

Wednesday, 9 April 1980

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA  
Wednesday, 9 April 1980

Time: 2:30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell): Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . .

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. ABE KOVNATS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directed me to report same, and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Virden that report of committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. STERLING R. LYON (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement to make to the House. Copies are available.

Mr. Speaker, I have an important announcement today concerning relief to Manitobans faced with rising education and municipal taxes. The government has been concerned about the general increase in municipal and education taxes throughout the province. As a government, we have always been committed to providing assistance where it is genuinely needed.

I make this statement today, prior to the 1980 Budget, to ensure that changes are reflected on the 1980 municipal tax statements which are now being prepared. I can report today that there will be an enhanced minimum tax credit which will be more than sufficient to offset most general municipal and education property tax rate increases throughout the province on average homes in 1980.

Mr. Speaker, the minimum property tax credit will be increased by \$100, from \$225 to \$325, effective this year. This is an increase of 44 percent in the general minimum property tax credit, and is equivalent to a property tax reduction of more than 14 mills on the average home in Winnipeg assessed at \$7,000.00. Mr. Speaker, for homes assessed at lower levels, it will amount to a larger offset against mill rate increases, providing maximum assistance to those who reside in lower assessed homes.

Renters will also benefit from the increased minimum when claiming their 1980 property tax credits in the spring of 1981.

Mr. Speaker, in Winnipeg school divisions, for homes assessed at \$7,000, this will mean an actual reduction in the net school tax payable. When both municipal and school tax increases are taken into account in the city of Winnipeg, the new minimum will provide homeowners with an actual net property tax reduction in all but two divisions operating in the city.

For most families in homes assessed at less than \$7,000, the enriched minimum will produce actual decreases in net property taxes payable.

The second stage that I am announcing today involves the pensioners' school tax assistance program. Mr. Speaker, we can meet the needs of our pensioner homeowners more effectively by calculating the pensioners' school tax assistance on top of the new minimum property tax credit, rather than on the maximum as was the case in 1979. We will immediately increase the assistance available under this program from \$100 to \$175.00. These revisions ensure that all

pensioner homeowners with school taxes up to \$500 will receive sufficient provincial assistance to offset the full amount. This assistance will be provided when they pay their property taxes.

In the Winnipeg School Division No. 1, for example, the new measure will guarantee all pensioners will homes assessed up to \$5,900 will not pay school taxes. On a home assessed at \$7,000, the enhanced assistance will provide pensioner homeowners with sufficient assistance to cover approximately 85 percent of the total school levy. Income related assistance through the income tax system is above and beyond this level.

In addition, senior citizen renters are eligible for assistance under the SAFER program.

The enrichment in provincial assistance to relieve school taxes and general property tax rates will cost an estimated \$20 million in 1980-81, over and above the approximate \$116 million allotted for the program already in the 1980-81 Estimates. Provision for the increase will be included in supplementary Estimates to be tabled with the Budget, Mr. Speaker.

Any changes in the maximum property tax rebates and adjustment to the general tax rebates in effect in Manitoba and other such specific measures will, of course, be dealt with in this year's Budget Address. While I am not in a position, Mr. Speaker, to discuss such possible changes at this time, I can assure the House that our intention remains unchanged, to ensure that wherever possible, provincial assistance programs are designed to provide maximum assistance to those genuinely in need.

Mr. Speaker, may I add that there are attached to the statement, for the benefit of honourable members, illustrative tables showing the general impact of the \$100 increase in the basic property tax credit. While three of the tables are based on the city of Winnipeg, only one is based on representative municipalities in the rest of Manitoba, because most of the municipalities outside of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, have not yet struck their mill rates.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. HOWARD PAWLEY (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, in 1978, the property tax credit program was frozen by this government. In 1979, it was also frozen by this government; in 1980 there are some adjustments now being made, after the freezing which took place in 1978 and 1979. Mr. Speaker, it was the opposition that prodded again and again the government to undertake adjustments in 1978 and 1979; and Mr. Speaker, I notice the Minister of Finance laughing. It was the Minister of Finance, in 1975, that indicated that the property tax credit program was a very cheap vote buying technique, and said getting rid of it would be our prime objective. Mr. Speaker, who is eating whose words today? Mr. Speaker, that statement by the Minister of Finance is recorded in Hansard as of that time. So, Mr. Speaker, we now have an adjustment after two years of freezing the property tax credit system.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of questions that one must pose as a result of the statement which is issued today, and I believe the most important statement is that the maximum, according to this statement, is not being adjusted. Mr. Speaker, those that are in the greatest need are not being adjusted as per this statement. The minimum is being adjusted, there is an increase of \$100 insofar as those that have been receiving the minimum. Those in the greatest need require the maximum. Mr. Speaker, it is not sufficient that the members of the government indicate that this can be delayed until Budget time so we can discuss further aspects in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, we demand indeed now that there be an adjustment insofar as those that are entitled to the maximum benefit, so that those that are in the greatest need will receive advantage as a result of this adjustment, long overdue, after the continued unjustified freezing of the Property Tax Credit 1978-79. Mr. Speaker, it is too little, too late.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Attorney-General: Can the Attorney-General advise whether or not . . .

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

HON. KEN MacMASTER (Thompson): No, Mr. Speaker, you went so fast, I had some information that I just wanted to distribute, no statement to make, information on statistics today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. DONALD W. CRAIK (Riel): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could also take the opportunity to table a report for the year ending March 31, 1979, of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. J. FRANK JOHNSTON (Sturgeon Creek): We'll do it later.

MR. SPEAKER: Are we now finished with Tabling of Reports? Notices of Motion . . . --(Interjection)-- Order please. There was probably so much commotion in the Chamber they couldn't hear me calling the Items. Introduction of Bills . . .

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Attorney-General: Can the Attorney-General advise whether or not he is examining the constitutionality of any proposed tax insofar as it being imposed against hydro-electric energy exports.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. GERALD W. J. MERCIER (Osborne): No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, does the Attorney-General intend to undertake an examination of the constitutionality of any proposed tax, in view of information which has been released this morning that in fact that form of tax was challenged in the Ontario Court some 50-odd years ago.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, the question is hypothetical, if indeed something does occur in this field then I am sure we would examine it.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I fail to ascertain the hypothetical nature of the tax, I simply ask the Attorney-General whether he would be looking into the constitutionality of a tax. However, to the Minister responsible for Economic Development, can the Minister responsible for Economic Development confirm that in the space of this past year, March 1st, 1979 to March 1st, 1980, not one job, not one single job, additional job, in Manitoba, net additional job, has been created under his stewardship as the Minister of Economic Development in the province of Manitoba?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Economic Development.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of being in the position of the Minister of Economic Development for the province of Manitoba. I don't particularly want to go around waving flags, we will just all keep working on this side as hard as we can together to do a good job.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, in view of the Minister's non-answer, I can only assume that he has not examined the Statistics Canada material released this morning; or secondly, that he prefers not to answer the question pertaining to additional jobs created in the province of Manitoba.

I must ask the Minister of Economic Development again whether or not, leaving aside the old rhetoric which he has used along with the First Minister over the past two years, whether he has any programs now to initiate in the province of Manitoba to ensure that there is job creation, in view of the dismal record of Manitoba compared to other provinces in the past year?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we have had an increase in manufacturing jobs in the province of Manitoba for the last two years. The statistics that were put forward this morning, and if the honourable member wants to read the release of my colleague, he will find that there is 7,000 more jobs in manufacturing today than there was last year in the province of Manitoba.

There is no question, Mr. Speaker, that in the construction industry, because we are overbuilt in housing, because of the policies of the government that was previously here, because of the policies that they had to have to create a false economy, that is why we have the problem which was created by them. Manufacturing is the way that the province of Manitoba will go ahead and that is the way we have been going ahead, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Economic Development protests too much.

Back to the original question, taking the total number of jobs, not manufacturing, not mining, not housing, but total jobs in Manitoba, is the Minister now prepared to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. Order please. May I suggest the honourable member is repeating his question. Orders of the Day. The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, there are more people working in the province of Manitoba today, totally, than there last year at this time. Yes, Mr. Speaker, and there were more people working in 1978 over 1977 as well, when we came out of a stagnant area for eight years in Manitoba.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Economic Development, and I would welcome the First Minister's participation, if he would care to examine the statement which has just been released by the Minister of Labour and Manpower, Page 2, dealing with seasonally adjusted jobs created in the province of Manitoba, and report back at some appropriate time as to concurrence with the fact there has not been one additional job created on a seasonally adjusted basis in the province of Manitoba in the space of the past year.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the honourable member is really reading from, because in March 1979, there were 442,000, in March 1980, 443,000, it's not a big increase, but it's an increase, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PAWLEY: Again, and I can't force the Minister of Economic Development to answer that which he chooses not to answer, but my question is related to seasonally adjusted total manpower in the province of Manitoba, the basis by which the government always has used as the most accurate indicator of job creation in the province of Manitoba, and I witness there has been no answer pertaining to that.

A further question to the Minister of Economic Development, does he acknowledge that in the space of this past year, March 1, 1980 figures, Manitoba, along with other provinces, Ontario, . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. May I suggest to the honourable member that the Question Period is used for eliciting information. Asking whether or not a member acknowledges is not seeking information. Would the member care to rephrase his question?

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister then to comment that in fact in the figures released this morning by StatsCanada, that the increase in unemployment in the province of Manitoba, from March 1, 1979, puts Manitoba in the unenviable position of being one of only two provinces in Canada to increase their unemployment rate in the space of one year, March to March.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. May I suggest to the honourable member that he is debating rather than seeking information. The question is out of order.

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Honourable Minister of Finance. Would the Honourable Minister of Finance now confirm, that despite his best efforts to keep government spending under the figure of \$2 billion, we may now revise the Estimate Book to show that government spending in this year, up to now, and without future supplementary Estimates, will now equal \$2,010,915.00?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, if the member would like to wait awhile, we'll have a budget for him and he can see the complete picture. If he wants a specific answer to his question, he'll have to wait and see how the year end turns out, and that's a longer wait.

MR. GREEN: In view of the fact that the Minister, when tabling the Estimates, was willing to say that we are going to spend \$1,990,000, is he not now willing to say that as of now, we are going to spend \$2,010,915, and I've rounded it off . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The question is repetitive. Would the honourable member care to rephrase his question?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I believe that you are taking too much for granted as to the Minister's understanding. I am positive he did not understand the first question, by his answer. I am asking the Minister whether we can now say that the projected 10 percent increase over last year's expenditures is now going to be at least 11 percent, and more like 11 1/2 percent over last year's expenditures.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, as usual, the member, if he is given enough time, finally gets down to the proper question. The answer to his first question was, how much are you going to spend? He didn't ask what the estimates of expenditure were. If he asked for the estimates of expenditure, the estimates of expenditure will be as he has indicated. If he is asking for the actual expenditure, if one takes the normal lapse factor that occurs, it's likely, Mr. Speaker, that the original estimate will be closer to the actual.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I was dealing with the same figures that the Honourable Minister of Finance was previously willing to deal with. I asked him to base his answers on those previous figures. I will now ask the Minister, in view of the fact that we are spending over \$2 billion, and we're still young, Mr. Speaker, it's only April, and that the estimated increase over last

year is now not 9 to 10 percent, but 11 to 12 percent, has the Minister subsequently come to the realization that the Conservative Party, under its policy of trying to restrain spending, has run the province into the ground, that they now realize that government spending and putting moneys into the hands of the taxpayers is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The question is argumentative. Does the honourable member wish to rephrase his question?

MR. GREEN: I will put it, Mr. Speaker, in a way which is not argumentative. Would the Minister, Mr. Speaker, now advise the people of the province of Manitoba, that the fact is that the Conservative Party has determined that through conservatism, the province has been led into stagnation, that they now have to resort to government spending, Mr. Speaker, and to putting money into the hands of the consumers of this province, which they have refused to do for two years?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that a pensioner receiving a \$500 credit on his bill at the municipal office would refer to that as stagnation. The Member for Inkster may refer to it as stagnation.

Mr. Speaker, furthermore, I've come to read the member's questions pretty clinically. If he's talking about a print-over-print estimate, his assertions are correct, but that is not what he asked. He asked, what is the spending going to be? The spending is going to be, Mr. Speaker, as is determined at the end of the year. Now, he's becoming pretty careless in his questions, Mr. Speaker, and this is not the only occasion. If he wants to ask a question, I'm going to listen to that question and I'm going to answer it clinically. The print-over-print, if that's what he is asking, he's correct.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I put to the Minister, a question which I hope he will answer clinically. Has the Minister and his colleagues determined that conservatism in the province of Manitoba is a failure?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I can't resist the opportunity to answer a really pertinent question after the fluff we hear from the official opposition. I am prepared to say to my honourable friend, the Member for Inkster, who understands politics in this province, that he is witnessing today, and he has witnessed over the last 2 1/2 years in this province, a reformation of the --(Interjection)-- you wouldn't know one if it hit you in the face.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for St. Boniface on a point of order.

MR. LAURENT L. DESJARDINS: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. There is no answer given here at all, it doesn't matter if it's the Premier, he hasn't any right, and if we're going to revert to comments, we'd like a copy of his comments, his declaration.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member has no point of order.  
The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I can well understand why my friend from St. Boniface and all of the members of the socialist party are so discomfited today, Mr. Speaker, because they see a government that is prepared to react to real situations, not to ideological ones that they dream up, but to real situations that we find in the province of Manitoba, and a government that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. One of the problems that we face is the type of question that is asked, and certain questions will demand certain types of answers, and if the members want to use the Question Period in that way, use it for debate rather than for eliciting information, that is their

choice. I cannot tell any member what kind of question to ask, I can advise him whether or not it is in order, but it's up to the members how they want to use the Question Period.

The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I'll try to abbreviate my answer to my honourable friend's question, which is a legitimate question as to whether or not we are witnessing some change, or to use his exact words, a failure, or abandonment of the policies of conservatism; Mr. Speaker, we're beginning to see the fruition of those policies. And we're beginning to see them through lower general tax rates right across the province of Manitoba than my honourable friends ever imposed; we're beginning to see them in the rejuvenation of the manufacturing and other industries in this province which were oppressed by my honourable friends when they were in office; we're beginning to see them again in the release of the people, the new freedom that the people of Manitoba enjoy after coming out from under the socialist yoke for eight years; and so, Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on. But I want to abbreviate my answer, has my honourable friend had enough? Or should I continue, you know, the Budget Speech is still to come.

But I merely want to say to my honourable friends across the way that, discomfiting as it may be to them to see the province of Manitoba improving, discomfiting as it may be to them, the people of Manitoba are aware of the improvements, the people of Manitoba are well aware of the improvements, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding all of the nay-saying and all of the hypocrisy that we have heard from across the way.

And so, Mr. Speaker, after listening to the Leader of the Opposition today, too little and too late, I just say to him after that speech, is he going to vote against the measures to help the ratepayers in Manitoba that were announced today? Of course not. Why doesn't he stand in his place, why don't he and his members have the gumption to stand in their place and acknowledge that something that is for the benefit of the taxpayers of Manitoba is good for all Manitobans?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the invitation on the part of the First Minister to respond to his question. It gives me the opportunity to detail at some length, Mr. Speaker, it was the present government, while they were in opposition, that voted against the property tax credit system when introduced in the province of Manitoba by the then government led by Ed Schreyer. It was the present Minister of Finance that indicated that getting rid of the property tax credit system would be their primary objective upon being elected to government in the province of Manitoba.

We are pleased, indeed, that they have moved away from that reactionary position expressed by them four years, five years ago in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, to the First Minister, the First Minister talked about greater freedom in the province of Manitoba. He has spoken in terms of greater economic activity in the province of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, he has not, and I ask the First Minister, he has not spoken in terms of the fact that capital investment growth in Manitoba was the second lowest in Canada last year; he has not spoken in terms of the fact that there are 6,000 fewer Manitobans now in this province than there were a year ago; he has not spoken in terms of the greatest net outmigration that has taken place in Manitoba's history, I ask .

. .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. If we can now proceed with the Question Period, the Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. LEONARD S. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier, since the Minister of Finance has left, whether the government has any estimates of the increase to the province in its debt situation? Apparently in 1977 we were going bankrupt at the level of debt that we had at that time,

according to the Honourable First Minister. Now that the per capita debt is \$800 higher today than it was in 1977, can he indicate how much higher it's going to be with the implementation of his property tax credit system?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I always have the impression, Sir, that the Honourable Member for Brandon East, when he was Minister of Economic Development, didn't understand current and capital, and quite frankly he has demonstrated that abysmal ignorance again today in the House.

But let me first of all, as a preface, Mr. Speaker, answer the first part of his question. The first part of his question was, what about the increase in the per capita debt in Manitoba since this government came to office? The increase in that debt, Mr. Speaker, is largely for projects that my honourable friends wrongly had under way when this government came into office, and we will be happy to go into that at greater length. Suffice it to say for the historic record, Mr. Speaker, and let all Manitobans be aware of this, that my honourable friends, in 1969, came into office in this province and left the province, in 1977, with the second highest per capita debt of any province in Canada. The Leader of the Opposition just finished asking, Mr. Speaker, why construction jobs were down in Manitoba. Because, Mr. Speaker, as I have told them time and time again, and as the Tritschler Commission told them, my honourable friends were wrong-headedly building on Hydro in 1974, '75, '76 and '77, when they should not have been overbuilding. And Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition on a point of privilege.

MR. PAWLEY: On a point of privilege, at no time did I make reference to construction jobs. My reference has been always to total jobs in the province of Manitoba.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I have to accept my honourable friend's correction, but I heard the word "construction". And, Mr. Speaker, just in that connection, Sir, may I say to him, he asks about the public capital investment in the province. Of course, and we have readily admitted since 1978, it's been down about \$250 million on average per year, because of the stoppage of construction on Nelson hydro projects, which my honourable friends implemented, not this government, and they implemented it too late.

So my honourable friends can hardly be seen, Mr. Speaker, to be taking credit on the one hand, for the fact that they overbuilt, in the 1970s, and then complaining on the other hand when the commission finds that they shouldn't have been overbuilding and that the building that should be going on right now is not going on because of their pig-headedness and of their leader in refusing to accept advice to stop building in the 1970s on the hydro projects.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba know the kind of rescue operation that this government has had to undertake. They know it very well.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, the first Minister has just provided us with a further dissertation about public spending in the province of Manitoba. Unlike the government, we don't differentiate as to the value of public versus private spending. But it is interesting, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask the First Minister to confirm, that the projections for 1980 in Manitoba, by Statistics Canada, indicate that private investment in the province of Manitoba would be the lowest by way of rate of growth of any province in Canada, with the exception of New Brunswick and Newfoundland, after 2 1/2 years of Tory reactionary government in the province of Manitoba.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend has always had the great ability to use, selectively, projected statistics which very seldom come to be

true, particularly StatsCanada statistics, so I'm not going to waste his time or the time of the House, which is even more important, in attempting to answer that kind of a trumped-up question from my honourable friend opposite.

What my honourable friend must know is that private investment increased in this province, and is increasing in this province, once the load of the socialist government got off investors in this province. And Mr. Speaker, the problem is, of course, that the sins of my honourable friends, stay around much longer than when they are out of office, and even today we are paying the price for the eight years of flirtation with socialism that we have in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary, if I dare, to the First Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member cannot ask a supplementary question.

The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: Another question then, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance, who has stepped out for a moment, is on record, very clear and categorically on record, as referring to this property tax credit system, the announcement that was just made a few minutes ago, referred to this property tax credit system - he referred to it, I'd like to get to my question - he referred to it as "a very cheap vote-buying technique, and getting rid of it would be our prime objective". On the basis, therefore, of the observation of the members opposite, the Conservative front bench that it's a cheap vote-buying technique, will the Premier of this province now announce that he's about to call an election within the next month?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, first of all, for the record, may I correct a statement that was made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition with respect to property tax rebates. For the benefit of history, and there are some members of the House who will recall, property tax rebates in this province were introduced about 1964 or 1965. Only for the sake of the historic record - I realize that like most people of their peculiar ideology, my honourable friends opposite are revisionist historians, and I merely thought I would try to correct the record in that respect.

With respect, Mr. Speaker, to the comments that my friend from Brandon East reads, attributed to the Member for St. Vital, those were statements made, I take it, on the face of it, some five years ago. I merely remind my honourable friend that members, from time to time, change their minds. I remind my honourable friend from Brandon East, Mr. Speaker, of what he said about his government divesting themselves of the McKenzie Seed Company, because they said their government never wanted to run such a company.

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

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I must ask, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, who made the statement . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. There seems to be some question.  
The Honourable Member for St. Vital on a point of privilege.

MR. D. JAMES WALDING: Yes, my point of privilege is that the First Minister has attributed statements to me made back several years ago that I did not make.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I'm quite happy to acknowledge the statements were made by the distinguished Honourable Member for Riel, not the Member for St. Vital.

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

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, I would direct my question to the First Minister, to ask him whether it is now announced policy of the Conservative government to embrace the property tax credit plan formula as presented, devised, and rejected by the Conservatives, brought in by the NDP government, and rejected by the Conservatives. Does he now embrace that formula?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure my honourable friend is perhaps the best example of the discomfort being shown by my honourable friends opposite.

I can assure him that it always has been and will remain the policy of this government, and this party, to give assistance to the homeowners of Manitoba in the best and the most direct and the quickest way possible, which is what we are doing today.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, in the light of that statement, will the Minister now agree that the most direct way, the best way, is the way prepared, presented, and brought in by the New Democratic Party Government, and rejected by the Conservative Opposition, led by the the then House Leader, the present Minister of Finance.

MR. LYON: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, since the Minister, understandably and embarrassedly refuses to acknowledge that, may I ask him, Mr. Speaker, to reflect on his statement and see whether, in the future, he is prepared to admit what is the apparent truth?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I am as good a judge, if not better, of the truth than my honourable friend, and I'll be quite happy to engage at any time in a debate, not in Question Period however, as my honourable friend tries to make points that aren't worth making.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Government Services concerning the other major announcement of the day, a \$15 to \$16 million package of construction over a number of years, all futile attempts to save a drowning government, and I would ask the Minister, in terms of his law court renovation, whether this is a continuation of our administration's four phase program to renovate the law courts?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

HON. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I would have to indicate very positively, no. The former administration's plans for the judicial complex was to separate it from the Law Courts Building, to locate it elsewhere in the city of Winnipeg, against, I must say, the general body of opinion of those people that have to work within the complex, and I'm very pleased to have been able to, along with my colleagues and the Premier, to have made that announcement this morning.

The Phase Three aspect of the major renovations to the existing old Law Courts Building were announced, the architect was appointed today, so that we will, unlike my honourable predecessor, bring the new construction in that

area in keeping with the beauty and the grace and the dignity of those buildings, rather than impose on that site a kind of architectural monstrosity, if I may say so, that now hinders what could have been a very beautiful development around the old Law Courts Building. The reason for appointing the architect for the renovation of the Law Courts Building is that he can work in concert with the prime architect that will begin immediately to design the planning for the new provincial judges' building.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Could the Minister indicate whether he has had discussions concerning this matter with the city of Winnipeg, since it was at the request of the Mayor and council that the facility be built near the City Hall and near the Public Safety Building to revitalize that core area and also be near the holding facility? Were there discussions held and does he have the City's concurrence in that move?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I could perhaps best indicate that by indicating to the honourable member that the Deputy Mayor of the city of Winnipeg, Councillor McGonigal, was only too happy to share in the ribbon cutting ceremony this morning. She also indicated, and we've had to answer this question directly, discussions on the site move. The city has also expressed an interest in the unnecessary land that was expropriated at considerable public expense by the previous administration, some seven properties in all, which of course are now surplus to our needs, and indeed I suggest were surplus to government's needs at any time. But fortunately the city is expressing some interest in some of these lands for development programs of their own in that area.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood with a final supplementary.

MR. DOERN: I would ask the Minister for clarification. The mere fact that the Deputy Mayor cut the ribbon doesn't imply formal concurrence of the city. Does the Minister have in writing the concurrence of the city for his particular decision? The fact that the government also decided on a different list of priorities doesn't mean that there is a surplus because of a different set of priorities. So I ask him again, does he have formal concurrence and were there formal discussions with the city, yes or no?

MR. ENNS: Again this Minister, who made it a point of not bothering about consulting and concurring with the former Mayor of the city of Winnipeg; the man who insisted on building outhouses where the Mayor of the city of Winnipeg didn't particularly want them to be built; the man who violated the city's building codes in building the Woodsworth Building to heights that violated the city building codes and then came in here and amended his own act so he could make it legal, what was prior to that illegal; he is asking me about the amount and the degree of consultation that takes place. I can answer him and perhaps the Minister of Urban Affairs can answer it better. We have regular meetings with the urban committee that meet with the city.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. The Honourable Member for Kildonan on a point of order.

MR. PETER FOX: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you're aware that the Minister was not even trying to answer the question, and I suggest that if we are going to have a meaningful question and answer period the same should apply to those who are asking the questions, as well as to those who are answering, that they stick to the point.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I have to say I concur wholeheartedly with the comments of the Opposition House Leader. The use of the question period is a matter that does concern me and I hope it concerns the members of the

Chamber as well. The Honourable Member for Elmwood with a final supplementary.

MR. DOERN: My point of order is that the man who was going to flood South Indian Lake to a depth of 34 feet . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. The Honourable Member for Rock Lake.

MR. HENRY J. EINARSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Labour concerning the Port of Churchill and in view of the very serious importance of this matter, I'm wondering if the Minister could indicate whether any further progress has taken place in the negotiations in the labour dispute between management and labour of the Port of Churchill?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I've been in touch with three different federal Cabinet Ministers, and I have been assured as of yesterday that the federal Minister of Labour is directing his arbitrator to get both parties back to the table, and that certainly was good news to myself, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EINARSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister: In view of the seriousness of this matter and the urgency of the matter, has the federal government given the Minister any indication of a deadline as to how soon these negotiations will be resumed?

MR. MacMASTER: No, Mr. Speaker, I was just informed yesterday that the federal government has told its arbitrator to try to get both sides back to the table. I'd like to believe that both sides are quite willing to get back to the table and I say that with some hesitation because there has been a lot of delay taking place in this particular set of negotiations.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rossmere.

MR. VIC SCHROEDER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the First Minister: After taking into account the increase in property tax credits as announced this afternoon, could he advise the House as to the percentage of education costs which are now being financed by the province for the year 1980?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to take that question as notice. It would be obvious to my honourable friend that the percentage would of course be considerably increased by the announcement today, as well as other announcements that have been made in the course of the publication of the estimates.

MR. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A further supplementary to the First Minister, again on the announcement of this afternoon: Could he advise the House as to the amount of increase in total, for a homeowner who has taxes in excess of \$375.00? What is the maximum amount of property tax credit which would payable under the plan now, after the announcement?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I think if my honourable friend would like to get his answer from the Member for St. Johns . . . Mr. Speaker, if my honourable friend will refer to the final paragraph on the statement I made today, I think his question will be answered.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time for question period having expired . . . The Honourable Member for Logan.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a substitution on Public Accounts, the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, for the Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that agreeable? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MR. JAMES R. FERGUSON: Yes, I'd like to make a change on Public Accounts also, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Anderson for Mr. Minaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that change agreeable? (Agreed)

Before we proceed to Orders of the Day, I would like to draw the honourable members' attention to the loge on my right where we have the former Member for Emerson, Mr. Gabe Girard.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GERALD W.J. MERCIER (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, would you please call Second Readings of the Bills on the Order Paper, and then if there is time, the Adjourned Debate on Second Reading of Bill No. 2, starting with Bill No. 3.

ADJOURNED DEBATES ON SECOND READING

BILL NO. 3 - THE POWERS OF ATTORNEY ACT

MR. MERCIER presented Bill No. 3, The Powers of Attorney Act, Loi sur le mandat, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill No. 3, The Powers of Attorney Act is to remedy the unsatisfactory state of the common law with respect to enduring powers of attorney.

At present the status of the law of powers of attorney is that a power of attorney, validly created, terminates upon the insanity or mental capacity of the donor. This is very unsatisfactory because at a time when an individual most needs a trusted person to act for him, given that the individual is incapable of acting for himself, that individual's attorney no longer has the authority to act for the individual. Therefore, there is no one at that particular moment who can look after the affairs of the individual who is most definitely in need of assistance. There are many instances where the attorney does not know whether or not the individual is capable of handling his own affairs. This is more difficult now because of various approaches to mental health and mental competence. A person who has the power of attorney puts himself at personal liability if he continues to act for an individual after that individual has ceased to be mentally sound, even if the person with the power of attorney is unaware of this.

The Law Reform Commission of Manitoba recommended that the common law of enduring powers of attorney be changed. The Uniformity Law Conference of Canada also recommended changes and suggested a uniform Powers of Attorney Act, which would deal with enduring powers of attorney and other aspects of powers of attorney, which are in Manitoba dealt with in The Law of Property Act. Bill No. 3, The Powers of Attorney Act, follows the recommendations of the Uniformity Law Conference.

The provisions which deal with the enduring powers of attorney, that is those powers which will continue to be valid even if the donor of the powers

is mentally incompetent, are drafted so that the donor of the power, who has to be mentally competent, has to be fully aware of the power that he is signing over to the person who will be acting for him. The creation of an enduring power of attorney has to be witnessed by someone other than the attorney or the spouse of the attorney, as under present law the persons interested in the estate of the donor, be they relatives or otherwise, can always petition to the courts if they feel that the person exercising the power of attorney is acting incompetently.

The Act also contains a provision which states that when a public trustee or any other committee of the donor takes over the administration of an estate of the donor, the power of attorney, be it enduring or otherwise, terminates.

There are provisions which deal with a situation where a person with a power of attorney is unaware that a committee has been set up to deal with the donor's estate. Various sections of The Law of Property Act have been repealed and their substance has been put into this Act so that all matters dealing with powers of attorney are contained in one Act. This is merely a housekeeping matter and those provisions do not involve any substantive change in the law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge members to support this bill, a bill which is long overdue and a bill which remedies a part of the law, which is at present clearly unsatisfactory.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Burrows that debate be adjourned.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the honourable member would object if I make some remarks at this point.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I intend to be very brief. I am always concerned, and wish to convey my concern to the Minister, when you make a statute which changes the common law and apparently remedy something, and sometimes we overlook what is going to occur as a result of the remedy.

Now the Honourable Attorney-General says that at present the power of attorney terminates on mental incapacity. He doesn't want that to continue because he says on mental incapacity, that is when a power of attorney is needed, but the present law would say that a person who is mentally incompetent has to be represented by a committee, a trustee. You are now changing the law so that the present person who is mentally incompetent will be represented by a power of attorney.

Now it seems to me that the rights, responsibilities, duties, obligations of a power of attorney are different from those of a trustee, and I am concerned as to whether we are now changing the protection that is afforded to the person who becomes mentally incompetent than as to what it was before, and if so - and I am not certain, I am asking the Minister to research this - if so, then the power of attorney after the person becomes mentally incompetent, if we want to make sure that that person is protected in the same way, we should say that if the attorney knows of the mental incompetency of the person who gave him the power of attorney, then his rights, responsibilities, obligations, etc., vis-a-vis the property, should be those of a trustee not of a power of attorney. In other words, he can continue, but he - a power of attorney can do anything, an attorney can dispose of property, an attorney can invest; a trustee can't do those things except on certain terms, and I am concerned, Mr. Speaker - I am not concerned with the person holding the power being the trustee, even being made automatically the trustee, but I am concerned that without knowing exactly what we are doing we are changing the protection that is afforded to the person who subsequently has somebody acting on his behalf.

I would ask the Minister to have that looked at by Legislative Counsel to see whether we couldn't be more certain of what we are doing. If what the

Minister is suggesting has to be done and there is good reason for it, fine, but if we are entering a mysterious field without knowing, I would prefer that we know exactly what we are doing.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Burrows, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 5. The Honourable Attorney General.

BILL NO. 5 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC TRUSTEE ACT

MR. MERCIER presented Bill No. 5, An Act to Amend the Public Trustee Act for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: The purpose of Bill No. 5 is to permit the Public Trustee to establish and maintain one or more common funds for the investment of moneys in his hands. This will allow the Public Trustee to group together moneys contained in various accounts, which are at present approximately 5,000 in number, into funds for investment purposes. These funds will allow the Public Trustee to take better advantage of investment markets available for large sums. The estate accounts included in the common fund would then be credited interest on a pro rata basis. You will note, the Public Trustee may deposit with the Minister of Finance, who will pay interest at competitive rates or increase the moneys in securities or loans which are authorized under The Trustee Act.

The establishment of a common fund will make the administration of the accounts handled by the Public Trustee much easier. The Public Trustee will review the investments involved in the fund as opposed to the present practice which requires him to review the investments of each individual account. This provision is in line with those in other jurisdictions, including Quebec, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I would bring to members' attention that a common trust fund was established and amendments made to The Trustee Act during the last session of the Legislature. Mr. Speaker, I would urge members to support this bill given that it will provide for a better administration of the accounts of estates under the charge of the Public Trustee and will benefit those persons affected by the administration of such estates.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Kildonan, that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 6 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE WILLS ACT AND THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT

MR. MERCIER presented Bill No. 6, An Act to Amend the Wills Act and the Mental Health Act, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 6 deals with two major items. The first item amends The Wills Act by extending the effects of a divorce upon a will. The present section of The Wills Act, which deals with the effect of divorce, Section 36.1, states that a divorce revokes any bequest to the divorced spouse made in the will by the testator. The proposed amendment, in keeping with the recommendations of the Uniformity Law Conference, extends the effect of divorce on a will to revoke powers under a will over a testator's property which the divorced spouse may have had. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is quite reasonable that the effect of the divorce upon a will should be to revoke any gifts made, or powers given to the divorced spouse under the will. If they want their former spouse to benefit, they can specifically state that the will was made in contemplation of marriage breakdown, or they can change their will after a divorce so that the divorced spouse will benefit under the will.

The second item contained in Bill 6 broadens an exception to the Rule of Ademption contained in estate law. Rule of Ademption states that gifts of property in a will are wiped out if the testator of the will disposes of the property prior to his death.

In 1976, The Mental Health Act was amended so that in situations where a Public Trustee, acting as a committee under The Mental Health Act, disposed of property, the principle of ademption would not apply and thus the beneficiaries would be entitled to their interest as set out in the will. The present amendment broadens that exception so as to include any situation where a committee, whether or not he is the Public Trustee, disposes of property the principle of ademption would not apply. The Law Reform Commission recommended this change in an informal report made to me in November of 1979. This amendment is in keeping with general principles of estate law which state that a testator's intention should be carried out wherever possible. This amendment does so by ensuring that in those cases where a committee has a power to dispose of property, the testator's intention to benefit the beneficiaries will be carried out. It's a logical and sensible extension of the provisions contained in The Mental Health Act and I recommend that members adopt it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Rossmere that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 7 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE MANITOBA EVIDENCE ACT

MR. MERCIER presented Bill No. 7, An Act to Amend the Manitoba Evidence Act, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, this act repeals Sections 8 and 9 of the Manitoba Evidence Act. These changes remove the privilege contained in Section 9, which protects the witness from answering questions which might tend to show him guilty of adultery in any legal proceedings. This privilege presently applies to all legal proceedings. For example, under the former Wives and Childrens' Maintenance Act, adultery was a bar to receiving maintenance. An applicant was protected by the privilege contained in Section 9 and thus did not have to answer any questions related to adultery.

In filiation proceedings, the putative father, if married, was protected by Section 9. The privilege which protects the witness from disclosing evidence about his adultery is based on a rule against self-incrimination.

In England, in the 19th Century, matrimonial disputes came under civil jurisdiction. The Civil Evidence Act was changed to make all parties competent and compellable to testify. The privilege was established to protect witnesses from giving evidence which would subject them to any penalty, forfeiture, or ecclesiastical censure. This privilege, Mr. Speaker, has been criticized on a number of grounds: (1) Ecclesiastical censure does not exist in Manitoba; (2) although adultery is a serious matter, there are other equally serious matters for which there is no privilege protecting a witness from testifying.

One lawyer who responded to the Manitoba Law Reform Commission's request for opinions on Section 9 of the Evidence Act stated the following: "It has always seemed to me strange that since the passage of The Divorce Act in 1968, a person may be compelled to admit that he has beaten his spouse, committed homosexual acts, or acts of bestiality, alcoholism, or any other kind of conceivable misconduct, but only adultery and no other marital misconduct is protected by The Evidence Act."

Another ground of criticism, Mr. Speaker, is that privileges which allows someone to avoid answering certain questions in court proceedings are derogations from the main purpose of court proceedings, which is to obtain all the relevant information in order to arrive at a true understanding of the situation so that a just and fair decision may be obtained. A leading authority on evidence, Wigmore, considers privileges from testifying in the following manner: "Privileges such as the privilege not to give evidence which might prove a witness guilty of adultery should be recognized only within the narrowest limits required by principle." The Manitoba Law Reform Commission, in an informal report dated November 6, 1979, recommended the repeal of Section 9. They stated and I quote: "It is our opinion that there is no apparent logical reason for the continuance of this privilege in Manitoba. Other jurisdictions have repealed this privilege." In 1968, the English parliament repealed those sections of its Evidence Act which provided the privilege to witnesses in proceedings dealing with alimony. Four English Law Reform Commissions, at the earliest in 1912, recommended the repeal of the privilege. In 1971 Newfoundland repealed provisions in its Evidence Act which contained the privilege. The Ontario Law Reform Commission, The Federal Provincial Task Force and Uniform Rules of Evidence and The Manitoba Branch of the Canadian Bar Association have also recommended the repeal of the privilege which protects witnesses against questions tending to prove their adultery.

The purpose of the new Section 8 is to state explicitly that the privilege protecting a witness from answering questions relating to adultery no longer exist. Bill 6 contains a transitional provision which states that it will only apply to any actions or proceedings commenced after the act comes into force. The reasoning for this is that actions commenced before the coming into force of this act may have relied upon the privilege contained in Section 9 and it would be unfair to change the law in midstream for the persons involved in those cases.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the argument put forward by the Manitoba Law Reform Commission and other law reform bodies throughout this country and in England. Any rules or privileges which tend to protect individuals from divulging information which would be helpful to a judicial proceeding should be confined to those areas which can only be justified on the grounds of principle. I see no principle which justifies the continuance of the privilege of not having to testify on matters which relate to one's own adulterer.

Mr. Speaker, I urge members to support this amendment to The Evidence Act, an amendment which is in the best interests of the administration of justice in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Burrows, that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 16 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE VETERINARY SERVICES ACT

HON. JAMES E. DOWNEY (Arthur) Presented Bill No. 16, An Act to Amend the Veterinary Services Act, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, the main reason for the amendments to The Veterinary Services Act, they used to allow the province to improve its financial commitment to the operation of rural veterinary services by removing the granting formula from the Act and placing them in regulation.

Other amendments will be mainly housekeeping changes to bring the Act up-to-date and clarify certain sections. The present provincial grant of \$5,000 per veterinarian were set in 1974 and have now become unrealistic due to the inflated costs and costs of operating a veterinary services district today.

The intent of the amendments will allow the province to provide a larger share of the annual operating costs of the rural animal hospitals. In 1979, municipalities contributed approximately \$270,000 while the province was limited by the Act to providing approximately \$200,000.00. Discussions have been held with municipalities, district veterinary services boards, and rural veterinarians. And there is a general agreement that the Act should be amended to allow the province to contribute a larger share to the operation of the local district veterinary services.

Since we are in a period of high inflation and rising costs, we are proposing to have the provincial contributions, as I said earlier, dealt with by regulation so that they can move readily and can be adjusted to meet the rising costs.

I would also like to point out that Item 10 has a typographical error and would like to refer to sub-clause 22(c)(3) rather than 22(c)(2). The Manitoba Veterinary Program is operating successfully, approximately 80 percent of the rural municipalities voluntary belong to and financially support a veterinary services district.

Other items which I would refer to, I refer to housekeeping, the matter of a new objective for the district board so that they can maintain and equip and upgrade the hospitals more under the local boards' authority rather than the provincial government involvement. Another change, Mr. Speaker, is to change the name from Veterinary Clinics now to Animal Hospitals. I think, Mr. Speaker, that in the best interests of the livestock industry and the farmers of Manitoba, that I would request the support of the members of this House on these amendments.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, Abe Kovnats (Radisson): The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 18 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE SURVEYS ACT

HON. GERALD W.J. MERCIER (Osborne) presented Bill No. 18, An Act to Amend The Surveys Act, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill 18 is to provide for a more efficient procedure for dealing with that part of survey work which re-establishes lost corners. In most cases existing occupation lines follow the boundaries determined by the corners. Over the passage of time, monuments which mark the corners of boundaries may be destroyed in any number of ways. However, when a survey is done to re-establish the lost corner, there may be a difference in the boundaries determined by that re-establishment from existing occupation lines, or some person may be prejudicially affected by the re-establishment of a lost corner.

The present procedures of The Survey Act which deal with the re-establishment of lost corners are quite detailed. Notice has to be given to all parties concerned and there has to be a publication of each purported re-establishment of a lost corner in the Manitoba Gazette.

Mr. Speaker, officials in the Land Titles office have informed me that the present provision of the Act are so cumbersome that it has been impossible for them to comply with them in a real situation because of both the detail of the work involved as well as the time frame, and the result has been that the provisions have been ignored for quite some time. Officials suggested that that situation should not be allowed to continue and a better method be found.

The amendments contained in Bill 18 vary the procedures so that notices have to be posted in several conspicuous places near the monument and the lands affected. As well, notices have to be sent to the secretary of the municipality in which the lands affected are situated.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to also advise members that at committee I will be introducing an amendment to Bill 18, which will require that notice be sent to a registered owner of land who may be prejudicially affected by the re-establishment of a lost corner, rather than all persons affected by such a procedure. A person can object to the Registrar General about the re-establishment of a lost corner. If he is not satisfied with the decision of the Registrar General, he can take his objection to the Court of Queen's Bench. The provision in the present Act provides for appeal to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Queen's Bench, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, is the more appropriate form in which to hear the matter because it is better equipped to take evidence.

Mr. Speaker, I urge members to support this bill; hopefully it will provide a more efficient and workable procedure to re-establish lost corners and thus determine real property boundaries.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Flin Flon, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 20 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE CHANGE OF NAME ACT

HON. GEORGE MINAKER (St. James) presented Bill No. 20, An Act to Amend the Change of Name Act, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Corrections.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Speaker, Bill 20 deals with amendments to The Change of Name Act and primarily there are some minor clarification amendments and there's also some significant changes. One of the amendments deals with the consent of children to have their name changed and is recommending in amending the Act to lower the age from 14 to 12 years of age. And the reason put forward, Mr. Speaker, is that our juvenile justice system recognizes the age of 12 when a juvenile can go before the Juvenile Courts; as well our Child Welfare Act also recognizes that age when a parent or a guardian can leave a child unattended.

The other area, Mr. Speaker, that the Act deals with is with regard to a woman reverting to her maiden name that is divorced, then she can automatically without going to the Vital Statistics Department revert back to her maiden name. And approximately 55 percent of the current change of name applications fall under this category. I might point out for the information of the House, Mr. Speaker, that the province of Ontario has a similar type of law as well as in Quebec, where there's an absolute decree of divorce, the woman must use her maiden name.

As well, Mr. Speaker, there are amendments which will allow and provide all persons to change their given as well as their surnames. The current Act only permits some categories of persons to change their given names.

As well, there is a new section in the Act which will allow the Director of Child Welfare to apply on behalf of wards, to change the name on behalf of children who are wards of the province. This would be for reasons where, either for social or emotional reasons, it might be in the best interests of the child to have the child's name changed.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, there are amendments that deal with married persons living separate and apart, that married persons living separate and apart from their spouse under separation agreements, or orders, will be permitted to change their name. There are other changes within the Act that primarily are to clarify and make it more meaningful and clear than it is at the present time.

For the information of the members opposite I have my explanation sheets here which I will ask the messenger to give to the House Leader of the Opposition. I would hope and trust that the opposition will support this bill and pass it in Second Reading. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for St. Boniface, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 21 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION ACT.

MR. MINAKER presented Bill No. 21, An Act to amend The Social Services Administration Act, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MINAKER: With the exception of one section in the Act which deals with a minor word change, the purpose of this bill is to enact legislation which will allow the province to establish standards and permits inspection in licensing of guest homes. Guest homes in the bill will be defined as residential care facilities and will be facilities where care and supervision is provided for adults suffering from such disabilities and disorders as may be prescribed in the regulations. This definition excludes facilities in which only room and board is provided, and we want to make this very clear, that it is not the intention to get involved in regulating and licensing those facilities which only provide room and board. Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, the residential care facilities provide care and supervision to the elderly, mentally ill, mentally retarded, chronic alcoholic and physically disabled.

We estimate there are some 220 such facilities in the province, each of which accommodates four or more adults in an approximate total of some 2,000 residents. We are concerned about the condition of the physical facilities, including the fire and building safety standards, health and hygienic conditions and care programming. We are currently developing the regulations which will be established under the Act, but we are doing so with some care and caution. Standards must be developed which will allow guest home operators to

accommodate themselves to the requirements, and standards cannot be immediately imposed which would cause this type of care to be substantially reduced in volume or in number or type of care. This would impose an unaffordable burden on the residents and we want to approach this with a sensible approach to make sure that the fire and health standards of the facilities are the prime objective and will be maintained.

It is proposed that in the amendments of the bill, Mr. Speaker, that the licensing authority will be the office of Residential Care in our Department of Community Services and Corrections. This office, as you probably are aware, is well-established and currently has the responsibility for the standards, inspection and licensing of some 105 group-living facilities which presently operate under the Child Welfare Program.

Mr. Speaker, we do not anticipate any additional inspection staff will be required. The inspection in the city of Winnipeg will be carried out by the city of Winnipeg departments that are presently doing such inspection for fire and health, etc. And outside the city of Winnipeg, inspections will be provided by the provincial fire commissioner's office, local fire departments where applicable, and the provincial public health inspectors.

In the Act there is a means for appeal, which will be through the Welfare Appeal Board. There is also a further means for appeal through a judicial court. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that primarily covers the main principal areas which the Act deals with. I have copies of the explanation sheets relating to the different parts of the bill that are being amended or added to the bill.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I have attached a copy of Bill 68 which was assented in June of 1977, which will help the opposition to more clearly understand some of the amendments that are taking place to the bill, and we trust and hope that the opposition will support this legislation, which we feel is long overdue, so that we can get our regulations and the program started as soon as is possible. We anticipate that the actual inspections and the standards and regulations should be enforced and starting to take place sometime late in the fall of this year, providing that we do get the support of the Legislature on this bill.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I only rise to ask the Minister a question, not to take part in the debate at this time. I can't find in Clause 3, refers to Clause 11.1(1)(i) that is repealed and this one has never been proclaimed, so therefore it's not in the bill, unless this is in his papers that he gave the Clerk of which I'd like to --(Interjection)-- if it's in there. The other question, the Minister said that the inspecting will be done by the city of Winnipeg health and fire, but before licensing it will be done by his department, will there be any inspecting or investigation to see if the people that are qualified to whatever limit, is needed to assure that this care is given.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MINAKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, to answer the Honourable Member for St. Boniface's first question, attached to our explanation sheet at the back he will find Chapter 13, Bill 68 and he'll find that portion of Section 11.1(1), which will show - it's attached right at the back, stapled to it, if he unfolds it - which will show those that have been proclaimed and those that have not been proclaimed at the present time. Those that, just for the help, if the Speaker will allow me - Sections (a) to (f) we are presently operating the licensing under The Child Welfare Act; and under Item (h), that is looked after under the City of Winnipeg by-law; and outside the City of Winnipeg - this is dealing with Group Day Care Centre now - they are looked after through The Public Health Act, and also the fire code principle.

With regard to the other question about inspection of the qualified staff, that will come under the regulation portion and it will be looked after; it is our intention under the Regional Delivery System through the Public Health Nurses.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Elmwood, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 27 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE LIQUOR CONTROL ACT.

MR. MERCIER presented Bill No. 27, An Act to amend The Liquor Control Act, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, Bill 27, amongst other things, changes the corporate structure of the Liquor Control Commission. Under the present structure the Chairman, who is a member of the Commission, is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Commission and supervision of its employees. As a member of the Commission, the Chairman and his fellow commission members are responsible for policy direction. The changes divide the decision-making power of the Liquor Control Commission between the Commission, the three members appointed, one of whom is the Chairman, which will be responsible for policy direction; and a chief executive officer, in this case a general manager, who will be in charge of the day-to-day administration of the Commission and the supervision of its employees.

These changes in the structure were, Mr. Speaker, recommended by the Task Force in Government Organization and Economy, which suggested that the Chairman need not be a full-time employee of the Commission; that the Chairman not be in charge of the day-to-day management of the business of the Commission; and (3), that a chief executive officer be appointed to manage the Commission. These amendments substantially alter the duties of the position of the Chairman of the Liquor Control Commission. Under the present Act the Chairman is a full-time employee who, as I mentioned earlier, is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the business of the Commission. Under the proposed amendments the Chairman's position will be a part-time one, and the Chairman will be allowed to have other non-conflicting interests. The Manitoba Hydro Act provides for the similar position of general manager and similar method of appointment. There's a minor amendment with respect to the Commission itself in that the Act outlines the specific duties of the Vice-Chairman. These are not in the present legislation.

Another provision of Bill 27 repeals the sections which permit the Liquor Control Commission to issue special licences to facilities such as theatres, sports arenas, and in particular the Winnipeg Convention Centre. These sections are replaced with one general section which will deal with the issuance of special events licences to such facilities.

At present there is a difference in the type of licence which may be issued to the Winnipeg Convention Centre or theatres, from those which can be issued to facilities such as sports arenas, including the Keystone Centre in Brandon.

For example, the Winnipeg Convention Centre for a particular event, may be allowed to sell all kinds of liquor as prescribed by the Commission, while the Keystone Centre in Brandon, if it were to hold the exact same event, could only sell beer. Mr. Speaker, I see no reason why legislation should specifically discriminate against facilities like the Keystone Centre in Brandon.

The proposed amendment, Mr. Speaker, allows the Commission to prescribe the kinds of liquor which may be sold for consumption as well as the periods in which liquor may be sold, and the areas of the building or structure in which

liquor may be sold. Thus, Mr. Speaker, the restriction that only beer can be sold at sporting arenas such as the Winnipeg Stadium or the Keystone Centre is removed. I must emphasize however, Mr. Speaker, that this specific amendment does not give facilities like the Keystone Centre, or the Winnipeg Arena, or the Winnipeg Stadium, the right to sell liquor of any kind in the stands, in any event. Rather, the Liquor Control Commission will have a discretionary authority to decide what may be sold at any particular event at any particular time. The intention of the amendment, Mr. Speaker, is not - and I repeat not - to have the Liquor Control Commission change its policy of making only beer available for consumption in the grandstands during sporting events. The Commission may however, for example, decide to allow other kinds of liquor to be sold at other events staged in arenas, such as the Winnipeg Arena or Keystone Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I would also point out that a general section, which covers special events licences, is a more appropriate amendment than an amendment which would deal with a specific facility, like the Keystone Centre in Brandon. With such a general section the Commission can deal with any facility which might apply for a special events licence. Mr. Speaker I recommend this Bill for support by all members.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Burrows, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried

BILL NO. 28  
THE SANATORIUM BOARD OF MANITOBA ACT

MR. SHERMAN presented Bill No. 28, the Sanatorium Board of Manitoba Act, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, this proposed Bill repeals and replaces an existing piece of legislation known as The Tuberculosis Control Act. The Tuberculosis Control Act established The Sanatorium Board of Manitoba as a charitable corporation with powers to fund institutions providing care and treatment to patients suffering from tuberculosis. It is the view of the government that that legislation now is obsolete and outdated, Sir. It is the view of those participating in the community with respect to the activities of this Sanatorium Board, and those related to the field in question, that legislation does not reflect the board's current role and responsibilities. So the government, in concert with and on the basis of opinions shared with that community, started it from the recognition of the fact that new legislation was necessary to outline the powers and responsibilities which do reflect the Sanatorium Board's current operation, and which therefore repeal the current act, The Tuberculosis Control Act, and that establishes the board under a new name of its choosing. The proposed legislation in front of the House, Sir, is intended to do that. I might say that The Sanatorium Board of Manitoba wishes to retain its title for fund-raising purposes, and hence the legislation proposes continuation of the title the Sanatorium Board of Manitoba and the act is entitled, obviously, The Sanatorium Board of Manitoba Act.

The old act, as I have said, provided for the development of sanatoria for the treatment of tuberculosis; sanatoria are no longer considered necessary in the treatment of tuberculosis. The role of The Sanatorium Board has changed to include an interest in respiratory diseases of all kinds, particularly in the area of prevention, research and care. In addition The Sanatorium Board of Manitoba still owns and operates the old Ninette

Sanatorium as a 70-bed facility for mentally retarded adults. The new act recognizes the changed role of The Sanatorium Board of Manitoba and outlines aims and objectives consistent with this role. I would urge all members of the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, to give approval to this proposed legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Kildonan, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

Mr. Speaker: Bill No. 2, adjourned debate, second reading. The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: I wonder if we can have this matter stand, because I won't have enough time today. (Stood)

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, it would appear that we'll have to go into Supply. I move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the Honourable Minister without Portfolio, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty. And in making that motion, Mr. Speaker, there will only be one committee - Government Services will start tomorrow.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a committee of Interim Supply with the Honourable Member for Radisson in the Chair for the Department of Natural Resources.

#### SUPPLY - NATURAL RESOURCES

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Abe Kovnats (Radisson): This Committee will come to order. I would direct the honourable members to page 80 of the Main Estimates, Department of Natural Resources. Resolution 107, Item 8, Fisheries (a) Administration (1) Salaries. The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, pass.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)-pass. The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Surely the Minister must have some comments to make about this part of his estimates, and some information to give the House in terms of what he expects to be doing in the area of fishing policy, regulations, and with respect to the expenditures that he's proposing we accept on behalf of the people of Manitoba, so I would think that just in general he could have some opening statement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, I heard calls from the opposition side to pass and that's why I took my seat. The House Leader is a bit upset over there Mr. Chairman, if he didn't wish to pass the item perhaps he shouldn't have called to have it passed. I am quite prepared to provide the information, Mr. Chairman, on the individual items as we go through. I think in general terms we've already had some debate of fisheries items and I am sure that we are going to debate them again.

In general terms, of course, we simply point out that from the commercial point of view that we are interested in the long term of creating a viable commercial fishing industry and that we have an industry within which the participants are able to earn a satisfactory level of income and a satisfactory level of return for their effort and their investment. Over the

years the commercial fishery has had it's problems, of course, for decades, even during the past decade there have been some changes take place within the industry, Mr. Chairman, which would indicate that there have been problems. We need only look at some of statistics concerning the industry, for example 1968-69 which was the last full year prior to the government changing and the NDP forming the government in 1969, that year there were 3,976 fishermen involved in the commercial fishing industry, they harvested some 25,000,731 lbs. and over the next 8 years that number of fishermen declined to 1976-77 the number of fishermen involved was then 2,953, which is approximately a 25 percent decline in the number of fishermen involved over all the province; and the amount of fish taken in 1976-77 was 19,167,400 lbs., again a decline from 25,000,731 lbs., a decline again in excess of 25 percent overall in the production. Certainly something that would indicate that there were problems in the industry.

Those problems were perhaps even more acute in the northern part of the province, Mr. Chairman, where in 1968-69 there were some 1,517 licences issued in northern Manitoba to fish 163 lakes and there was 9,526,000 lbs. of fish harvested. But 8 years later in 1976-77 there were 1,102 licences issued to fish 125 lakes and there was 5,618,922 lbs. of fish harvested. Again we see over that course of 8 years, Mr. Chairman, that the number of licences issued had declined by over 400 from the 1,500 in 1968-69. Again in the neighbourhood of a 25 percent reduction.

The number of lakes being fished had declined from 163 to 225(sic) so there were over 30 lakes that had been fished obviously were capable of producing fish on a commercial basis in 1968-69 were no longer being fished in 1976-77. The total production in the north dropped even more dramatically as it fell from 9.5 million lbs. approximately to 5.5 million lbs. so that the drop there was, I suppose, roughly in the neighbourhood of 40 percent. So those declines, Mr. Chairman, certainly indicated some problems in the industry and those took place, of course, during a period of time when there had been some changes take place in the industry, both in the marketing and in the kinds of support that were being offered to fishermen. The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, of course, came into operation shortly after that 1968-69 period referred to, and it was viewed with some mixed feelings by the fishermen involved at the time. They had not been happy of course with the kind of marketing situation that had existed prior to that time. They had expected some very significant results to occur as a consequence of the introduction of the single desk marketing concept. But over that period of time that perhaps there weren't the kinds of improvements evidenced that people had thought that there would have been. For instance, one of the advantages that was anticipated from the introduction of the Freshwater Marketing Corporation was that there would be a greater percentage of the value of the fish returned to the fishermen. From information available to me, I worked out the percentage return from the period nine years prior to the advent of the corporation and nine years subsequent to that. And the percentage return to the fishermen in that period prior to the advent of the corporation was somewhat better than 56 percent and in the period after the advent of the corporation it was somewhat better than 52 percent. So that in that period of time the expected advantages in the percentage returned to fishermen didn't materialize.

So the fishermen had mixed feelings about the corporation, and perhaps it's only within the last year or two as prices have started to increase significantly, and naturally as the prices go up the fishermen have more money in their pockets and they tend to be happier with the system. We hope of course that those prices will hold and that they will go even higher because the relative position of fishermen as of about 1978, which are the most recent statistics that I have available, the relative position of fishermen at that time really had not increased significantly to what it was in the early 1960s, when one takes inflation into consideration.

So, Mr. Chairman, we are attempting to work to bring about any improvements that we can in marketing or in the management of the resource or in the methods of licensing; any changes that we can bring about which will work to the benefit of the fishermen we intend to examine very carefully. At the moment, with respect to the marketing question, as I pointed out to the

members opposite, we have a committee of technical people from the various jurisdictions involved in the corporation examining some possible options that might be entertained to see what the impact of introducing some of those options might be. The expectation was when we met with the Ministers in early December that we would have been meeting during March to consider the results of that investigation to be able to make some recommendations. Of course the intervening federal election has set that time tableback somewhat and I am uncertain at this point as to when we will be meeting again. In the meantime, of course, it's business as usual as far as the marketing operations go.

I don't know that there is a great deal to be said about the sport fishing aspect of the department. I believe that the annual report that's available for the year ending March 31st, 1979, covers activities of the branch including our activities with respect to sport fishing. We are of course very proud of the resource that we have here in Manitoba to provide a recreational base to Manitobans, as I've said many times the recreational resources that we have in this province provide tremendous benefit to our population and the fishery resource is just one of those. In addition, of course, being able to be utilized by our own people for their benefit we also are able to provide and in effect market recreational opportunities to non-residents of our province who are able to come and enjoy these resources and to bring dollars into the province and create employment in the province. We are happy to see that, Mr. Chairman, we hope to see some expansions in that area as we are able to implement some of our policies of allocation and our policies of land sale, for instance, where commercial operators are able to gain longer term tenure to their commercial sites as well as to the resource.

So I think with those introductory comments, Mr. Chairman, I could just advise the honourable members that in the first item before us, the Administration item, 9.(a), the staffing of that group, there were five staff man years in the 1979-80 vote and there is a request for four before us now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the Honourable Minister, the remark was made 9.(a); we are on 8.(a).

The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see I don't have time before we break for Private Members' Hour to adequately deal with the Minister's irresponsible handling of the government policy on fish licensing in Manitoba; something that has been brought out in the Legislature previously, and the Minister, I believe, would hope that it has been discussed adequately and that we would not bother mentioning it again. But I am afraid the Minister can't be let off that easily because I believe that the Minister is still proceeding to implement a policy which will be disastrous to the fishermen of Manitoba, one which the fishermen have protested against vehemently, have almost unanimously opposed in its application, and one which the Minister himself has had to back down and backtrack on in terms of his own statements regarding his policy. I refer to statements he made to the CBC, in which he said, when he was questioned about objections from areas like South Indian Lake, said despite objections the policy will remain the same; and that further to that they were studying possible major changes to the Freshwater Fish Marketing agency. Since that time, Mr. Chairman, we have seen the Minister make a couple of double-backs, so to speak, one was during the election campaign when the Federal Conservatives came to him wringing their hands and asking him to please hold off implementation of this policy because it was being politically damaging to them in their campaigns.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister then made a very fine distinction in his announcement suspending the commercial fishing licence changes and trying to walk that fine line between that small group that's proposing these changes and the majority of fishermen who are opposed to it. He simply said that the changes in policy that were to be implemented June 1st were suspended, but not cancelled. Mr. Chairman, the fishermen of Manitoba want them cancelled; they don't want them just suspended. They want the Minister to give up this proposed change in the fishing licence policy and I believe that the Minister is still not listening to them, that he is still attempting to proceed with his original policy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour is now 4:30; time for Private Members' Hour. 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 Emerson, that the report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR

MR. SPEAKER: The first resolution, under Private Members' Hour, Resolution No. 17.

The Honourable Member for St. Matthews.

Then we'll proceed to Resolution No. 11, the resolution of the Honourable Member for Wellington, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Crescentwood.

MR. WARREN STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this resolution. Unfortunately the Member for Wellington isn't here today and I am sure that he expected the Member for St. Matthews to proceed with his resolution. But as you can see, Sir, the Order Paper is very long and I would prefer to carry on with my few notes at this particular time to take the opportunity to speak to this resolution concerning ambulance service which is fundamentally related to general health care and a valuable part of our health care delivery system in Manitoba. Ambulance service is the initial contact for patients with pre-hospital care, and the ambulance attendants delivers an important extension of hospital care.

The Honourable Member for Wellington in my opinion, Sir, is to be commended for introducing for debate a resolution dealing with a service that is so important to the public health. The member's resolution deals with the subject in a reasonable non-partisan fashion and it will be my intent, Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks, to move an amendment to his resolution. But first, Mr. Speaker, let me examine some of the parts of his resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the information and the statistics used in the resolution are reproduced from a research paper that was written by three Winnipeg doctors, all very qualified physicians. As some of the members know, one of the doctors, Dr. Bristow, is the head of the emergency department at the Health Sciences Centre here in Winnipeg. The information from that study carried out by these three doctors has been accurately incorporated into the resolution moved by the Honourable Member for Wellington, Mr. Speaker. But what we have before us is not the complete and full story.

For example, in the member's resolution and I quote from his opening paragraph, "Whereas Winnipeg heart attack victims who suffer cardiac arrest outside of hospital have less than a five percent chance of survival." This is a very alarming statement that was made in the member's resolution and unfortunately, Sir, it is true and it is a fact.

In his second paragraph he says, "And whereas authorities have recently stated that the survival rate could be improved by as much as 25 percent if the Winnipeg Ambulance Service crews were better trained and equipped." This information appears to have been obtain from an article published by these three doctors. The important factor in a cardiac arrest, Mr. Speaker, is how soon after the arrest the victim receives life support treatment. As stated, the chances of survival are increased five-fold where life support treatment is administered immediately at the scene of the arrest. This is important to remember in discussing the next clause, Mr. Speaker, which is the third one

where the mover of the motion of the resolution says, "And whereas expert studies have stated that in order to be effective, ambulance response time to cardiac arrest calls must be made in less than five minutes." This is based on the fact that following a cardiac arrest irreparable brain damage begins at a point somewhere between four and six minutes and because of a delay in placing an emergency call, often resulting because of confusion by persons who are attending a person that has a heart attack. The objective of five minutes following placement of the call would probably mean the ambulance would arrive at a time in excess of the five minutes following the actual heart attack itself. One must remember, Mr. Speaker, the important factor is that when CPR is started the five minutes' response time, therefore, might be too late. To have a real impact on a survival rate, it is necessary to have someone commence CPR within the first few minutes of the person suffering the heart attack and before the ambulance arrives. This is why a problem aimed at reducing the mortality rate of heart attack victims outside of hospitals must have two important ingredients: firstly, a quick response time by the ambulance and, secondly, a public instruction program with the objective of having someone trained in CPR in every household.

In the fourth paragraph of the member's resolution, he mentions, "and whereas a recent study in Winnipeg found that ambulance running time was over 5 minutes in 50 percent of all cases;" these figures pertain to all cases of cardiac arrest, Mr. Speaker. Response time on cardiac arrest cases is generally longer than that of the average ambulance response, for example from accidents, because when any person suffering cardiac arrest are at home in their homes or in their suites and are often difficult to get to, whereas accidents do take place very often on public thoroughfares and the ambulance crews can get to an accident scene often much faster than they can get to somebody's place of residence. The average response time for ambulance calls is between five and five-and-a-half minutes in the winter months here in the city of Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker, and less than five minutes in the summer months, with the average time being three-and-a-half minutes. But let's not be diverted by these average figures, Mr. Speaker. If 50 percent of the cardiac arrest calls are responded to in four minutes and 50 percent in six minutes, we have the desired five-minute average response time. However, that will be of small consolation to the families of the 50 percent of the people who had the ambulance response time take six minutes or longer.

I believe the Honourable Member for Wellington understands and agrees with these statements. We are led back again to the need for public education in CPR training. In Seattle, Washington, in the United States, that city has one of the best advanced life support systems in the world and is the model system here in North America. In Seattle, they are coming close to reaching the objective of having at least one person in every household knowledgeable in CPR.

The honourable member mentions in his fifth and sixth paragraphs of his resolution, "and whereas current Winnipeg Ambulance Service practice is to equip each vehicle with two persons;" and it goes on to say, "and whereas the head of the Emergency Department at the Health Sciences Centre has recently stated that it is very difficult to provide good basic life support with only two people in a moving ambulance vehicle."

Both of these statements are correct, Mr. Speaker. It is a standard practice to staff ambulances with two persons, whether that be in the city of Winnipeg or other cities in Canada and the United States. Even in the city of Seattle, Washington, which is considered the city with the model system, they staff their ambulances with only two persons. But I don't believe what the honourable member is suggesting is that we can staff ambulances on a regular basis with more than two persons. What does happen in other more advanced jurisdictions, including the city of Seattle in the United States, is that a third person is present when the ambulance responds to a cardiac arrest call.

An alternative solution, Mr. Speaker, that has been instituted in some other areas, is a two-tiered emergency response service. In the two-tiered system an emergency call is responded to simultaneously by the local fire department and the nearest ambulance. Since there are usually more fire stations than ambulance stations in any metropolitan city, the fire department

people usually can arrive at a home where a person has had heart attack more quickly than the ambulance because there are, in most cities, at least twice and sometimes three and four times as many fire stations as there ambulance stations.

Firemen are also trained in CPR and can usually meet the five-minute response time. When the ambulance crew arrives, they take over, and if CPR is to be continued en route to hospital, one of the firemen then accompanies the ambulance, therefore, giving it three persons: the driver plus two persons applying the CPR. That is the method and the system most desired in transporting patients to the hospital.

The seventh paragraph of the honourable member's resolution mentions that, "and whereas ambulance services are related to general health care and, therefore, directly impact an important area of provincial responsibility;" there is no denying of this, Mr. Speaker. Health care is the responsibility of the province and the responsibility that, in my opinion, has been excellently met by our present Minister of Health. Ambulance service, though closely connected with health care, is still the responsibility of the municipalities.

In the eighth paragraph of the member's resolution, he mentions, "and whereas the provincial government will subsidize approximately 27 percent of the Winnipeg Ambulance Service's projected operating deficit for 1980;" this figure is approximately correct, Mr. Speaker, except that it was 27 percent of the operating budget and not the deficit that is being funded by the provincial government. This government is giving approximately \$700,000 this year to the City of Winnipeg for ambulance service. There are approximately 75 other ambulance services throughout the province that the Government of Manitoba helps with funding. Many of these are operating very satisfactorily and efficiently within the present system.

The honourable member's last paragraph in his resolution goes on to say that, "Now therefore be it resolved that this government consider the advisability of creating an advisory committee to evaluate the adequacy and efficiency of the Winnipeg and other municipal ambulance services and report thereon." Because of the emergency relation on the impact of the well-trained ambulance crews that we have, not only on cardiac arrest cases but on many other conditions, including highway traffic accidents and other emergencies, we feel that the time is right to review the ambulance services in this province. Pre-hospital care is an important extension of hospital care and is being recognized as such throughout the United States and most of Canada. Its importance is being recognized in several provinces; namely, Ontario and British Columbia, where they have programs which recognize the concept of pre-hospital care. The time is right to develop such a plan for an efficient and, hopefully, economic program which is in tune with the current emerging concepts and which is consistent with the health care services being delivered by the province.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, the staff of the Manitoba Health Services Commission were instructed to investigate various initiatives for improving the ambulance programming for consideration by this government. There is no need then, Mr. Speaker, to establish an advisory committee because the Minister of Health has already asked the Manitoba Health Services Commission to review this matter. So, the need for establishing an advisory committee or some other bureaucracy is not needed when the evaluation called for, as I've just mentioned, has been started and is underway by the Health Services Commission.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for River Heights that the resolution of the Honourable Member for Wellington be amended by striking out the words after the word "survival" in the third line thereof, and substituting the following therefor - I've just, Mr. Speaker, given the pageboy some copies of my amendment - and substituting the following therefor:

"AND WHEREAS ambulance services are fundamentally related to general health care;

AND WHEREAS pre-hospital care is an important extension of hospital;

AND WHEREAS the Manitoba Health Services Commission began a study this winter of various initiatives in ambulance programming for the purpose of making recommendations for consideration by government;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Manitoba Health Services Commission be encouraged to develop its recommendations on the basis of proven technical and successful experiences in other jurisdictions, including the widest possible public instruction in cardiac pulmonary resuscitation."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. SAUL A. MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've listened carefully to the Member for Crescentwood and he didn't disappoint me; he introduced an amendment. If he hadn't, I would have, but he did and I'll try to address myself to the amendment which really recognizes the fact that the Member for Wellington did, in fact, introduce an important resolution to this House, and I don't believe the Member for Crescentwood did in fact quarrel with much of what the Member for Wellington said. He read it through and he did indicate that, with regard to the 5 percent that, in fact, the response time is pretty good generally and that perhaps he felt that the Member for Wellington had exaggerated it somewhat but, by and large, he didn't quarrel with the idea that ambulance services are a logical extension of health care. That whereas, in the early years, not too many years ago when it was considered what is required in the field of health in the service to people, that it was recognized that you have to zero in first on hospital care, which is the most costly and was financially crippling people, to the services of doctors, which is another costly and necessary matter that had to be addressed and that these other extensions would in due course follow.

I know that when Justice Hall brought out his report, which led to Medicare in Canada, in his report he indicated that this is just the first step toward a total health scheme, and that his hope was that Canada would move toward a total health scheme. This resolution deals with a program which we initiated a few years ago - I can't recall the exact year; I remember I was involved in it - recognizing at that time that the time had come when we now had to address ourselves to the next step in total health care and ambulances was a logical one. We addressed it at that time with the idea that it would be expanded; it would be improved; it would be enhanced over the years.

Unfortunately, it pretty well stayed static; nothing has happened. I believe that this year there has been a slight increase in the grant, by about \$55,000, to the present \$690,000 for 1980, but it has not kept pace with the cost of delivering the service. As the hospital services became available and if you recall, when we went into the program, Mr. Speaker, hospital services in Winnipeg were privately-owned. There were a number of private operations and I forget the number but it was amazing; I was surprised at the time we looked into it, there were about a half a dozen different operators, each one vying for the ambulance business. It was a fragmented system; it was a poor system and the City of Winnipeg recognized it for what it was and once we moved they moved to creating one unified ambulance system in the City of Winnipeg, which made sense. It was the only way to go. It was logical. And Winnipeg has - I give them credit - has tried to bring that hospital service to people in Winnipeg at a - I wouldn't say the finest level because there's still gaps in the service as we know, in Transcona and elsewhere, the response time isn't what it is but it is improved - and as I say a far cry from what it was just five years ago. So I give the City of Winnipeg credit for moving in that direction.

My concern is that the province has not moved in that direction. The province has simply sat back. They inherited a program - and I'm glad now that we did it because if we hadn't they wouldn't even have that to fall back on - we developed a program; we said, let's start it off, we're flying blind, let's start off with a program right across the province on a per capita basis, we'll make moneys available. And in the early years, frankly, it covered a substantial part of the cost because as I say it was a fragmented service. It was a privately owned service, privately operated. But in the last three

years - I think it's three years since the city of Winnipeg finally amalgamated it - I think they bought out the ambulance services, they took them over certainly and unified them into one service with the ambulances spotted around the city and they're still, as I say, working towards consolidating that. But now they're faced with much higher costs and you've got to recognize that the costs for this kind of service cannot be related to other kinds of costs in the system.

This is a highly labour-intensive cost. Ambulance is not just a vehicle, it means the people who man the vehicles 24 hours a day. So you need three shifts plus that other shift which is "off" for their weekend, whether that weekend be Saturday, Sunday or Monday and Tuesday. So the manpower that you require for an ambulance service is exceptionally heavy. So it's very labour-intensive and when you have a labour-intensive operation as this you can't simply say, well the provincial budget went up 3 percent so we'll increase 3 percent or 5 percent or 4 percent, it just doesn't work that way. It is very labour intensive.

As well, the equipment they use, is costly and in the last few years, certainly with the exchange rate, the Canadian dollar exchange rates dropping as it has and since most of the equipment that's used in ambulances, a great deal of it, is of the kind that is manufactured in the United States. The cost of the equipment they use, the cost of materials they use have risen far more than the cost of living, the normal inflation rate. So when the province comes along this year and says, well, we'll put in another \$55,000, it's not just only shirking its responsibility, it basically is doing what it's trying to do all around, it's pushing the cost onto somebody else so the province can keep its costs down. They don't care if the cost goes up as long as the provincial costs either stay the same or drop.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the city of Winnipeg, their costs should have been increased, their funds for that project should have been increased last year and the year before and the year before that, and to come along this year and simply say, well, here's \$55,000, just doesn't wash. There's no sense to it really. It makes no sense because it misses the point completely. And members of City Council have, I think, gone on record as saying that they met with the government, they asked for funds for this operation in their meetings with government, and they're simply dismissed. They're simply given this \$55,000 - I don't know how they ever arrived at that kind of figure - and the rest they would find from this great big block fund that they give the city of Winnipeg, this \$30 million, now \$33 million, and that's supposed to pay for all of these services that in the past were cost-shared.

Mr. Speaker, I indicated at the time that the Minister of Municipal Affairs or Urban Affairs announced the block grant, I said that block grant would come back to haunt the city of Winnipeg because under the guise of autonomy they were, in fact, putting them in a straitjacket financially; that they could not fund their operations, the civic operations, with the kind of program put forward by this government; that there is no way that \$30 million, or \$33 million this year, was going to meet their needs, We've seen what happened; we've seen that they had to cut back drastically everywhere; that the maintenance of the city of Winnipeg is in a deplorable state; and that they cannot maintain the kind of service that the city of Winnipeg would like to maintain and really should maintain if we all recognize - and the Member for Crescentwood did not deny it - that in fact hospital service is an essential service, is part of the health service and it cannot be treated as a secondary service, something to be dismissed or something simply to be pushed onto the shoulders of the city of Winnipeg.

A MEMBER: Why didn't you take it over?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I didn't talk about taking over and I still am not saying that they should take it over and maybe that's the direction they should go. But as I indicated to the Minister, we started something that had nothing, absolutely nothing. We started when there was no hospital service in the city of Winnipeg except by a few private ambulance operators and the Minister knows it because he was involved at that time. And I suspect he

was also involved at the time when the decision was made that the system was inadequate and the city had to take over the system and make it into a city-run ambulance service. He was there so he knows. So the time perhaps has come when maybe, in fact, the province should assume the hospital costs. Now maybe they're not ready for that - I'm not even asking them to go that far today - but darn it all you have a responsibility to maintain your share of the costs, and that you haven't done. You have slipped. You're down to 27 percent. And as a matter of fact if you could get away with it you'd let it go down to zero and say, that's a city responsibility. You'd just pass the buck on it, just as you passed the buck on them in Public Health Services. You are now paying the city of Winnipeg as all other Public Health units in Manitoba. You're saying, "We gave you a lump sum of money. Find the money there". And that big pie you gave them is being cut into so many slivers that no one sliver is adequate to cover anything, and that's the dilemma the city finds itself in. And you're continuing that and you're worsening the problem with the kind of support you're now giving to the city of Winnipeg. So I'm not saying to you take it over; I'm saying something was started, a very positive step was taken. For the first time in Manitoba the province said, yes, we have a responsibility. Okay, we will now share with the municipalities and we'll see how it develops. And I was pleased when the city took the bit in its teeth and moved in the direction they did.

But lo and behold the province simply sits back and says, all right, things are now going in the proper direction but now that the city has done it we'll just sit back and do nothing; and an increase of \$55,000 on a budget of \$690,000 is peanuts. It's nothing. It's of no consequence. Mr. Speaker, the province should be paying 50 percent of the costs to the city of Winnipeg. And my disagreement with the Member for Wellington was that his resolution didn't call for that. It simply called for a study: "consider the advisability of creating an Advisory Committee to evaluate the adequacy." Now we have a Resolution which says; "WHEREAS the Manitoba Health Services Commission has begun a study", and so therefore I assume from that therefore the study suggested by the Member for Wellington is not needed according to the Member for Crescentwood, "that the MHSC began a study this winter of various initiatives and ambulance programming for the purpose of making recommendations for consideration by government. AND THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Health Services Commission be encouraged to develop its recommendations on the basis of proven techniques and successful experience in other jurisdictions, including the widest possible public instruction in cardiac pulmonary resuscitation."

Mr. Speaker, what this calls for is a campaign to educate people in CPR. That's a wonderful thought. That's a terrific idea. By all means do it. But what's that got to do with the need for hospitals in the city of Winnipeg; and the need to help the city of Winnipeg pay for the costs of that hospital service? Because the hospital service is there. But again you've passed the buck on them and this amendment is really a slap in the face to the city of Winnipeg who are trying desperately to maintain an ambulance service and this simply ignores them totally and its motherhood. It says study ways, look at other areas and study ways of including the widest possible public instruction, and CPR. Everybody's going to become an expert in CPR.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member has 5 minutes.

MR. MILLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is not an amendment which I think the government can be proud of and they should be proud of. This is dodging the issue; this is turning your back on the issue; this is passing the buck again back to the city of Winnipeg and saying, it's your problem don't bother us. We'll have a study. We'll issue some bulletins and we'll print up some nice pamphlets and brochures telling people why they should take the CPR course; telling them they should all enroll in the St. Johns Ambulance course. That's what this is; that's all this is and it will cost you the price of a brochure, which you may or may not mail out to everybody but you'll probably have at every regional Public Health office so they can pick it up, or in the Norquay Building. Mr. Speaker, they have totally missed the point.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the Member for Kildonan, that the amendment be amended by the addition of the following:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the interim the government consider the advisability of increasing its funding support for ambulance services in 1980-81 to reflect the actual increase in costs since 1977.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the sub-amendment moved by the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks I want to speak for a few minutes with respect to the whole issue and the whole subject at hand. As it is isolated and identified for a debate in the wording contained in the sub-amendment just proposed, the Member for Seven Oaks has acknowledged that my colleague, the Honourable Member for Crescentwood, is speaking to the original resolution proposed by the Honourable Member for Wellington has not adopted a posture of antagonism or in fact of declamatory conflict with the essential thrust of that original resolution. That position put forward by my colleague the Honourable Member for Crescentwood is the position of this government and accurately reflects our attitude to the original resolution because we feel that there are, and we acknowledge that there are substantial avenues of exploration leading to initiatives and improvements in ambulance services generally that now must indeed be pursued in this jurisdiction, as is the case in many other jurisdictions in North America where ambulance programming is under intensive review and in some cases undergoing substantial improvement.

I would suggest, and I think my colleague has suggested in his remarks, that essentially this is what the resolution calls for, contrary to the position taken by the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks. The Member for Seven Oaks suggests that the amendment proposed by my colleague from Crescentwood misses the point of the position taken by the government in the Honourable Member for Wellington's resolution and I would suggest with respect that the Member for Seven Oaks is reading considerably more into the resolution, and reading considerably more into the debate, for his own purposes, and that's fair enough, he's entitled to do that but it is not an argument that I feel has much substance.

The resolution proposed by the Honourable Member for Wellington calls precisely for a study that would ostensibly lead to an expansion of, and improvement of the ambulance service in the city of Winnipeg. It calls, in fact, in precise terms for the establishment of an advisory committee to evaluate the adequacy and efficiency of the Winnipeg and other municipal ambulance services and report thereon. Now there's no reason why the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks should not come into this House and advance a resolution calling on the government to increase its funding support for ambulance services in 1980/81 to reflect the actual increase in costs since 1977, as he has done; but I suggest to him that he stretches the debating point pretty extremely when he tries to pretend that the amendment that we have proposed to the original resolution misses the point of the resolution.

The point of the resolution was to establish an advisory committee to evaluate the service, that is the operative proposition in the resolution. What we have said in our amendment, and what my colleague from Crescentwood has indicated to the Chamber in his remarks addressed to the resolution, is that essentially we on this side and the member for Wellington are on much the same wavelength with respect to the current adequacy of the ambulance service in Winnipeg; that we believe the time has come, and indeed recognized some months ago that the time had come for an in-depth evaluation, an in-depth assessment of the adequacy of that service. What we say to him and his colleagues and this House in the amendment proposed is that in fact your proposition for an advisory committee and an evaluation is redundant in the circumstances because the government, through the office of the Minister of Health and through the Manitoba Health Services Commission, did this winter call upon the Manitoba Health Services Commission staff to investigate that service, to investigate its strengths, to identify its weaknesses, to

measure and assess it's efficiency and to develop in the context of the information that's available to us, not only with respect to the adequacy of our service here but in the context of the information that's available to us with respect to ambulance services across this continent, and their strengths and their weaknesses to propose to us some initiatives for improvement of the Winnipeg ambulance service, and indeed the Manitoba ambulance service generally, for consideration by government in future programming.

So I must suggest to my honourable friend, the Member for Seven Oaks, that if anyone is proffering any legislative proposals with respect to this resolution that miss the point it is the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks because he is in fact introducing a new suggestion entirely. There is nothing wrong with that but he is the one who has missed the point of the resolution. Now to deal with the suggestion that he makes and the point that he raises, Mr. Speaker, I think it is necessary to remind him that there has been, as a result of the changes that have taken place with respect to the city of Winnipeg and its boundaries and its size in the past few years, to remind him of something to which he already made reference but in which he perhaps was selective in terms of the points that he was making, that is that the Winnipeg ambulance grant has been a point of some consideration and some contention between the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba for some years. It's not something that was suddenly generated by the election of the present government in October 1977.

In fact, Sir, I would remind the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks that in the fiscal year 1977-78, which was the budget that we inherited, which constituted the estimates package which we inherited when we were elected, that there was no change contained or proposed with respect to the total grant by the province of Manitoba to the ambulance program. In 1975-76 the total grant, and that was the first year of provincial grant support, the total grant was \$1,300,000.00. In 1976-77 that total grant rose to \$1,319,000.00. I am not suggesting that a rise is not a rise, that an increase is not an increase, but when we're talking about figures, and he's the one who has referred to a \$56,000 increase in the city of Winnipeg's share this year as peanuts, that the previous government, in 1976-77 raised the total grant by \$19,000.00. That was the total grant for the whole province of which, as the honourable member knows, the city of Winnipeg only receives approximately half. In 1977-78 we were elected to inherit a package of estimates and spending proposals that were already in place for the fiscal year and there was no change proposed, there was no increase.

So Mr. Speaker, let us acknowledge that there has been a bone of contention, as it were, and there has been some legitimate dispute and some legitimate grievance held by the city of Winnipeg, vis-a-vis the province of Manitoba with respect to the funding support for it's ambulance program, but it did not originate with this government. In fact, Sir, we have in the current year attempted to remedy and rectify what has been admittedly a difficult situation for the city of Winnipeg, where ambulance program funding is concerned, by providing a 9 percent increase in the ambulance grant which raises the total grant to \$1,438,000 and which raises the city of Winnipeg's share from approximately \$617,000 to \$672.5 thousand, that is the \$55,000 or \$56,000 increase which the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks refers to as peanuts. It is not the kind of increase, Mr. Speaker, admittedly, that meets or resolves the city of Winnipeg's problem where ambulance grant funding is concerned. I don't pretend that it is, and I acknowledge that in using the terminology that he has used the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks has merely picked up the catch phrase of a critic that had already been circulated and publicized earlier, and I admit to some sense of vulnerability and some sense of unhappiness with respect to the size of the increase because I do not hesitate to admit that it does not solve or resolve the city of Winnipeg's problem and that more has to be done with respect to support for the Ambulance Grant Program.

That is why my colleague the Honourable Member for Crescentwood, delivered to the Chamber a few moments ago the assurances and the information that he did. We were aware in my office and in the executive council of government that the ambulance program in the province, and particularly in the city of

Winnipeg, needs modernization and improvement; needs new initiatives. Those are going to require some additional kind of funding support; not necessarily of the form that has been the case up till now, Sir. I don't think I'm in a position at this time, nor do I think that it would be politic for me to suggest what kind of support for ambulance services we are contemplating, but I want to give my honourable friend, the Member for Seven Oaks, an undertaking that we are contemplating very seriously a very innovative improvement in ambulance programming which would obviously call for a much more sophisticated and innovative form of financial base than has been the case up till now, and that continues to be the case today. This is why I, through the Health Services Commission and with my officials and my colleagues, called on the commission staff to study the field this winter, to produce for us an evaluation and to produce some suggested alternatives and options that we can look at. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my friend the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks that this is not a motherhood approach, either the recommendation for widespread public education in CPR or the exercise on which the commission is now embarked, on our instructions, to evaluate and assess the Ambulance Program. It is not just a case of referring the problem to another committee. It is not just a case of derailing the momentum and defusing the criticism. It is not just a case of creating some kind of smokescreen of activity behind which my department can take sanctuary. I am aware that ambulance programming requires new directions, new initiatives, new imagination, and new support, in this province, and that leadership must come from the government and particularly from my department to provide that and I want to give my friend, the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks, and the Honourable Member for Wellington, and move this resolution, and undertaking, that is a priority with me and with my department.

We need a study in order to do that and it's not an academic study, it's not a theoretical study; it's a study . . . --(Interjection)-- Beg your pardon? He's retired now but we're able to draw on his expertise. It's a study that will be geared to presenting to government some concrete proposals that I think will recommend themselves to all in this Chamber for consideration for early implementation, to provide a better ambulance service, better ambulance programming, in Winnipeg and in Manitoba generally.

I think it can be said and it be thoroughly said and acknowledged, Mr. Speaker, that through the Manitoba Health Services Commission operating program, the government has in the past two years introduced a number and a substantial number of new health programs and services that have been much needed and that have been warmly welcomed on all sides of the House and by the particular communities of Manitoba citizens whom they have served. We have not obviously been able to do more than we have been able to afford but we have within those limitations introduced a number of compelling important and powerful new health programming and health service initiatives. And the members opposite and the members in the Chamber generally need only refer to the operating budget and the operating program breakdown of the Manitoba Health Services Commission to remind themselves of some of those.

We have also announced in the program that has not been detailed yet, but will be detailed when I am introducing my Estimates, or during the course of my Estimates, a number of new health program initiatives this year through the operating budget of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, quite apart from those things that I announced in capital, but as was mentioned in the Throne Speech. We have programs such as an insured program for cleft lip and palate and others of the like, rheumatology research and immunology, coming this year, as MHSC funded programs. We obviously as is the case with any government can only move on the basis of the capacity of the public treasury to fund these programs and we operate on the basis of priority and as much responsibility to the priority selection process as we can apply. In that spectrum of considerations, is the ambulance service, the ambulance grant program and the clear recognition that ambulance services are health related, hospital related, they are part of the health care spectrum that we must, in attempting to supply and sustain a responsible quality health care system, have built into that and contained within that, a responsible quality ambulance program, and a responsible quality ambulance care system.

So, Mr. Speaker, I must suggest to the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks that the sub-amendment that he proposes is not acceptable to me or to the government at the present time. Our budget is committed and the interests that we share generally are being served by the study that we have under way which will produce programming for the very near future.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. WILSON PARASIUK: I was going to call it 5:30, but I would like to take a couple of minutes to answer some of the statements made by the Minister because I think we've had another demonstration of the way in which the Minister deals with critical health matters. The Minister is sympathetic with the general intent of the resolution put forward by my colleague, yet his colleague emasculates all the whereas's. The Minister is sympathetic with the whole critical issue of health care, yet he freezes funds for three years; freezes funds in such a way that what you really have is a government cutback in funding to ambulance care. And while doing this all, he is wringing his hands, wringing his hands, and crying crocodile tears, and that's a particular technique used by the Minister of Health.

You know, he talks about all these problems and wrings his hands and he reminds me of a, you know, talk about bleeding heart Liberals, you know, you have these bleeding heart Liberals running around trying to deal with problems. And I think that what we have in the Minister of Health is a bleeding heart Conservative. He wrings his hands, he gnashes his teeth, he expresses cries of sympathy in relation to critical problems of personal care homes or ambulance care or hospitals or nurses. But ultimately, Mr. Speaker, he is still a Conservative. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is cut-back. Ultimately, the bottom line is that he trades off that type of priority against another type. Now if you look at budgetary expenditures over the last three years, and the Minister brings the whole question of funding and said that the NDP administration really froze funding. In incipient stages of the program, funding was exploratory. It always is in the early stages of a program, but the Minister proceeded to freeze funding for three years while being part of a Cabinet, that increased funding in a whole set of other areas. If you look at the Minister of Economic Development's budget, if you look at his particular budget, and if you look at the way in which grants to companies have been increased, if you look at that, then you have to wonder where the priorities of this government are and you have to wonder where the ultimate priorities of the Minister are, because he is part of that process; he is part of that decision-making process that goes around wringing his hands in terms of social problems but ultimately cutting back on social services and providing different forms of corporate welfare.

And he's been part of that process, so we've had a demonstration, Mr. Speaker, by the Minister of bleeding heart conservatism. --(Interjection)-- Well, this person does, he ultimately, while gnashing his hands . . . while gnashing his teeth, no, he wrings his hands and gnashes his teeth and cuts back on the programming. --(Interjection)-- Well, you know, it's another example, Mr. Speaker, of the Minister putting dollars before needs which he has been doing consistently, consistently in the health care area. And if you look at the budget of the government over the last three years, if you look at the spending estimates, you will notice that there has been a shift in certain directions and away from certain critical priorities like ambulance care.

And one of the things that I find surprising in the Minister's statements on this is that while expressing general sympathy, he will not support the sub-amendment of my colleague, the Member for Seven Oaks, who is saying that what we should do in the interim pending another of the Conservative government studies, is that we should provide an adequate level of funding for ambulance services; that the province should show its commitment to health care and pull its fair share in terms of funding for ambulance services and it certainly hasn't happened over the last three years.

The City Council has been put on the spot; they have had the buck passed to it and one wonders then why the government is doing something like that because health care surely is a provincial responsibility. You know, we have

school children coming to us and we talk to them about the duties of various levels of government because they tend to think of government as being somewhat monolithic and we try to separate the functions of a federal government out from those of the provincial government and those of the city. And one of the things that I tell them is that the province deals with the delivery of health care and that's a very very major function of a provincial government. And with something as critical as ambulance care, and no speaker yet has gotten up to say that ambulance care isn't critical; not speaker has gotten up yet to say that it isn't high priority. But yet in this fundamental area of provincial responsibility, the province passes the buck off to the city and the city is sitting there getting this thrown on it trying desperately to provide services, providing services which would have some equality of access.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hour being 5:30, when this subject next comes up, the honourable member will have fifteen minutes.

The hour being 5:30, the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:30 tomorrow afternoon. (Thursday)