR. SHERMAN: A direct answer, Mr. Chairman, is no. The decision to suspend promotion of the program was made by the Minister of Health and Community Services. Surely it is a prerogative

of the Minister in charge of his department to make some decisions at some point in time with respect to various programs in his department. I had a number of complaints — not only written complaints but personal complaints, persons coming to my office and persons coming up to me at public meetings — complaining about the program. The Minister of Education had also had a number of complaints about it. He and I discussed it. I consulted the Alcoholism Foundation about it, and as the member well knows, there have been changes in personnel at the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba. As the member well knows, changes in personnel, whether at the Alcoholism Foundation or whether in the government, whether in this Legislature, often preclude and imply changes in approach, changes in policy, changes in attitude, changes in philosophy.

The present directorate of the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba did not introduce, or conceive, or help design the program. They inherited the program. I ordered them to stop promoting it while we had a look at the program and had a look at the complaints that have come in to us. I do not have time to carry out an exhaustive review at this juncture of the Legislative Session. I intend to do that. In the meantime, anybody who wants it can have it, but the Winnipeg Regional Director and the WestMan Regional Director and their personnel of the AFM are not going into School Divisions promoting it.

That's all that's happened. I think that that's a fairly reasonable and responsible action and I think it's fully within the prerogative of a Minister of a department to do that.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, there is no question of the prerogative of the Minister to make decisions. It's his responsibility. But there's also no question about our right to challenge them and judge the basis for it. For example, and only as an example, Mr. Chairman, I think you probably heard the Minister of Finance say, "Well, I decided to refund money because the Law says I can do so."

Well, there's nobody questioning the right. This Minister certainly has the right to make decisions. I don't know yet the power he has over the Alcoholism Foundation to order them to do or not do anything. I've yet to find that out. But, he assumed that power obviously, because he ordered them to stop promoting it and that means that he made a decision. And he made the decision without a personal investigation but rather on the basis of consultation with some people, some written, some verbal protestations as a result of which he didn't stop it. That's the peculiar thing, Mr. Chairman. He ordered promotions stopped but he did not remove the program or its availability. Why? He says it's there, they can use it, but you shall not push it. It almost brings me back to thinking about junk foods and whether or not there's freedom of choice. He said you must not stop McDonalds from advertising, he especially says he likes the program. You must permit people to display their wares. But he said to the Alcohol Foundation, after he talked to the Minister of Education, you shall stop. Now we know that he never looked at it. I'm not critical of that. A Minister can't possibly deal with everything but when he makes a decision then that has to be based on something.

Is he prepared to inform us about the philosophic approach with which he disagreed, because he says when there are changes there are different philosophies involved, different attitudes, different biases. What philosophic change is there between his decision and that of any predecessor of his in dealing with this program of an educational nature dealing with health. Did he have the Health Education Branch which we're now dealing with, give him a review of the uses and abuses of the program, of the values and the disadvantages or did he react in a gut way to protest by individuals who may have phoned him or who may have seen him at a meeting or who may have written to him?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: I suppose, Mr. Chairman, I reacted in a gut way but I certainly did not react in a precipitous way. The complaints that I have received started coming to me in November at the very latest, it might even have been October. I can remember the particular beginning and the particular event but I'm not absolutely sure in my memory whether it was October or November, but certainly it was last fall. Let's say it was November. I did not act on the basis of the initial contacts and the initial complaints. I had many complaints subsequent to that through the next two months or two and a half months. —(Interjection)— Just let me finish this one point and then I'll come back to the nature of the complaints. During that period of time I was contacted by the Minister of Education about it because of the concerns that parents had expressed to him and he asked me whether we shouldn't be doing something about it or looking into it. Ultimately, I would say in perhaps mid-February, perhaps a month ago, I instructed the Acting Director of the Alcoholism Foundation, Mr. Jimmy Toal, who will be replaced by the new executive director on the 1st of May. I instructed him to instruct his staff to cease promotion of the program until the

government had had a chance to look at it and assess it and evaluate it. I didn't say to him we'll be able to complete that evaluation during the month of March. I never expected to be able to do it while the session was on or particularly while my Estimates were on. I wanted to take a personal hand in looking at it because I'm a parent too, although my children are beyond the age at which they would have that instruction in their classes. But I would like to take a personal hand in it.

Now, the Member for St. Boniface asked what are the natures of the complaints. The nature is that the material is disturbing to and upsetting to young children in that it takes a particular — possibly the Member for Winnipeg Centre could offer more information on the subject because he would be familiar with it from past years — but the nature essentially was that the material was too sophisticated and too clinical for young children. It posed questions that disturbed and concerned a lot of them. It asked them questions that caused them to have apprehension about their relationships with their own parents and their own siblings in their own households and that their children were coming home quite disturbed and quite upset reflecting the fact that they had been exercised in their classrooms by the kinds of material that they were being exposed to in this course.

On the basis of that, the Minister of Education and I concluded that we should not promote it any further until we'd had a chance to take an in-depth look at it. Now, as far as the individual school divisions are concerned, I have not interfered. I had no right to interfere, nor does the Minister of Education. —(Interjection)— Well, the school divisions who have elected to adopt it and implement it in the curriculum in their schools, have made that decision. Those school trustees are democratically elected, they make that decision, they're carrying on with it. All we are not doing through the Alcoholism Foundation is going into divisions — we are now not going into divisions that don't have it and sitting down over a cup of coffee with school trustees and saying, "Look it, here's a program that you should have." That's all that's happened.

The Member for St. Johns asks me what authority I have to interfere in the policies of the Alcoholism Foundation. I've never viewed it in that context. The Alcoholism Foundation is a part of the Department — albeit a free standing independent corporation but nonetheless funded by the taxpayers of Manitoba through my department and as such a part really of the Department of Health and Community Services. Surely the Minister of the department has a role to play in the policies that are implemented through the Alcoholism Foundation to the same degree that he has through the policies implemented in other components of the department. There is a board of the Alcoholism Foundation to be sure. They have concurred through their chairman in the decision to suspend promotion while we all have a look at the program and its content and consult with those parents who have raised objections.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, firstly, I must express regret that the Minister of Education isn't here. I'm sure we'll have opportunities to discuss it with him. But the Honourable Minister of Health made me think of the Minister of Education very rapidly when I was reminded of how the Minister of Education professed to have no participation or knowledge about the universities being instructed to raise their fees by a body which is appointed at a commission appointed by government. Now, this Minister has just used the expression that the Alcoholism Foundation is free-standing, independent and then he proceeded to say that he has a right to order them around. He has the right to tell them what to do. And the threat obviously is contained in what he also said and that is after all they're funded by us, so that we have a right to deal with them like other departments within the Department of Health.

Why is he fooling the board members or the public by saying they're free-standing and independent when he admits that he ordered them to stop it and he said they accepted it. What were they supposed to do? If he said to them, "I would like you to consider doing this I think it's bad," I think they'd be foolish not to pay a great deal of attention to him or resign or reject his suggestion. But he ordered them to do it, Mr. Chairman, and he ordered it on the basis of what some parents told them, parents complained. Then he says, and he described the objections as being very serious, if they are true, then what right does the Minister of Education have to permit this kind of activity to go on in the school system of this province? If it is true that there is serious concern about children being emotionally disrupted — I'm not using his words; I don't remember them accurately enough but surely he made it clear that there's a great danger to the emotional stability of children because of this program.

MR. SHERMAN: The parents said that.

MR. CHERNIACK: Ah, Mr. Chairman, the parents said that. Well, he took the parents' word for it enough to say, "Stop promoting it." He believed it enough. He didn't say stop promoting it in this or the other classroom where the parents complained and, Mr. Chairman, I think the parents had a right to do so and had a right to go to their School Board and work with their School Board and with the Principal and with the teachers rather than go to the Minister of Health, who isn't even responsible — I mean it in the sense that he's not charged with the responsibility of education of the children. So they go to the Minister of Health and they stop him at meetings, and they phone him up and they complain to him, when the Minister of Education, who sits right behind him and is responsible for the education of our children, permits something to go on which apparently is alleged to be dangerous.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my point is, I still say this Minister reacted, and I must say one of the very intriguing features to all this is that — how did this come to our attention? Well, I'll tell you how it came to my attention. I was told that there was a report somewhere that the Minister of Education was speaking in some School Division District and was asked, "Do you know this book?" And he said, "I know it. I don't like it."

So, I wrote to the Minister of Education and I said, "I am informed that you were asked about a manual whose title was something like "Bringing the Pieces Together", that you stated you had read it and didn't agree with it." And I said, "I'd appreciate it if you could let me have a copy of the manual and information on where it is being used, and how and by whom, and to whom it is being distributed."

Mr. Chairman, I had no knowledge about what this program was about. I had no idea what it was about. I just knew the Minister of Education expressed an opinion about something going on in the school system. So I asked for information and I asked him who is dealing with it, and under what circumstances, because I share the concern that other members have for the education of our children.

I received a reply from him which reads, "According to the notation on the fly leaf, this program was co-ordinated under the direction of the Alcoholism Foundation," and he gives their address. "I am informed that the manual is being used in one or more schools in each of 20 School Divisions at the present time. I regret that I do not have an extra copy for you, but I expect that the Alcoholism Foundation could provide you with one."

So, Mr. Chairman, I wrote to the Alcoholism Foundation and they were kind enough to lend me this copy, and I use the word "lend" advisably because they requested that it be returned to them on or before March 19th, and to keep my record clear I must tell you that I phoned them on March 19th and received an extension. In the interval I read — well, I skimmed it — I had a few other people read it whose opinions I respect, and I was informed by them and I came to my own conclusion that this is a very positive, even an exciting, teaching tool.

Mr. Chairman, I don't know the dangers to which our school system puts a child to make a child think or react or relate, and much of what I see here is the effort to make children relate to themselves and to other human beings, and if that is all, then that's great. I think it's marvelous to have a mind challenged, to have emotions challenged. But if it is what this Minister accepted to the extent of cutting out a promotion, then I say to him he did too much or too little, too little because he's never looked at it himself, nor has he told us that he has an educated report on it. He's not told us that. He may have had. But he has not told us that a person, whose expertise he respects, has told him that these dangers are there, and therefore he did too little, especially ordering a free-standing, independent body to stop promoting a document which they apparently were promoting, or he did too little by not saying, "My, there's something that alerts me to a concern I have."

And the Minister of Education with whom I meet at least once a week and who sits right behind me, and who is on the same Committee, the HESP Committee, although I think it's not called that any more but it's a Committee dealing with Education and Health, has not himself entered into it. He's read it apparently. He doesn't think it's important enough, apparently, to step in the school system and say, "Stop using that dangerous program." He sits there and, as you recall, Mr. Chairman, I asked him the questions first. I didn't know the Minister of Health stopped it. I thought it was the Minister of Education that did. As a matter of fact, when I started asking questions I didn't even know it was stopped, but the last time I asked the Minister of Education he said, "Well, it's the Minister of Health who did it", and to me, I drew the inference from what he said that it's not my program, it's not my doing.

I asked the Minister of Health what he was doing and he told me that he was stopping it, so I wrote a letter to somebody to complain and I told him it was the Minister of Health that's stopping it, and I find it most interesting of all, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister of Education didn't send a copy of the letter that he wrote to this person, didn't send it to the Honourable the HOUSE Leader. He didn't send it to members of the Caucus. He sent a copy to the Premier. Why to the Premier?

well, my assumption is that the Premier had gotten involved in this —(Interjection)— Well, I don't know if the Premier gets copies of all letters that are sent by all Ministers, but I would say that the Premier probably got this kind of response, and if the Premier did then surely the Premier should have made sure that there's a proper investigation.

Now, by next July, this Minister, having consulted with various people and with his Caucus, is going to make a decision about the future of this program. At least, that's what I believe he's going to do. And in the meantime, there is a program being delivered by, according to the Minister of Education, one or more schools in each of 20 School Divisions.

MR. SHERMAN: Unimpeded.

MR. CHERNIACK: Unimpeded, the Minister of Health says. But yet he said to the Alcoholism Foundation, "You stop promoting it." He didn't say, "There's a restraint program, there's money involved." He didn't say that. He said, "You cut it out because I had calls from some parents."

Well, Mr. Chairman, I have to say that I am not the expert. I am not the Child Psychiatrist who should be informing the Minister. I am not the educator who should be informing the Minister. I am not the Social Worker who should be informing the Minister. But I must tell him that it seems to me that this is a very exciting teaching device. Now, I suppose if the teacher doesn't know how to handle it, the teacher shouldn't be doing it, but that's what our Department of Education is for. That's why you have Principals. That's why you have directors of programs, and that's why it may well be necessary to help teachers deal with this program.

You know, Mr. Chairman, I happened to open this just now, and I don't even know what program I opened it in, but there are various matters that are dealt with, and here is one dealing with decision making predicaments and they're talking about the teacher opens a discussion by asking the class to think of the number of decisions they make in a day, getting up — that's a decision, going to school, playing with a friend. And then they start talking about decisions that they have made. Teacher explains how to play the game that is now being played on what decisions have been made. And then they are asked which decision was hardest for you to make in this game? Did some decisions take a long time? If so, name them, explain why you thought this happened. Was it hard to make a decision when you had to do it as quickly as possible?

Well, this Minister said that he got a complaint — I didn't know I was going to relate this program I happen to be reading to the Minister's own decision making process — but he got a complaint in October or November and by February he made a decision, which decision was to order the Alcoholism Foundation not to proceed and he made that decision to do what? To make a decision next July after having some review made. Well, these are children who apparently in this one class would be dealing with decision making, children grades 4 to 6. I'm skipping, of course, Mr. Chairman, and I tell you in advance, I just happened to open this at this program and I'm not too familiar with this particular one. In concluding the activity the teacher points out that we make a lot of decisions in one day which we don't even consider decisions. This may be because they've become almost routine, i.e. deciding how much time to brush one's hair doesn't usually cause much of a problem. Perhaps if we slowed down to observe how and why we make those small decisions daily, we might find clues for easier ways to make bigger decisions.

Mr. Chairman, maybe this is too elementary. I mean, the grade, because I think governments could handle this kind of problem and deal with it. But nevertheless it's a pretty good introduction. Well, they reach a stage, Mr. Chairman, where they write a letter to a parent. Here is the letter. "Dear (blank), Hi. oday at school we solved some problems. The problems we solved came from the Building the Pieces Together book. I would like to tell you about how I solved some of the problems, what I learned from doing this. Could we make some time for talking about these things? If you would like to know more about how we use the Building the Pieces Together book, you can talk with my teacher. My teacher's name is so and so. You can phone or I can take a note to school. The school's phone number is so and so." There is the challenge, Mr. Chairman. That is the upsetting thing for parents to receive this terribly challenging letter saying hey mom, hey dad, let's talk about some of the things we did at school today.

Mr. Chairman, I suppose there are — well, I know, you can see, that this is a pretty voluminous book. And they deal with other matters. And some parents who don't want to face their children who send their kids to school and say, well, they're there. And when they come back we'll feed them whatever we have, we'll deal with all we've been taught in the nutrition aspect by the department and then they won't have nothing to do with it.

Mr. Chairman, to me, the reason I said this is exciting is that it is an opportunity for the parent to know what the child discussed i school and to become involved in it and to phone the teacher and say hey, teacher, my child came home and is concerned, my child came home and is a little

disturbed because maybe there's something in this program that made my child think that the decision that daddy made might be something to discuss at home. That's possible, Mr. Chairman. It is quite possible. It is possible that in decision making one can say, well, why did you do so and so. Well, because daddy told me to do so and so. Why did daddy tell you to do so and so? Well, now there's a question. Maybe a child shouldn't be allowed to consider it. But, Mr. Chairman, I think this is, as I say, an exciting, important teaching device. —(Interjection)— I am reminded that this is the Year of the Child but not for this Minister. For this Minister it is the Year of the Parent. And, Mr. Chairman, I believe that parents should be involved in the educational process. Why are they talking to the Minister of Health, Mr. Chairman? What has the Minister of Health got to do with the education of their children? Well, obviously enough to feel that there are teaching tools that are good in the health field as well and some of them have to do with arriving at a more mature approach to various problems one faces in life.

But, Mr. Chairman, I have come to the conclusion and I think fairly, that the Minister reacted and I am told and I can't vouch for it but I'm sure the Minister of Education will deny it, that when asked on one occasion what he thought about this he said oh, it's some kind of socialist program. And, I would believe that because his leader would certainly always, if there's anything that is questionable, anything that is not quite Progressive Conservative but maybe progressive in any other way, he will damn it immediately by calling socialist and invite to people that scare that boogy man concept that — well, Marxism is worse, even than socialism. And that's why he uses Marxism, of course. He too is a follower of Marxism in the sense that he's very often to me the kind of a clown that Harpo Marx is but that's a comedian whom I respect highly, I mean Harpo Marx, so I shouldn't develop that theme too much.

Mr. Chairman, I would like this Minister who's going to have the weekend off, and he's going to have Tuesday off and he's going to have Wednesday off, to borrow this book. Now, maybe he has enough pull with the Alcoholism Foundation that they will lend it to him for a longer period of time but he could really leaf through this and see just what it is he is doing.

Here's another program I opened up. Open ended sentences. When I'm 30 I expect to be (blank). A child is asked to decide what that child expects to be when he's 30. When I need help I usually turn to (blank). Maybe the danger is that that child turns to a teacher rather than to a parent. What really bugs me is (blank). That's a terribly dangerous thing to put in the mind of a child. To answer what really bugs the child. Next, it gets really unfair when (blank). Oh, here the child is being asked to conceive of what is really unfair and here are some of the worksheets that were provided by a grade 4 student. When I'm 30 I expect to be just me. You know, I think that that's really great, Mr. Chairman, that a child at school, after having gone through a program can say, when I'm 30 I expect to be just me. I think that's one of the smartest answers that one could expect. Just me. And that's pretty important. I didn't realize it. When I need help I usually turn to my mom or my dad. Oh, look at that, Mr. Chairman. What really bugs me is I am so short. Mr. Chairman, isn't that really the essence? Hee is a child who faces up to the fact and admits it, what really bugs me is that I am so short. And I think that's pretty important for a child to admit what really bugs me is I'm so short, because, Mr. Chairman, there are so many people that go around who won't admit to themselves just what bugs them. And, Mr. Chairman, you know, I'm just opening this book at random and I have yet found nothing that justifies this attitude by the Minister of Health.

Let me conclude my comments, and invite the Minister to respond. The participating officers who supported the program in its development are Child Development and Support Services, the Department of Education, Province of Manitoba, the Ministry of Corrective and Rehabilitative Services, Province of Manitoba, Education Services of Department of Health and Social Development, Province of Manitoba, the Non Medical Use of Drugs Directorate, Health Protection Branch, Department of Health and Welfare, Government of Canada, and the Minister of Health having received some phone calls from parents said, stop promoting this. It might be dangerous. And, Mr. Chairman, it reminds me in a way the First Minister called in the Deputy Minister of Education two days before he had the right to do so and said get out of here, you're fired. And, it's the same mentality, Mr. Chairman, that would take a program that has been developed over some period of time by people in government and say stop promoting it and say it too, and I have to repeat, to a free standing, independent body of people who are probably very much concerned about the welfare of the Manitobans and starting down with children, and saying to them, I order you to stop promoting it. Well, I think that he's in two ways. I said earlier, either too little or too much. He did too little or he did too much. And, I don't think that it's satisfactory to know that this cloud that he has cast on the program along with the Minister of Education who I believe his colleague is, I'd even say his confederate in this decision or this non-decision, one way or the other are going to wait until July when they've had casual reviews and, Mr. Chairman, I repeat, I don't know one person, the Minister's not named one person who's charged with the responsibility of reviewing

this program and reporting.

Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition has just come in and he obviously doesn't know very much about what we've already discussed but he is very much concerned with this program and he will make comment but I'm sure that one of the comments he will deal with is what do the school boards think about it, what do the school teachers think about it, what do the principals think about it, what do the superintendents think about it, what do child psychologists think about it, what do all the people who are involved professionally with a background, think about the program and where are the parents and what do parents think about it? What attempt was made to find out the survey.

So that, Mr. Chairman, I'm looking forward to hearing more from the Minister on this and he said perhaps this is the department that should have been looking at it. Mr. Chairman, I waited, I've waited, and it's true, I was able to attend the other committee meeting —(Interjection)— I waited to get down to this section because I can't conceive just where else this would be reviewed but he says it's not being reviewed in this division and Mr. Chairman, it's not being reviewed. I state my inference from what I do, from what was said this is not being reviewed actively. This is being set aside and eventually the caucus is going to deal with it. How and on what basis and with what expertise I have yet to learn but after the caucus deals with it the Minister says he will make a further decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Where is it being reviewed, Mr. Chairman, the honourable member asks. It's not being reviewed under this particular appropriation or this particular branch because I gave him an honest answer on that subject. It's being reviewed, in the Estimates process it's being reviewed and dealt with or I had assumed it would be reviewed and dealt with under the appropriation on the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba. I'm fully prepared to deal with it here. Obviously we're dealing with it here. But, the member asked me where is this being dealt with or where is it being reviewed? I said, no, it isn't being reviewed under that branch. We would be dealing with it under the Alcoholism Foundation the Minister responsible for the Alcoholism Foundation that is where I would expect us to explore and examine programs of the Alcoholism Foundation.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the Members Opposite from time to time have fun and play their little games about performances on this side of the House and they accused me of certain kinds of performances but I take a far, far distant back seat, Mr. Chairman, to the Member for St. Johns. We've just seen one of the classic examples of his most theatrical most dramatic, most fictional kind of performances and posturing. I used to have a professor at the university of Manitoba who used to teach us in history and he would take out a huge volume of history that was written in Russian and we'd be dealing with the history of mother Russia and he would say, "now translating loosely from the Russian," and he would spiel off great passages to us in English which he was presenting to us as being translated loosely from the Russian. The fact of the matter was, and we all knew it, that he had the English translation superimposed or pasted onto the pages. The Honourable Member for St. Johns talks about arbitrary selections, selecting at random. He has the audacity to do that when he comes into the House with all the pages marked, paper markings, paper tabs, white tabs, all marked with the pages that he wants to refer to. He's gone through and made his selection, but this is random, this is random reporting. He's made all his selections.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Johns on a point of privilege.

MR. CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I said from my seat that I've never questioned the truthfulness of the Minister of Health, but, Mr. Chairman, he is challenging the truthfulness of what I said and I said at random and I meant at random and all those pieces of paper are other people's notes and Mr. Chairman, I did not open it up at any of those.

The minister should have enough courtesy, no I shouldn't say that, the minister doesn't have to believe me, but I repeat Mr. Chairman, that when I said that I select at random, indeed I did and I suggest to him just to conclude my privilege, that he take that document and he select it at random and find his own stuff there. But his suggestion that I deliberately attempted to mislead him or anybody else is both unfair and ungracious, and I ask him to withdraw that statement.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member for St. Johns tells me that that's the case, naturally I accept his word for it. I take his word for it. Nonetheless, he did select "at random" three or four pages from what is a pretty thick, substantial report, from what is a pretty big document. At the very least, his selection at random can be described as selections out of context in terms of the overall report.

Now, Mr. Chairman, just let us get a few facts straight before they're left distorted on the record. The Member for St. Johns talks about the government saying stop, or the minister saying stop promoting this, it might be dangerous. I never used the term dangerous. I've not used the term dangerous at any point in time in discussing this inside or outside the House, I did not use it with the Acting Executive Director of the Alcoholism Foundation. He is the one who's brought in the spectre of danger, and dangerousness. —(Interjection)— I never used the term dangerous. I said some parents and a substantial number had raised concerns about it and we agreed and discussed among ourselves and discussed with the Alcoholism Foundation, and I instructed the Acting Executive Director of the Alcoholism Foundation to stop the promotion of it while we had a chance to consult with parents and to review the program.

Now, he has made much of the fact that I haven't done anything about the School Divisions and the school trustees that have it in place. I have no right to do that, Mr. Chairman. The School Divisions and school trustees are elected by their own constituents, they have made their decision to have the program in their schools. He says that I did too little or too much, that I should have gone, taking the perspective or taking the approach that I did too little, that I should have then gone and done something or through the Minister of Education done something with the parents in terms of having it taken out of those schools.

I said to those parents who approached me about it, Mr. Chairman, you will have to deal with your elected school trustees, you will have to deal with your School Divisions. We can't instruct that the material be taken out of those School Divisions. Your elected school trustees decided to put it in those Divisions. All we have done and the Honourable Member for St. Johns can't seem to understand this or at least if he does, he certainly does a good job of disguising his apparent interpretation of it, is stop promoting it. I told the Alcoholism Foundation that we do not want salesmanship on it. —(Interjection)— It may well be good and if it is good, it will stay, if it's bad, obviously some other action will have to be taken. We're not going to make that kind of decision until we've had a chance to evaluate it. He asks why something hasn't been done with respect to the School Divisions, that's the answer. It's up to the School Divisions. —(Interjection)— The Minister of Education will have to answer for himself, but it is a program after all that was developed and introduced by the Alcoholism Foundation, not by the Department of Education.

So, Mr. Chairman, I think that I have acted in the only responsible way possible on this subject. If the Member for St. Johns is suggesting to me that people's opinions don't count, that parents or any citizens that have particular concerns in number about a particular subject and who complain to the government about it are not to be heard, are to be rejected out of hand or to be ignored, then that's fine, he'll have to live with that kind of approach. That is not my response to that kind of unhappiness, or that kind of anxiety. I had sufficient grievances about it that I felt that in the interests of the system itself, and in the interests of responsibility that we should not promote it further until we'd had a chance to have a look at it. —(Interjection)— I certainly will, as I said earlier, I expected this debate under the AFM appropriation, and as I told the honourable member this morning I'm fully prepared to provide him with the arguments that were conveyed to me. I had not expected it under Health Education, I don't mind that it's under Health Education and I will certainly convey those arguments to him. They were sufficient arguments, substantial in number, enough that I think a Minister of the Crown or any legislator has a responsibility to respond to them, to do something about it. But to go beyond that and order the School to interfere in a decision of the school division is quite a different thing.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Johns has quoted four or five pages from that report. There might not have been anything in those particular pages that disturbed the parents who got in touch with me, but obviously there were things on other pages that did. They didn't do this on whim, they did it out of sincerely held convictions, out of sincerely held concern. If he goes fairly through the entire report, I'm sure he'll find pages in there, arguments and presentations in there which he would have to concede do contain the possibility for upsetting certain parents, being misunderstood by certain parents, being misunderstood by certain children. That is not to say the program is bad, I don't know that it's bad. We have to evaluate it, we have to examine it to determine whether or not we think it is worthwhile or not worthwhile, and that process will be carried out. But, in the meantime, because of the concerns raised, surely out of respect for the democratic process, it's reasonable to ask that promotion of the program be suspended without interfering in the decisions of the School Divisions themselves.

The Member for St. Johns has made considerable of that point and I put it to him whether or not he, as minister of the Crown, or as a private member of this Legislature does not react to concerns that are brought to him by his constituents or by the public. He accuses me of reacting, of course I reacted, I reacted out of a sincerely felt conviction of responsibility for those concerns raised.

He's made considerable, or attempted to make considerable of the fact that I candidly and

apprised him of the fact that the first complaints came to me some two and a half month before I acted on them. I once again put it to you, which is the fairer way to react. To react immediately, or to think about it, to see whether they were just isolated instances or whether there was really some substantial support for that kind of opposition position. When it became obvious that there were certainly more than a few, certainly more than a handful of persons concerned, then I felt it was reasonable to take the action that we took, and I don't back away from having taken that action as Minister. I see nothing wrong with the Minister responsible for the Alcoholism Foundation making decisions relative to AFM policies and programs. I'm quite sure that the previous minister would disagree with me, the minister formerly responsible for the Alcoholism Foundation and that's his prerogative. He might well disagree with me, but I know him well enough to know that he would concede that we have a right to disagree, and that if I feel certain AFM programs are not in the best interests of the people of Manitoba that I have a responsibility, yes, to react to anxieties and concerns that are raised. I have to justify that and I will. Once we've evaluated the program it may well remain in force, there may be nothing changes changed, but I can certainly justify suspending promotion of it when considerable numbers of concerns are raised about it.

The Member for St. Johns cites a particular question and answer exchange on one of the aages in which a young pupil was asked to describe what really bugs him and he wrote, "What really bugs me is that I'm so short." Well, Mr. Chairman, what really bugs the Member for St. Johns is that he's no longer a Member of the Treasury Benches, that's what really bugs him, because he resents the fact that some others of us in the Chamber have a chance to meet and live up to the responsibilities that embers of the Treasury Bench carry. And he deplores the fact that a Member of the Treasury Bench should meet that kind of responsibility and make a decision. —(Interjection)— And I don't back away from that decision for one second.

As far as the reference to my Leader is concerned, I want to disabuse the Membe for St. Johns of that impression right now and in total, Mr. Chairman. I have never consulted, nor has my Leader ever discussed with me at any time this program, "Building the Pieces Together." I don't know what my Leader feels about it. All I know is that a number of parents are concerned about it, we have a responsibility as government to respond to those concerns. We have done nothing other than say, "Fine, we'll have a look at it," and in the meantime we won't promote it. How the Member for St. Johns can argue with that in all democratic conscience, and I say democratic, not New Democratic, I don't know, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I wish to discuss this program at some length, but at this point I would like to ask the minister some questions.

First, I would like the minister to indicate, if he would, where he first received and by what means he first received objections to this program.

MR. SHERMAN: I think the first instance, Mr. Chairman, was at a meeting in Gimli when a number of residents of the area and constituents of the Evergreen School Division came up to me and spoke to me personally about it.

MR. PAWLEY: Is it as a result of that meeting, that the minister saw fit to communicate directly with parents in the Evergreen School Division?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, I can't say that it is a result directly of that meeting, that was one of the contacts. I also had letters, I've had other contacts but the Honourable Member asked me where it all began. I'm citing to him, where as I recall, it all began.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the minister that in his letter of January 10th to a Mrs. Vivian L. Schoen, one of the objectors, written by special assistant Mr. Burns, words are to the effect, "Mr. Sherman has advised me that he is equally concerned about the effects of this program and has instructed the Alcoholic Foundation of Manitoba to stop promoting it, effective immediately."

Now, the minister in his comments just a few moments ago emphasized that he had only stopped it so that there would be an evaluation of the program, not that he was opposed to the program, but that he was going to evaluate the program itself. The letter which was sent and which was used afterwards by the this particular group of parents makes no reference to any future evaluation or consideration of the program by him or by his Department. I would like the minister if he would to indicate why he would not have indicated that to the concerned parents. As the minister surely can see, the letter reads as though he is opposed to the program, that he is ordering that program

to be stopped immediately. There's no reference to any future evaluation of the program.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, did that letter go out over my signature or my Special Assistant's signature?

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, the letter, and I'll read the letter into the record — the letter reads "The Honourable L. R. Sherman has asked me to write you and thank you for your letter of December 21, 1978. Regarding your concerns on the subject taught in your local school Building the Pieces Together, Mr. Sherman has advised me that he is equally concerned about the effects of this program, and has instructed the Alcohol Foundation of Manitoba to stop promoting it effective immediately. As for individual, local situations, however, parents will, of course, have to deal with their own elected school trustees. Yours sincerely, J. R. Burns, Special Assistant to the Minister of Health and Community Services."

MR. SHERMAN: Well, all I can say, Mr. Chairman, is that that accurately sums up the substance of the message that my Special Assistant would have received from me in terms of the response requirement to that particular correspondent, but it certainly doesn't, and was not intended to cover the entire subject.

The honourable member knows himself that there is a considerable volume of mail to be dealt with in any department. I've dealt with as expeditiously as possible, and not all subjects are covered in their entirety. The point that I had made to my Special Assistant, which he accurately translated, was that I was concerned because I'd had concerns expressed to me that naturally produced concern on my part, and that I was going to move to have the promotion of the program suspended. It's certainly not the fault of my Special Assistant that there is no fuller elaboration of what future course might be taken. That might have been an oversight on my part but I suspect it was rather that the essential message I wanted to get across was that I was concerned and that promotion would be suspended.

MR. PAWLEY: When the minister instructed his Special Assistant to convey those views to him, was he at that time aware of the many, many evaluations that had already taken place pertaining to this program, and I would refer the minister if I could to a series of evaluations, not only in the Department of Education, but in the Department of Health and Social Development, Corrections, Rehabilitation Services, Non-Medical Use of Drugs Directorate, the Alcoholic Foundation of Manitoba, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the School of Social Work, Lakehead University, Child Care Services, the Faculty of Education, the University of Manitoba, the Association of School Superintendents, the Child Guidance Clinic, the Faculty of Education, the University of Regina, the Manitoba Medical Association and numerous others that were involved in reviewing and evaluating the program before the program was offered in the classroom. Was the minister also aware of the support which the Conference of Mennonites in Canada offered to the program within the Evergreen School Division at the time that he saw fit, through his Special Assistant, to disassociate himself from the program?

MR. SHERMAN: I can't say I was aware of all of them, Mr. Chairman, no, but I was certainly aware of some of them and I acknowledge all those that the Leader of the Opposition has cited. But that doesn't alter the prerogative or the responsibility of a minister to respond to the concerns of citizens, and of parents. I might say that I am in favour of capital punishment. I'm aware of all the evaluations that have been done on the subject of capital punishment, and the deterrent effect and the desirability of having a law in this land that prohibits capital punishment. Those are valid evaluations. There also are people in the community who believe in the other side of the question. I heard from parents who are the most closely associated with children as I'm sure my honourable friend would concede — I heard from parents as to their concerns. Regardless of the professional reviews and evaluations that have been carried out, I respect the views and concerns of those parents, and I suggest that if the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is trying to pretend that he doesn't, then he's posturing for political reasons because I know that he responds to those concerns himself.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, did the minister provide his endorsement, either personally or through his Special Assistant, Mr. Burns, that his letter plus the letter of the Minister of — his letter, I'll leave aside the Minister of Education, that his letter could be used as support by the petitioners to the Evergreen School Division in order to have the program removed from the series of studies within the Evergreen School Division?

MR. SHERMAN: Just let me be sure that I have the question accurately, Mr. Chairman. The

the Leader of the Opposition, is asking me whether I indicated, through my Special Assistant, that my letter to that correspondent could be used as support by those petitioners?

MR. PAWEEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to elaborate. When the minister wrote, through his Special Assistant, on January 10, 1979, to the protesters, through his Special Assistant, Mr. Burns, a petition then was assembled and put together by the various complainants, signed by some 28 parents. We're not speaking about a large group of parents, but 28, and certainly we respect the concerns of 28 parents as part and parcel. But I would like to read, Mr. Chairman, into the record the petition that was submitted to the Evergreen School Division.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, would the Honourable, the Leader of the Opposition ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Minister on a point of order.

MR. SHERMAN: Would the Honourable, the Leader of the Opposition, give me time, one minute or one-half minute to respond to his question before the clock runs out?

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Charrman, if there is time I would like to elaborate because the minister found it very difficult to deal with my question understandably, and therefore I feel I must elaborate in order to be fair and to be just to the minister.

MR. SHERMAN: May I ask the Honourable, the Leader of the Opposition, to give me the 20 seconds now, and I'll give the floor back to him. On the basis of my understanding of the question

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition will relinquish the floor? The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: On the basis of my understanding of his question to me, Mr. Chairman, no, I have no recollection of advising them that they could use it as support or endorsement, but I will check on that.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I believe we've reached the very crux of this matter. The minister saw fit, along with his colleague, the Minister of Education, to allow themselves to be used by a pressure group, a lobby group — the letter which was submitted by the Minister of Health and Social Development, was then used by this group in their representations to the Evergreen School Board to represent to them that they had the full blessing and support of the Minister of Health and Social Development, plus the Minister of Education. I must say, I must say, Mr. Chairman, so that there need be no misunderstanding, that upon a reading of the letter which was forwarded to the protesters by the Minister of Health's office there could be no misunderstanding as to the Minister of Health's position. He may be attempting today to modify that position by saying he was really intending to evaluate the program later, but to stop the program temporarily. That's not what the letter states.

And what happened, Mr. Chairman, is that the petitioners, the petitioners, and I would like to read the petition into the record so that the minister will see how he participated, along with a group, not a sizable group of parents, in lobbying, in pressuring the local School Board, elected by the local people in Evergreen School Division, to cease the operation of this program; how he permitted himself to be used, to be used, Mr. Chairman, by the group of parents which he was dealing with because of the ill-handling of this matter on the part of the minister himself.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On a point of privilege. The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: I do have a point of privilege. There was never any stopping of the program. I don't know how many times that point has to be made. They were instructed to stop promoting it, to stop selling it, to stop doing what the honourable member for Selkirk is doing in promoting and selling a position. The program is in place; they can ask for it. It may not be worth having in place but it is in place. But I wish the Honourable, the Leader of the Opposition would stick to the truth, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am not aware that that is a point of order. "On behalf of the parents of the children in Grades 4, 5 and 6 in the Winnipeg Beach School," this is the petition, "I am

presenting to the Board of Trustees of the Evergreen School Division the following petition in regards to the Building the Pieces Together program. The names on the petition represent over 80 percent of the parents and are by far," though there's only 28 names on the petition, "represent over 80 percent of the parents and are by far the majority of parents who are concerned about their children. We demand that the implementation of this program cease and that this School Board should show some responsibility, and start asking questions about how such a program got introduced and by who, and for what reasons. It seems that the relationship between this Board and its hired Superintendent, until such is reversed, and that it is the case of the tail wagging the dog.

"We trust after this incident there will be a greater deal of responsibility accepted by the elected members of the Board and they will not be led down the garden path so easily. Perhaps the qualifications of our Superintendent should be looked into, as he has caused a lot of hard feelings."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. The hour being 4:30 p.m. Committee rise. By leave . . .

MR. SHERMAN: Certainly, certainly, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, want to make our meaning perfectly clear to this referring to the Superintendent, anyone else who is mistaking kindness for weakness, that we are prepared to do whatever is necessary to stop this and any other needless programs that they come up with. following are the responses that I have received from the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health and Community Services of the Province of Manitoba, I would like to read these out for everyone to hear. think that these responses should remove any doubts about this program, and I'm sure that the Board will see fit to remove it, to remove it from this division, letters of the Minister of Health, Social Development, the Minister of Education used as support by this group.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour being 4:30 p.m. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.
The Chairman reported upon the Committee's deliberations to Mr. Speaker and requested leave to sit again.

IN SESSION

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. KOVNATS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, that the report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: We are now under Private Members' Hour. The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSON: I believe there was agreement reached earlier that we would dispense with Private MembeHour today so I would move, sec by the Member for Seven Oaks that the House do now adjourn. MOTION presented and carried and the House accordingly adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:30 Monday afternoon.