

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 27 May, 1982

Time — 8:00 p.m.

## CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

### SUPPLY - FLOOD AND EMERGENCY EXPENDITURES

**MR. CHAIRMAN, H. Harapiak:** The Committee will come to order. We're on 1. Flood Control and Emergency Expenditures. Mr. Minister.

**HON. A. MACKLING:** Mr. Chairman, as this line implies, the explanation is it "Provides for expenditures related to flooding and other natural disasters. Includes municipal flood grants, departmental flood expenditures, Manitoba Flood Disaster Assistance Board and other related expenditures."

I'm advised that the item here makes provision for the following. Most of the money that's involved in this for flood pertains to the 1979 flood and its aftermath.

\$500,000 is committed for payout of a recent legal settlement and I don't have details of that, Mr. Chairman, but it's a matter of paying out compensation for flooding.

\$100,000 is expected to meet an appeal on claims by Winnipeg.

\$35,000 will be spent by the Department of Natural Resources on minor outstanding bridge repairs, again occasioned by flooding and \$100,000 will meet miscellaneous appeals generally through Government Services, through that Department.

The balance of the funding is there to deal with as the line implies "emergency expenditures." An example of that is the recent settlement in connection with loss of bees resulting from spraying operations that were carried on and that generally typifies this item.

You will note that it makes reference to the Flood Disaster Assistance Board, it's the same board that has been in existence, I think, for a number of years. It's chaired by Elswood Bole and the vice-chairman is Syd Reimer. The board has been very effective and considered very reasonable. I think the same chairman has been there during the lifetime of several administrations and I expect that will continue to be the case.

Those are all the remarks I have, Mr. Chairman. This item really is, as the line indicates, for emergency expenditures, primarily used in respect to floods.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Lakeside.

**MR. H. ENNS:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't think that we have any reason to prolong this to any length. The item of interest, of course, is the substantive one, the half-million dollars for settlement of some outstanding legal claim. The Minister has indicated that he hasn't got the details about that. Perhaps he could at least outline in general terms what that particular claim is.

The other only noticeable item that I take some exception to being included in this amount is that I don't think that under this item we should necessarily be the patsy for a decision made by the Department of

Health; namely, that for its good reasons instituted the Baygon spraying and subsequently did some damage to the beekeepers in Manitoba and out of this Flood Control and Emergency Expenditures - I suppose maybe it's the second term "Emergency Expenditures" that comes under, so I only raise it on that point.

The only other is, this does not include, as some of us perhaps were under the impression, some of the flood protection works in the Valley, dikes, Red River Valley town. This is cleanup of the past flood primarily. Can the Minister give us any further indication of that one major item that he indicated was the substantive item in this vote, the half-a-million dollars.

**HON. A. MACKLING:** No, Mr. Chairman, I apologize for my lack of detail on that. I was under the impression that all of this information would be available through my department. It wasn't the case. Most of this funding is paid directly out of Finance. I think the Flood Disaster Assistance Board makes a finding and then the money is requisitioned. I think it primarily works under Government Services, but the funds are appropriated out of Finance, so I didn't have the information.

What I'll undertake to do is, I've taken note of it and tomorrow in the House, in answer to a question, I could volunteer the information then.

**MR. H. ENNS:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister has anticipated my action. If the Minister agrees to accept as notice my questioning of that amount and to have the detail to us in an answer form, then I have no further questions on this item. I defer to my colleague.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Emerson.

**MR. A. DRIEDGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I just have a few questions. During the time when the Flood Protection Program was in place, cost shared with the Federal Government at that time, and deadlines were set and problems arose because of the deadlines. Many people had not completed the work. I think we discussed this to some degree under the Minister's Estimates. I think somewhere along the line, if I'm correct, I think we left almost \$1 million on the table that was not expended in terms of that program. Many applications were replaced, but had not been undertake the work because of weather conditions, No. 1, and lack of contractors that were prepared to do that work at that time.

I think application was made by the previous administration for an extension of that time element and I'm sure this Minister would feel the same way that if at all possible there should have been an extension of that time.

I'm just wondering whether any of these people that did not manage to get under the wire for various reasons, whether there's still a possibility or probability that this Minister can maybe get in touch with the federal people and see whether there's a chance of maybe having some of these people get their Flood Protection Program in place, in terms of diking around their properties, etc. Many people took advantage of

it, but there was a lot of applications that somehow did not get their work completed. There were a lot in my area specifically and this is why I raised the question. I still get confronted with it to this day and I'm sure the Minister does to some degree. I'm wondering if there's any way that maybe there's a possibility of extending this program somewhere along the line for a period of time during the summer months - it wouldn't be any good in wintertime - so that some of these people could take advantage of this program.

**HON. A. MACKLING:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I haven't had people approach me on it, but certainly I'll look into that and see whether it's possible. I might say that our experience with the Federal Government of recent years doesn't make me too optimistic, but if you don't try you can't succeed. I don't know what the volumes are. It may have just missed getting in under the wire. I'll look at that and certainly I would sympathize with trying to provide some assistance for those people, because it would make good sense to do so. That's all I can say. I'll look into it. I can indicate to the member what the results of my enquiries are.

**MR. A. DRIEDGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the Minister, I would appreciate it if the Minister could maybe give me an update on some of the information. I am sure that the committee under Elswood Boles probably has this information as to how many applications or how many requests they had after the deadline passed. The fact that, unfortunately, money was left on the table that was not expended is, I should say, unusual that this happened. Conditions at that time, when the deadline was set, sort of dictated it. As I indicated, weather conditions and lack of contractors — (Interjection) — Well, if the Minister wants to change chairs with the previous Minister, I'll go after him in the same way.

The other question I have is, the Minister has referred to a \$500,000 libel suit that is being anticipated may be a court case?

**HON. A. MACKLING:** Yes, not libel. Libel is an action in law, saying something indecent about someone else, so you mean it's a \$500,000 claim. Apparently there's been a recent legal settlement and I haven't got the details on it, but I will get them.

**MR. A. DRIEDGER:** I understand that this probably is one claim that is being dealt with. Could the Minister, possibly at the same time, find out whether there are any other claims that are outstanding that have not been dealt with under this program? It seems odd that we have one major one for \$500,000, and I know of individuals who are not happy with some of the things that have happened, whether there are any others that are understanding at this time?

**HON. A. MACKLING:** My note indicates that one large one, the \$500,000 one; \$100,000, an appeal on a claim by Winnipeg; and then there's \$100,000 covering miscellaneous appeals and there may be a number of appeals, obviously, involved in that, which are being handled through Government Services.

**MR. A. DRIEDGER:** The question that I have then is, if

the Minister is checking this out, the major one is with the City of Winnipeg, is that my understanding?

**HON. A. MACKLING:** No, the \$500,000 one, I don't have the detail on the \$500,000 one and I'll give you the detail.

**MR. A. DRIEDGER:** The \$100,000 miscellaneous claims, I wonder if it would be possible, as close as possible, if the Minister could provide that information as well as to the claims that are outstanding on that one?

**HON. A. MACKLING:** Yes I will, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** I. Flood Control and Emergency Expenditures—pass.

Resolution No. 128 - Be it Resolved that it be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1 million for Flood Control and Emergency Expenditures for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1983—pass.

That concludes the Estimates on Flood Control and Emergency Expenditures.

Committee rise.

## SUPPLY - LEGISLATION

**MR. CHAIRMAN, J. Storie:** This committee will come to order. I direct the members' attention to Page 3. We're here to consider the Legislation Estimates, Item No. 1. Indemnities, Page No. 3, 1. (a) Members.

The Honourable Member for Virten.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** It's customary when any department's Estimates are put before the House that the Minister make an opening statement. Would the Minister be prepared to make a statement?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Minister.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, my statement will be very brief, to the Honourable Member for Virten. As one member of the Board of the Internal Economy in presenting these Estimates to the House, I believe that most members are aware, that if they have any specific questions with respect to the item shown and in any other areas dealing with members' services, indemnities and questions dealing with retirement and allowances, I will attempt to get the information for the honourable members and we'll try and supply the information to them as best as I can for the honourable members. This being a new role for myself as one member of the Board of Internal Economy, I will attempt to answer and serve the members of the Assembly as best I can on behalf of His Honour, our Speaker.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 1. (a) Members; 1. (b) Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's and Deputy Chairman's additional Indemnity—pass.

The Member for Arthur.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** Just for clarification, you're on 3. on page 3, is that correct?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** We're on Item No. 1.(b). Speaker's, Deputy Speaker's, and Deputy Chairman's Additional Indemnity.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** Okay, I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 1.(b)—pass; 1.(c) Opposition House Leader, Party Whips—pass; 1.—pass; 2. Retirement Allowances Including Refunds of Contributions (Statutory)—pass; 3. Members Allowances (Statutory) 3.(a) Constituency Allowance—pass; 3.(b) Living Allowance—pass; 3.(c) Committee Allowance—pass; 3.(d) Mileage Allowance.

The Honourable Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** On the Mileage Allowance, could we have the figure? I believe from time to time the amount paid for mileage is upgraded and I think we get the same rate as the Civil Service. Could the Minister indicate to us what that rate is?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the southern portion of the province, south of 53, the rate is 20.3 cents per kilometre up to 9,000 kilometres per year; between 9,000 and 18,000 kilometres, the rate goes to 15.6 cents a kilometre; over 18,000 kilometres, it's 14.4. That's south of 53. North, it's slightly increased for those members north of 53 - 22.9, 17.8 and 17.3 on the respective mileages.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Niakwa.

**MR. A. KOVNATS:** Mr. Chairman, on Item (d) Mileage Allowance, who qualifies for mileage allowance?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Yes, I believe the legislation is quite clear in terms of members whose constituency boundaries are outside the City of Winnipeg. They would qualify for mileage from their residence to the Legislative Assembly on the basis of that distance.

**MR. A. KOVNATS:** Mr. Chairman, I would like the Honourable Minister to advise whether he thinks that it's a fair system in allocating mileage allowance to a constituency that would be just bordering the City of Winnipeg and outside of the City of Winnipeg, whereas there are members in the City of Winnipeg who have probably a larger area to cover and maybe even farther to come to the Legislature than a constituency that's just adjoining the City of Winnipeg. Would any consideration be given to somebody whose residence, whose normal residence or even not normal residence - is outside of the City of Winnipeg. Would any consideration be given to that type of a member?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I should mention to the honourable member that there is a limit in terms of the number of trips per annum and that is 26 trips that the mileage is covered. The legislation, as I understand it, is quite clear and it's statutorily provided if there will be any changes. I am sure most changes to The Legislative Assembly Act have come about in the main through consultation and discussion between the parties within the House, and negotiation. If there will be any changes or any deviation from the present statute, that would have to be presented in terms of

amendments to the Act.

In terms that the member speaks of, where constituency boundaries are bordering Winnipeg, they have to be outside the city limits and the residence of the member would have to be outside Winnipeg as well, in terms of where a member normally resides to qualify for that mileage. While I can appreciate members within the urban area having expenses in terms of the coming to and forth from the Assembly, I presume, in terms of the history of the legislation, that rural members who have had to live away from home, coming into the city to either do business and/or live in during the Session would qualify for this allowance.

**MR. A. KOVNATS:** I would just like it to come to the Honourable Minister's attention that there could be a rural member who would in all probability have farther to come than an urban member, but I would think that it would be a matter of maybe just two of three miles might be the difference. For instance, and I am not looking to make any changes at this time, but I would like to make the Honourable Minister aware of it, the member who represents Springfield, who lives in Springfield, might only have an extra five miles to drive more so than the Member for Transcona and receive his allowance. You know, I'm not here to beat the drum for the Member for Transcona by any means, at least not the sitting member that's there right now. I think that there are some inequalities here and I think that it should be looked at.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, first of all, I think it is quite clear that members of the Executive Council are not eligible for this allowance, but the member gives a "for instance," and I guess no matter where you set the boundary at any point in time, that decision becomes arbitrary in terms of where you make the rules initially. While I appreciate an argument can be made by the honourable member saying, well, it's not quite the same, one can also look at other areas - not only in Members' Allowances - when you do have boundaries that has to be a form of, if one can put it, discrimination when you do draw boundaries, for example, in terms of insurance boundaries.

There are boundaries which insurance companies, whether it be public or private, they have set boundaries in terms of rating territories. For those people who are living near that, there are arguments on both sides of it. There is that point the honourable member makes that there are very close differences. These are the rules at the present time. If the member, I'm sure, has some ideas how to better the system, I would hope that he would even communicate with myself or with the Speaker in terms of some ideas or with his Caucus people who would be dealing with our members in terms of any future changes. I think he should make his views known to his own members so that kind of a discussion can take place.

**MR. A. KOVNATS:** I will take to heart what the Honourable Minister has just suggested, that if I have any better views, any better ideas, that I should bring them to the attention of the Legislature. I think that one of the best ideas I ever had would be to see that the Member for Niakwa, who has a residence out in Menisino, is also given a car allowance. I would just men-

tion that, you know, as a passing remark to the Honourable Minister.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Well, Mr. Chairman, one has to examine the remarks that the honourable member has made because if the honourable member's constituents are residents in that area and he does live there, obviously he would be entitled to that, but if his constituents are within the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg and because one chooses to have a residence somewhere else other than the constituency that he represents, that is entirely up to the honourable member and would not fall within the scope of the legislation.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** I just don't know what the Member for Niakwa's majority was in the Menisino last election but, Mr. Chairman, just as a point of interest going from the sublime to the ridiculous, the Member for Churchill who lived in Churchill at the time when he was claiming mileage allowance, there's no road into Churchill, so they asked him to claim rail mileage which goes way up into Saskatchewan and back in again. It would have been far cheaper for him to fly but he claimed mileage on the rail miles.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** (d)—pass—the Member for Pembina.

**MR. D. ORCHARD:** Just one clarification from the Minister. What did he say that mileage was per kilometer?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** 20.3 cents up to 9,000 and 9 to 18, 15.6 and over 18, 14.4.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** (d)—pass; (e)—pass—the Member for Arthur.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** Mr. Chairman, I want to make a few comments on this point. I think it'll probably be in this area and there's two points I want to make; one is the secretarial staff that are available for all members of both the Opposition and the backbench of the government. In what is taking place within the discussions between the two parties I would hope that there would be serious consideration given to expanding the amount of secretarial service that is available to all members. As I understand it, Mr. Chairman, we're on 3.(e) which is Secretarial and Research Assistance, I think I'd be in the proper area. —(Interjection)— Well, Mr. Chairman, statutory or not, it's still a point I want to make and I think this is the place to do it.

I do think the importance of that to give better representation and to better service one's constituency, that kind of support should be given to members and I want to go on the public record as publicly supporting that, because I think it's not a matter of a lot of money, but it's a matter of providing a service which would better serve the constituents within each member's constituency. I think that's really the job we're here to do and that is to provide the best possible service to the constituency.

The other point I want to make on the Research

Assistance and, as well, I want to acknowledge the invitation which I received through the Speaker's office to go to the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Welland Canal System some two to three weeks ago or a month ago. I dropped a note to the Speaker thanking him, but I think the kind of effort that is put forward in funds to provide the opportunity for members of all the Legislative Assemblies throughout Canada to look at the different areas of importance, particularly to Western Canada and particularly to Manitoba. The St. Lawrence Seaway System is important to Manitoba, because approximately 90 percent of our grain moves through that particular port and I think I, as a member representing rural Manitoba, hopefully, would be able to have a better understanding of the kind of costs, the kind of exercises that have to take place to drop the grain from Thunder Bay some 600 feet to when it hits sea level. That is a substantially greater distance than I am sure most Manitoba farmers would realize. This was my first opportunity to see it. I think for some strange reason I had the feeling that once grain got to Thunder Bay that it was pretty well ready for export, but it has to go some 1,500 miles further to get to the —(Interjection)— well, the member's saying, we are not in Agriculture. I want to make the point.

The other point I want to make in this area, seeing the Minister of Agriculture is here and maybe he would transmit this message on to some of the people who have the responsibility for handling of grain, but if it wasn't for the grain moved through the St. Lawrence System and out of eastern Canada and out of Canada in total, Canada as a nation would be pretty flat on its economic behind, because certainly there is no other commodity moving in the Great Lakes system. There isn't any iron ore coming up because of the depression in the automobile industry; I think there is some 20 percent of the Dominion Marine system; the ships are not in service because of the depression. And the point again has to be made—the importance of agriculture in Canada is once again rising to the surface and I think the people who are negotiating on behalf of the farm community, when it comes to selling our commodities and when they're trying to put their case before the politicians in Ottawa who are in control of the Wheat Board and transportation system, have a pretty important and big bargaining tool in their favour. I think the people, particularly the Minister of Agriculture who is sitting here, should be very much aware of it himself. I think that to again make the point, if it wasn't for the agricultural industry, the income for all of Canadians would be pretty minimal and I think we would be in a far greater depression than we are at the present time.

Mr. Chairman, again I think that any monies that go into the Speaker's area of allocation for these kind of exchanges, I want to fully support and would hope that members opposite see fit to continue on and think in that same way.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I thank the honourable member for his remarks dealing with Secretarial Assistance and Research Assistance and I want to go on record as well for the honourable member to tell him and his colleagues that I think it was appreciated by all members of the House, when they had the reins

of government, in terms of providing offices for MLAs, the movement into better accommodations for MLAs to be able to serve their constituents. I give them full marks in advancing along those lines. They made positive moves in that area and I think it should be acknowledged. I've said it many times throughout this province privately, but I do make it and acknowledge it here speaking tonight publicly for that move.

But I'd like to know from the honourable member whether when he speaks of Secretarial Assistance, is he speaking of assistance in terms of constituency work, in terms of the riding; whether or not there should be the ability to set up some office within the riding; whether there be some part-time secretarial help to take phone calls and do some office work for the member, or is he relating that primarily to the Caucus Office when members are in Session within the Assembly. I'd like some clarification from him so that I could better understand his feelings and his needs in terms of serving the people of Manitoba better.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** Mr. Chairman, I don't want to belabour the situation. I would suggest that it would be best within the building, a greater amount of secretarial service right here during the Session and probably some during the rest of the year, but not specifically to enter into constituency offices and that type of thing. No, I was speaking specifically about support staff in the secretarial pool system.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Concordia.

**MR. P. FOX:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to address the few remarks in regard to secretarial help, the improvements that MLAs have had and, of course, all of the other amenities that have developed. I probably am one of the few who is more aware of how much has transpired since I became a member because when I first arrived here, it was strictly a matter of sink or swim and you got a secretary between - at that time we were an Opposition of 12 - we had one secretary for the 16, 18 weeks that we sat, and that was it. We didn't even have an office. We got a shoebox to put our papers in and take them home with afterwards. I realize that today we have quite a lot more in the way of services to the members but I'm afraid that like so many other things, because it just happened, because it occurred and it grew like Topsy, it really isn't adequate and it's a far cry from what we really need in order to serve our constituents and, of course, do an efficient job for the public of Manitoba.

I have to say that this, I want to explain, applies both in Opposition, as well as in government. I'm sure that the Ministers, probably because they're overworked, whoever happens to have a ministry, don't always see the parliamentary system functioning, and the kind of a system it is and how good it is. Yes, it's got its drawbacks; it isn't perfect. I've been a student of systems from around the world and I find that the one we have is probably as good as any that I'm aware of.

Nevertheless, it can be improved upon, and the only way it can be improved is if the members themselves can get the tools with which to do the job adequately. The first job is that they have an environment within which to work. Now we have part of that, but unfortu-

nately it's segregated. You're operating in different little pods, which makes it also difficult to have the adequate secretarial service.

At the present time we have phones downstairs. If you're using the phone downstairs, you tie up your line and somebody trying to get hold of you from the outside can't do a darn thing. Certainly they can get hold of you upstairs, if they recall that number, but then their message is there and as I've said, you really aren't getting your communications as you should. I believe one of the things that could be done just to improve the system as we have it, is that the telephone system could be informed to revise the numbering system so that our calls could be transferred one way or the other to us right down there. I don't say we should have a second phone but we should have a system whereby a light would light up to tell us there's an outside call coming in and we could put it on hold — something of that kind.

In regard to extra secretarial help, I really think that if we were to get any more, it would be an inefficient way of operating to put them into the pods, because you're starting to duplicate services. I'm of the opinion that what should really be done - and I would imagine this would have to be a little bit on a long-term planning - is that this legislative second floor should become a legislative floor only, so that the members could have a Caucus Room and their offices together, where you could get efficient service from the secretaries that you have without having to run around, have a double filing system, upstairs, downstairs and so on.

The other thing that I think and that's a long-term plan, but I think what really has to happen is that we, as members, have to start discussing and arriving at consensus instead of worrying about what the press is going to do to us, because no matter how much we spend in this regard - and I'm going to be open and frank and they can print every word of it - if we spend \$1 million, it's about one twenty-fifth of a percent of the total Budget of the province and if that means that we can do a better job for the people of Manitoba, then I think it's money well worth spent.

So I'm saying that we really have to have a hard look and we have to start to co-operate and the other thing that we have to do is set up an all-members committee. As much as I appreciate that two Ministers and the Speaker may have the best interests of the rest of us at heart, since they are Ministers and since they are Speakers, they're very busy. I've been in the Chair as a Speaker and I know that many of the things that I thought that members would like, I found out afterwards the members were not really interested in, because you are sort of aside and apart from the mainstream of the Legislative Assembly when you're a Speaker and the same thing applies as a Minister.

So, consequently, I think an all-members committee would probably serve us members and serve the public much better, because we would come up with ideas that would save the public money, give the public the information and the services they require and at the same time make us better MLAs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 3.(e)—pass; (f) Speaker's Expenses. The Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, while I realize that the subject here is one that is a statutory figure that is set by The Legislative Assembly Act, I think that we have to take a look at the office of the Speaker. I know the former member who was just speaking and was a Speaker can probably give the Legislature a lot of information on some of the expenses that are involved within the Speaker's Office that it's absolutely impossible to cover by an amount such as \$3,000.00.

I will give you an example and I know it probably will be covered under Item 4.(b) or (c) or something down there, but next year, the Province of Manitoba is expected to host the Canadian Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference here in Manitoba. The cost of that conference will probably exceed \$125,000, \$130,000, so it will be a special consideration for that one year, but that isn't the end of the parliamentary activities. Parliamentary activities go on all the time and I think when we're making up our Estimates, probably we should have an item in the Estimates dealing purely with parliamentary matters, the various parliamentary groups that Manitoba belongs to, the memberships that we have to pay to belong to those associations so that members themselves would get a better idea of the activities of the various parliamentary associations, their activities and the benefits that can accrue from taking an active part.

I raise the issue now because we are dealing with expenses that deal with the office of the Speaker and the Speaker is the president of the various parliamentary associations of which Manitoba is a member. So I suggest to the Honourable Minister that in future, when you are considering the preparation of Estimates, it might be worthwhile to have a separate item in the Estimates dealing purely with parliamentary matters, so that members would be able to take a look at that particular item and they would become more cognizant of the fact that there are various parliamentary activities to which they are members in full right and the benefits that are accruing to them from that membership.

One of the other things about that is the ongoing activities that occur in the Speaker's office when we have visiting delegations, usually the responsibility of the Speaker to entertain, to host visiting parliamentary groups. Since you don't know at the beginning of the year how many visitations you can have or the size of them or the length of their stay, I suggest to you that the figure of \$3,000 is a very arbitrary one to begin with. However, it is statutory. We do have an excellent secretary to the Board of Internal Economy and I am sure he probably can, under Other Expenditures, find a dollar or two on the odd occasion, but it does leave the activities of the office of the Speaker pretty tight as to finances on what the Speaker can do with respect to visiting parliamentary groups. So I just raise it now for the benefit of other members of the Assembly who may not be aware of those activities that are ongoing by the Speaker on your behalf.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Concordia.

**MR. P. FOX:** Mr. Chairman, I too would like to join with the Member for Virten in indicating that it is unfortunate that we are members - it's not unfortunate that we're members - but it is unfortunate that we don't

allocate monies for participating as members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, that is at the international as well as at the Canadian regional level. One of the things that I found during my time was that one had to get some of these monies out of different allocations.

For example, the dues for the CPA if I recall correctly - I don't know where they come from now; they may be here, but I haven't been able to find them - came out of the Executive Council and out of Dominion Provincial Relations budget. Why it was there, I don't know, but that was a number of years ago and that's the way it was at that time. Possibly, the Clerk for the Internal Economy can tell us where they come from now or the Minister can.

I believe that there are a number of seminars that we are attending. I find no allocation for them in here. I know that we are going, but where the monies are coming from, I am not aware. Possibly, we can have that explained to us.

Further to that, I think as parliamentarians, we should be exchanging information and learning from other parliamentarians. I know that often they invite us. There have been invitations to B.C., Alberta, Quebec, and I am not aware that we were able to reciprocate except on special occasions. I think that we should because if we are going to belong to the family of parliamentarians, we can learn from each other and that also makes us better at carrying out our functions as MLAs. I think that is essential and I would concur with the Member for Virten that we should have a parliamentary allowance in here and that it should reflect the needs of participating as parliamentarians in Canada and abroad.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 3.(f)—pass - the Member for Radisson.

**MR. G. LECUYER:** Mr. Chairman, I want to concur with the last two members who have spoken. I want to bring up a matter that I think is very much related to what they have talked about. The Member for Concordia was talking in terms of exchanges initiated by the various provinces to give an opportunity for the members of the various Legislatures to meet and exchange on various issues which would be pertinent to both groups.

There is another program which is started on a pilot basis this year by the Centre for Legislative Exchange which has been operating for, I am given to understand, some ten years now between the Canadian Government at the federal level and their American counterparts. For the first time this year, they initiated the program on a pilot basis whereby representatives of both the Government side and Opposition sides of the various Legislatures would get together on two or three occasions during the year to exchange on some of the current issues.

It is not a program that is intended to compete or detract from the CPA program. It is a program which is unique in itself and I want to read a passage from a letter which the Speaker has received, a copy of which he has sent to our Caucus and to the Opposition Caucus and I have had occasion to discuss this a little bit with the Chairman of the Opposition Caucus. I know that at least one member from our side of the

House and a member from the Opposition side has gone and benefited from this program already this year. "The idea of the Canada-Legislative Visits Program for which" - and this is the Director who's writing this - "I am soliciting your support, really grew out of repeated advice from provincial members who have participated in our Canada-U.S. Legislative Visits Program."

It's not a very costly program. Actually the amounts which are requested of the various provincial governments represents less than the cost of the air fare to participate in these programs. Since it is a distinctive program whereby the format is different from the CPA in that only a small number of parliamentarians would meet to discuss a single public issue not with the idea of arriving necessarily at a consensus, but to get experts to present the pertinent facts in that particular field.

The financial contributions requested, as I stated, are actually small enough that they should not cut into any funds available to the CPA but again, I repeat, I think from those who have participated in this program with whom I have talked have told me that these programs as far as they know are well planned, well organized and well worthwhile. I think that monies should be provided to support this program.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Minister.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to advise honourable members that although some of the questions that they have raised with respect to allowances and expenses dealing with other matters of the Speaker's Office, there is, within the Budget, an item for (d) a breakdown which I can give to the honourable members. There is going to be some preparatory work done for the CPA Conference and there are funds provided for, of course, memberships into the conference, the expenditures, expenses of members in terms of travel and as well expenses for members attending the conference there. But those items are considered in the under 4. (d) and members who have commented on involvement in the Parliamentary Association and different Canada-wide research groups and I take their comments and consideration should be given to see what participation the Assembly should take in terms of being involved in these groups, so that members can better inform themselves in terms of what is happening within our parliamentary system in this country and even in other countries, in order to have and participate in the research that is done.

I can say as a member of this Assembly, I've had the occasion to attend two or three CPA Conferences and as well, I was on one exchange. I believe it was through the group that the Member for Radisson spoke about. It was while I was Minister responsible for the Civil Service. We had occasion to travel to Washington to deal with issues in the United States dealing with equal employment opportunities, the Civil Service and various other legislative mechanisms that are in place in the United States. I found that exercise from a ministerial point of view very worthwhile and fruitful in terms of knowledge and scope as to what is happening elsewhere. So I appre-

ciate the comments of the honourable members in these areas and it will be up to Members of the Assembly to consider the scope and the amount of involvement that we wish to take in some of these organizations that they have raised and talked about.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 3. (f)—pass; 3. (g)—pass; 3. (h).  
The Member for Minnedosa.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could give us an explanation of what this item really constitutes and how it's expended?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Minister.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, that this allowance is for the Deputy Speaker's Expenses and I'm advised, as well, in the last decade it has never been utilized—(Interjection)—it may have been, but from the recollection of staff here that in the last number of years it has not been expended.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Niakwa.

**MR. A. KOVNATS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that I can confirm that and I can probably tell you the reason, I didn't know how to get it. I think that it's a good expense and I think the Deputy Speaker is entitled to that extra \$5.00 for whatever it is that he needs for expenses — or is that 500? Now, I'm really sad that I wasn't able to get it. I think it's a good expense; I think that the Deputy Speaker should be allowed to have that expense for emergencies or for whatever, but for nonpolitical purposes and I think that it's a legitimate expense and I just want to bring to the attention that it hasn't been used, at least during the previous government's time in office.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 3. (h)—pass. 4. Other Assembly Expenditures 4. (a) Leader of the Official Opposition Party 4. (a) (1)—pass; 4. (a) (2) Salaries—pass; 4. (a) (3) Other Expenditures—pass; 4. (b)—pass; 4. (c) Salaries.  
The Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, I believe the Honourable Member for Arthur raised an issue which I think probably could have fallen under this category and that is dealing with salaries of support staff within the Legislative Assembly Building here, and I believe the point that he raised was one that is certainly of concern to us. I believe when this recycling of members' offices took place last year, where there are groups of members in rather large offices with individual office space, there is certainly a need there for one additional staff in each one of those group offices. I would hope that the Board of Internal Economy considers that request very carefully, because I think it's a very reasonable request. I'm sure members on the government's side who also have those offices will find that there is need there as well. There are many activities in political parties that are quite properly Caucus activities, but there are also the individual needs of members, and when they have their individual offices the needs of those individual members can be serviced quite well if there was additional secretarial help in the various groups of offices such as rooms

132, 138, 151 I believe it is, and two or three at the others. So I would ask the Minister to consider that request very seriously for additional secretarial staff, especially while the House is in Session.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I thank the honourable member for his comments. If the member will recall, when I spoke to the Member for Arthur, I indicated and I asked him, I wanted to find out his views whether or not the assistance in terms of secretarial help should be here within the facility, whether it should be as well supported, or in the riding in which better service could be provided to the members' constituents.

I presume that somewhere there's probably some discussion going on now as to what better ways we as members can serve our constituents, the people of Manitoba, in as effective a way as possible. Of course, one of the ways is to provide members with further secretarial assistance in terms of doing necessary office work; in terms of typing; in terms of answering the phones; in terms of letter answering; in terms of filing. Whether that should be done as well, so that greater use of that personnel could be made in the areas where we directly effect people who support us by casting their ballots as MLAs in our own constituencies. I presume there has to be some dialogue and priority-setting, whether it should be that some assistance is here during the Session, or at the same time whether that assistance should be, as well, provided in the riding while members are here.

I'm guessing. I don't know whether the member is part of his group's team in terms of discussions that are going on now. If he is, I'm sure that he will make, and is making his views known. For myself as a member, although I happen to be on the Treasury Bench now, my personal preference - and I say to the honourable member quite candidly - would be to have office assistance in terms of a better contact within my constituency, to have people there.

While we do have the use of our Executive Assistants, being on the Treasury Bench, but there will be a time when we all are MLAs, and my personal preference would be to have assistance where I can better function for my constituents in the riding, where there can be day-to-day in constant contact. At least even if it is on a limited part-time basis, even if it was a half-a-day, it certainly would assist myself as a rural member - I speak as a rural member - far more. Because after the Session I have found in terms of filing, in terms of typing, in terms of doing things that I felt could be done by some secretarial help, that the closer that help is to where I reside in terms of my constituency, would have been a greater benefit to myself.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to point out to the Honourable Minister that what he is talking about as far as constituency and secretarial assistance is a statutory item. We don't get a vote on it in the Estimates here at all. Any changes in that would require changes to The Legislative Assembly Act. But what we're talking about here is the Estimates of expenditure of the Legislative Assembly, which are budgetary items that are open for discussion and debate on the floor of the House, and are matters, I suppose, that if the members of the Assembly in their

collective wisdom wanted to increase a sum they probably could. I have never heard of it being done and likewise they could also, by a collective vote of the Legislature, reduce some of those sums. But we are now talking about budgetary items that are items of expenditure which we can discuss quite properly at this time. It was in that context that I was addressing my remarks to the Honourable Minister who is charged with the responsibility of shepherding these Estimates through the House.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, just a brief comment to the honourable member. While the honourable member is technically correct, I believe that any discussions dealing with services to members really would be, in all fairness, part of a package. Whether or not there would be the need for legislative changes or not legislative changes, they would be discussions that would deal with an entire discussion of services to members.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(c)—pass; 4.(d) Other Expenditures.

The Honourable Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, under Other Expenditures, the Minister indicated he had a breakdown of those amounts and was quite prepared to give it to the members here.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Minister.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, part of the 192,600 there is a budgetary item of 47.4 for the Speaker's Office, where there is a breakdown of various expenditures dealing with membership fees; of the larger ones, travel for CPA and the CPA Conference. Those are the three largest ones, they would make up approximately 40,000 of that 47,000; the other seven would be dealing with office and expenditures within the office. The remainder of those expenditures, there are monies for the Chamber, for the Committees Branch, \$5,000 for the Caucus Offices dealing with — yes, the Government Caucus Office and the Opposition Caucus Office, approximately \$55,000 for both offices, and the Leader of the Opposition's Office of \$20,500.00. Those would be basically the largest components of that \$192,000.00.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Did the honourable member say the Leader of the Opposition's Office? I believe it's already accounted for under Item 4.(a)(3).

**HON. B. URUSKI:** I must apologize. The member is correct. The figure I quoted, the Leader of the Opposition's Office was taken care of in the other one. I missed one item. The bulk of the item of course in terms of office expenditures is the Clerk's office with the sum of \$82,500, the bulk of which being telephones and postage, approximately \$38,000 of that office expenditure.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(d)—pass; (e) Hansard—pass; (e)(1) Salaries—pass.



(e)(2) Other Expenditures - the Member for Elmwood.

**MR. R. DOERN:** Mr. Chairman, just briefly, this matter has been discussed before, but I do want to say to the Minister that one of the things I think would probably help Hansard and certainly would help this Chamber was if there was some improvements made in our P.A. system. I have always felt that this was inadequate, that when someone is speaking and a couple of years ago when we had the old system, there was an amplification of voice which meant that the person on mike, their voice would carry and they would be the dominant speaker. Today, everybody has equal voice volume and punch, and when there is heckling going on the speaker is drowned because of the fact that his voice is basically natural and the hecklers' voices are basically natural. I think something should be done to improve the audio system in the Chamber.

The other thing I say in regard to Hansard is that Hansard was more interesting a few years ago, in that I think more of the interjections often made by such luminary presences as the Member for Pembina would be picked up and reported. Even in Ottawa, where all they do is to put down "oh, oh," which is a pretty poor translation of some of the things that are said down there, in Manitoba there were some of these interjections from time to time. Obviously, they can't all be picked up. Obviously, they can't all be identified, but a person reading Hansard today compared to a few years ago, I think would find it far less interesting because it tends to be precisely what the speaker said and a lot of the interjections which contain some of the colour, which is now going on, are ignored. So I simply say that I don't know how this happened. I don't know why some of the interjections are deleted or not included in the Hansard record, but it certainly makes for less interesting and colourful reading.

Now, one thing, Mr. Chairman, I want to say in particular to members on both sides of the House is that there is equipment that is used by Hansard that I think should be either more readily available to the Caucuses or the Caucuses should have their own similar equipment, and I speak particularly of the word processing machines. I think in the day and age that we are at in the 1980s that each Caucus could use equipment like that, to use the printouts, to use the memories, to use it on a sort of a computer basis, a storage basis in relation to existing secretarial and research staff. I mean, I think it's time we got into the 1980s and there's other equipment like that.

I think there is some limitation now on photostating equipment and so on. I don't think there should be. I think that each Caucus should have a machine that they can use to the best of their judgment and ability and without paying for it, which of course is the problem. I think that each Caucus should have such equipment and it should be available to them for their duties.

Mr. Chairman, this type of equipment available to elected members has been used widely in the States for at least 20 years. I know that in 1964, I attended the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City and at that time, as an observer to see Lyndon Johnson pick his Vice President, Hubert Humphrey, after playing a lot of games with a lot of people, I learned that most

senators and congressmen had access to equipment whereby they were, in effect, early word processors and other types of machines.

So I simply say that when we are considering our own requirements, I think that we must consider, in addition to staff, machines that are available that will help us execute our duties and responsibilities and that should be a major concern of MLAs as well.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(e)(2)—pass - the Honourable Minister.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I would just like to speak on two points that the honourable member has raised dealing with the amplification system that we have in the Chamber. I believe that members, if the technical people wish to tune you up, you will be amplified loud and clear right throughout this Chamber. I heard the honourable member very well and that can be accomplished, but I believe that - if I understand it - the original intent for the new system was eventually to provide simultaneous translation in this Chamber, and this, if you amplify the speaker's voice at that point in time, that could not be accomplished by providing for simultaneous translation and that was one of the reasons.

The item that I am holding in my hand is called - you could hang it in one's ear. It is really an aid for members to be able to hear. As I understand, in Ottawa they have used this piece of equipment for many years and we should not as members here be at all intimidated that we may have a hearing problem because we are wearing the earphones. They are here for the use of members to make sure that they pick up the speech of a member, but as I understand it, the whole evolution of this new system was to provide for a simultaneous translation and that is why the amplification was done away with within the Chamber.

With respect to additional equipment and word processing, as I understand it, that service to members was eliminated for the time being by His Honour, the former Speaker, when we were in Opposition because members were using the word processing equipment, as I understand it, at least in the Speaker's view at that point in time, in excess of the budget that he may have had.

I can advise the honourable members that the Department of Government Services will be and is going to be, shortly after the Session ends, dealing with both Caucuses to conduct a review to see whether or not additional equipment such as word processing should be and can be established within those offices to better provide services for members.

**MR. R. DOERN:** Mr. Chairman, I do not like nor do I intend to use earphones. I mean it could have probably been just as well to have bought 57 ear trumpets and we could have all had these big trumpets and moved them around in the direction of the Speaker and say things like "eh" or "come again" or "take off" as the Member for Pembina would say.

Mr. Chairman, the other point I make to the member is, surely to God, in this day and age where people can be sent to the moon and all kinds of wonderful technical achievements can be made, somebody with half a brain could devise a system whereby you could have a

voice amplified in this Chamber as you used to have and also a system whereby you could have simultaneous translations.

I don't know how they do it, but in the United Nations they must have translations in a dozen languages and surely it's a simple technical problem to have a system where you have French and English and where you have a voice amplification. If we don't have the expertise in House, I think we can easily hire some audio person who could come in and correct that in a wink of an eye.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** (e)(2)—pass; 4.(f)—pass.

That completes the items to be considered under Resolution No. 1.

Therefore be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding \$1,095,600 for Legislation, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1983—pass.

Item No. 5. Provincial Auditor's Office, 5.(a) Salaries - the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**HON. S. LYON:** I notice that there's an increase of something in excess of \$300,000 for Salaries. Could the Minister advise as to whether this amount is a natural increase in the Provincial Auditor's Office or what proportion of this increase is attributable to the fact that the practice of using outside auditors in conjunction with the auditors of the Provincial Auditor's staff is now being either reviewed and/or discontinued by the current government?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Minister.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, to the Leader of the Opposition. If he would wait a few moments, I'll have the explanation in terms of the specifics of the Estimates that are provided for and I'll provide him with the answer shortly.

Mr. Chairman, there is a provision within these Estimates for 10 positions. Whether an assessment will be made on the basis of - as the audits of the Crown agencies come up they will be evaluated as to whether or not the office of the Provincial Auditor can perform those audits as in terms of costing, as government policy, with a similar or less expensive cost, and those changes will be made on an individual basis as the audits are being reviewed by the government.

**HON. S. LYON:** So is it possible then, Mr. Chairman, for the Minister to give us a figure, even though it may be notional at this stage, for the amount that might be required for audits that would be done by the Provincial Auditor in lieu of those audits being done by outside firms for which negotiated fees are paid?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that the salaries for the 10 positions are approximately \$261,700.00.

**HON. S. LYON:** And it's not possible, I take it, at this stage to attribute those 10 extra positions to the requirement for additional staff that would be necessitated by the abandonment of private auditing firms doing work for Crown corporations or indeed for other work that the Provincial Auditor, in his profes-

sional wisdom, sees fit to have them do.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, when the original shift was made from the Provincial Auditor's Office to private auditors, a relinquishment of 10 positions took place at that point in time. At this point in time, that same amount of staff man years are being placed back into the Budget, but until such a time as an agency-by-agency review is made on the basis of costs and projections, to be very specific to the Leader of the Opposition, I can't give that determination to the Leader of the Opposition.

**HON. S. LYON:** Mr. Chairman, I can appreciate that. That's why I was talking in terms of it being a notional figure at this stage, because it's apparently a proposition that has not been finally agreed to by the government. The figure I would be interested in getting, and it may not be possible to obtain it tonight but sometime before the Estimates review is completed, would be a figure which would show the totality of the cost of hiring - in the case of the 10 positions that are added to the Auditor's Office - the totality of that cost in terms of salary; in terms of office equipment; in terms of secretarial staff; in terms of pension benefits; in terms of all of the array of services and infrastructure that goes to support any member of the Civil Service of Manitoba.

I ask for that figure, I'm not trying to hide anything at all, because I believe that - and it's only a belief, I can't demonstrate the complete accuracy of it - if we were to compute on a per-auditor basis the full totality of the cost of hiring an auditor in terms of what his sick benefits are going to be; his holiday pay is going to be; the fact that he or she works for a good employer in the Province of Manitoba, which sometimes through negotiation and so on, gives better holiday pay than private employers do, etc., etc., etc. - all of the nuances that go into employment. I would like to see the totality of that figure in order that we, along with the members of the government who are apparently making this comparison, will have some idea as to the question of costs, say, as between contracting this professional service from private audit firms or having it done in-house as seems to be the desire of the present government.

Now having said that, I realize, and the Provincial Auditor is here and he can correct the Minister or correct me if I'm wrong through the Minister, that it has been the practice of the Government of Manitoba for more years than I can remember, even in the times of the Schreyer Government from '69-77 when there was a shift away from the private auditing firms and to have that work done in-house, there was still the residual power on behalf of the Provincial Auditor, which he should have, to farm out particular audits that he wanted to have done, indeed to the consternation - if not the surprise - of one of the former Ministers of Finance at a Public Accounts Committee Meeting back in '76 or '77. The present Provincial Auditor advised the then government that, of course, he was farming out certain work to be done, because that was the most efficient way to do it and it had nothing to do with the apparent desire of the government not to have that kind of contracting-out done. He was doing it out of a pure professional sense of getting it done in

the best way that was possible at the time and I presume that he took costs into account.

I make it clear, Mr. Chairman, that I'm not making any pitch for professional services, be they accounting, be they legal, be they engineering, architectural or whatever, to be totally farmed out. That has never been the case in Manitoba at all. The Provincial Auditor, to the best of my knowledge, going back through people such as George Iliffe and some of the distinguished predecessors of our present Provincial Auditor, always had a fair amount of leeway and a fair amount of determination that they could make on their own, unencumbered, if I may say so, by the political biases of the government of the day to do what was best in terms of the Provincial Auditor's job.

The Provincial Auditor, after all, is not responsible to the Government of the Day. He and his staff are responsible to this Legislature and that being the case, rather than have a government make a determination based upon its current and sometimes unexplainable bias against professional firms on the outside helping the Provincial Auditor in the massive job that he has, I think it's more important that this Legislature be seized of all of those facts, because it is the Provincial Auditor answers to this Legislature, not to the current Minister who is answering on his behalf, not to the Minister of Finance, not the Premier of the Day, whoever he may be, but to this Legislature and, indeed, the legislation establishing the office of the Provincial Auditor makes his position semisacrosanct in the sense that he cannot be dismissed by the Government of the Day. It requires a two-thirds vote of this Legislature. So when a determination is made by a government - and all governments are transient, and no one is in a better position to state that axiom than perhaps myself and my successor who will find that to be the case - all governments are transient, and these determinations about auditing which goes to the heart really of what Parliament is all about.

You've heard me say on so many occasions what I believe to be the case, that Parliament is about the voting of supply. If you didn't have supply to vote, you wouldn't have as much of a need for Parliament because you're taking money from people, from the taxpayers, and you're acting as a temporary trustee, government is, to make sure that money is properly spent on behalf of the taxpayers.

It is the job of the Auditor to ensure through his own staff and through the staff that he is able to hire from professional audit firms in the Province of Manitoba, that this job is being properly done. That's why his job is so key. That is why his job is put beyond the transient whims and sometimes the mischievous desires of government to change people around and so on.

He reports to us, to all 57 of us, and before he makes any fundamental changes in the method by which he carries out his statutory responsibility. I merely feel that it is incumbent upon the temporary Government of the Day to report as to whether or not the Auditor is satisfied with this procedure. Indeed, in Public Accounts Committee we can question the Auditor personally and - to put it in street parlance, Mr. Chairman - he doesn't have to give a tinker's damn literally about the particular bias of a government of the moment. He has the statutory responsibility to carry through and I merely want to ensure that when the

members of the government say that their only concern in matters of this sort is cost effectiveness and having, as I do, a well-known view about how the particular variety of NDPer that gets into government in this province knows very little about cost effectiveness, when that kind of statement is made I want to look into it. As one member of this House, I want to look at it pretty carefully, because I am not in the habit of going out and asking the arsonist to tell me how to put out the fire; I am not in the habit of leaving the fox in charge of the chicken coop. That's why the Auditor's job is extremely important and why we must be satisfied, each of us, each of the 57 members of this House, that what is being served here is the public interest, not the particular mischievous whim or antiprofessional attitude that may have been carried forward from one or more Ministers of a previous regime. I am very familiar with those attitudes and with the antiprofessional bias that obtains in one or two members of the present Treasury Bench which, you know, really does them no credit and does no service to the public interest of Manitoba.

So when the statement is advanced that cost effectiveness is the only test with respect to whether private auditors are able to be used by the Provincial Auditor with respect to outside audits, then I think we have to put that statement to the test. I, as one member of the House, want to see all the facts and the figures that this government has in its possession before it makes any radical change in the auditing practice of the Province of Manitoba.

I say that because the auditing practice of the Province of Manitoba is not unique. All other governments in Canada, save perhaps - and I don't know this for a fact - but save perhaps with other aberrations that occur in provinces like Saskatchewan or B.C. where they from time to time have socialist governments that tend a bit, regrettably, to be sometimes antiprofessional. All of the other normal provinces in Canada including Manitoba up until the 30th of November, 1981, had a mix of private auditors assisting the Public Auditor, to the best of my knowledge and information. In fact, the Federal Government does, according to my information, much the same thing.

So what we are merely trying to do is to determine, Mr. Chairman, that the suggestion that has already been made in this House by one or two of the Ministers, actuated apparently by some of the funny ideas that flew about in the Schreyer years, we should find out that the auditing practices of the Provincial Auditor are to his satisfaction; that the figures that are being used to justify the alleged cost effectiveness of doing the business in-house are real figures and that they account for the totality of costs of hiring extra staff. I say that, of course, because my honourable friends opposite have this penchant for building up a big centralized bureaucracy; that is part of their ideology and they're entitled to it. But during the brief time that they're in office, we don't have to be inflicted with all of the errors of their ideology, particularly, Mr. Chairman, when it comes to something as fundamentally important as the audit.

Now, the other point I mentioned, which is axiomatic, which I have heard the Provincial Auditor state on different occasions, is this, and it's so apparent that it shouldn't have to be stated, but apparently it does

for the benefit of some of my honourable friends opposite. One of the advantages of having an outside audit is that you bring to the books of the Crown corporation or of government that kind of exposure to the private sector that people in the outside practice of accountancy have. In other words, they can bring an experience to the work of government audit that they glean in their day-to-day operations from doing the books of outside companies and seeing what the different accounting practices are. They are up-to-date in every respect. This is in no way, by any sense of implication or innuendo or anything else, any criticism of the Provincial Auditor or of his staff. I am sure he agrees with this. What it does bring is an enrichment of the kind of job that he and his staff can do with that kind of injection of outside private-sector experience being brought to bear upon the books of the Crown corporations of this province and, indeed, of some of the departments of this province if the need should arise.

Now I have heard that argument advanced by many people and it's an argument that I know is not in disfavour with the Provincial Auditor. I merely put it in, not because it is germane to the question of cost, but because it is a factor that bears up on the practice that is followed in most other jurisdictions of using fairly generously the outside services of private auditors for the benefit of the public. It hasn't got a heck of a lot to do with cost effectiveness, because the cost effectiveness is practically taken for granted in the sense that the services that are offered by different auditing firms include all of the housing costs, all of the pay costs, all of the pension costs, all of the other costs that firm must bear, so that the taxpayers of Manitoba don't have to bear it on a continuing basis.

So without trying to make the full and complete argument that shouldn't have to be made in a commonsense Legislature with respect to a practice that is followed in most other civilized jurisdictions in the world, I merely ask my honourable friend, the Minister, Mr. Chairman, to ensure that on the question of cost effectiveness we be given the totality of the costs that are involved with respect to the hiring, in this instance, of 10 new auditors, all of the matters that I have mentioned before including the cost of their offices, their secretarial staff, the pension benefits, the whole shooting match so that we can be in a position to make some kind of an assessment based upon the alleged reason for making the changes put forward from time to time by the government benches.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** I am advised by the Provincial Auditor, to the Leader of the Opposition, on the specific question of cost. The direct salary costs and an additional 25 percent onto the direct salary costs that are provided would cover all the costs dealing with pensions, holiday pay, in terms of the staffing costs related to auditing. With respect to furniture and office space, the Provincial Auditor occupies space within this building, those costs I would not have included, the costs of providing the furniture and the space within the offices.

Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that it is a worthwhile exercise. You know, I think he should recall when his government made the change, the transition into both public and private

auditors, and when they moved to the private auditors, how it was done. Without asking for proposals there was a directive given, on the basis of government policy, that this firm shall be the firm that will be doing the audit on this agency.

The Leader of the Opposition should also recall, I give him one specific example, and there are others I believe, but the one that I am most familiar with was the audit of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. The cost of that audit, and here is where one can get into the argument of the scope and the additional cost that might be undertaken, but the cost of the audit went from - I go from memory - from \$38,000 went up to, I believe, \$68,000 in one fell swoop in terms of that audit. That audit was previously done by the Provincial Auditor and all the costs would have been passed on to the corporation. I'm assuming that in terms of the costs that would have been assessed to those agencies, would have been those that I indicated a direct salary cost plus 25 percent, would be the way the agencies have been billed. What wouldn't have been billed to the agencies would be what a normal markup or profit would be in terms of that agency, normal office rental space per auditor and secretarial, not secretarial help but dealing with office space that would be required. Those would not have been charged to those agencies. But on purely cost effectiveness, in terms of, and only if one is an auditor could be able to give the precise answer, if the scope of the audit was similar from one year to the next, in terms of the way the audit is being conducted, then one has the measurement of whether or not there is a direct comparison, and that has to be taken into account if there is going to be a change as well. As to whether there is a change in scope of the audit that is to be undertaken, whether there are new methods, changes in operation as I understand it, those kinds of factors would have to be taken into account with the change in audit.

I've given the honourable member the way the Provincial Auditor bills the clients and the costs that are passed on. That analysis as well will be made by the Treasury Board and by Cabinet as to when and how the Provincial Auditor, and the timing of those audits will be transferred, or not transferred.

In the intervening time, I understand as well that the Provincial Auditor does, as the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, from time to time as necessary, contract or hire independent firms, private firms to assist as the need arises in terms of the staff. I put down to the Leader of the Opposition one way of handling this.

There is another way; without even changing the policies of how to handle the audits, the government and the Legislative Assembly can say this is the Budget of the Provincial Auditor. Yet he will conduct all the audits, and if you don't provide the staffing that is required to conduct those audits, there is no alternative for the Provincial Auditor but to go to an outside firm and hire it because if the audit has to be done and the funds, in terms of staffing, are not provided there is no other recourse but to go that route. I mean there's several ways of handling that. We have put it out front, in terms of saying those were the staff that were let go in terms of the shift that the government made at the point in time that they made the shift. We

are saying that upon the review it appears on the recommendation of the Provincial Auditor that it will require the same amount of staff to do those audits, and when the analysis is done at that point in time, those changes will be made.

**HON. S. LYON:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for the information that he has been able to provide tonight, and I realize that the estimate that has been given to him as we sit here tonight is only a ballpark estimate, and it's not the kind of definitive estimate that I think a Treasury Board or this Legislature would want to act upon.

We want to know the totality of the cost, and you can't get at the totality of the cost unless you look at the cost of air conditioning; the cost of heating; the cost of putting the lights in the office; the total cost that is attributable to keeping an auditor; a professional person on staff; secretarial; paper - the whole shooting match. You can take a stab at it, perhaps, and say 25 percent is a good ballpark figure; we want to see the figures. I know that they're perhaps not available tonight, and I merely say to the Minister that before the Treasury Board arrogates unto itself a decision to change a system which is applied in this province for the better part of a 100 years, changed only during that brief period from '69-77 when we had the first Mark One of a socialist government; before they change from normality back to abnormality, let us get the figures so that each of us in this House to whom the Provincial Auditor must report, is seized of the figures and can have our judgment brought to bear on this matter just as well as the members of the Treasury Board.

I say that, because governments - to repeat the axiom again - are transient creatures, and transient creatures should never do irreversible harm to institutionalized systems that are there to protect the public interest. I for one, Mr. Chairman, do not intend to stand idly by in this House, and watch institutionalized systems which have a proven worth for the public interest, be changed, sometimes for the spoken reason of being cost effective but rather more often, I fear, to serve some kind of blind and primitive prejudice of the transient Government of the Day.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I find the words of the Leader of the Opposition very hollow in terms of the comments that he is making about —(Interjection)— well, Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition might want to make any kind of comments he wants about my understanding or not understanding, but I say that again that I find those comments quite hollow in terms of him now standing up in his place, and yet when he was the Premier of this province doing, without regard to the system that was in place in terms —(Interjection)— well, Mr. Chairman, he now calls it a transient system, the way he appointed the auditors without calling for tenders, without quotes. He went and said, "A" firm, you are doing this — one could accuse the now Leader of the Opposition of clear pork-barrelling in terms of the audits that he allowed by government decree. If that isn't a transient system that was brought in and clearly, Mr. Chairman, he did not even want to acknowledge that the costs, that the direct costs of audits, and I gave him one

example —(Interjection)— well, Mr. Chairman, then let the honourable members show us how the Member for Sturgeon Creek, who says it was not done that way.

I want to know from the Leader of the Opposition how it was done; how did they appoint those auditors and that they went out and said, "Provincial Auditor, you no longer need 10 staff, because by government policy, we are moving to the private auditors and we appoint "A" firm, "B" firm, "C" firm for these kinds of jobs." And, Mr. Chairman, talk about cost effectiveness, when an audit overnight practically doubles for one agency, how cost effective was that change and how cost effective were we? Were the people of Manitoba to be well served when they paid double? For what reason, Mr. Chairman? I'll tell you for what reason. To be able to tell the people of Manitoba that we've reduced the numbers of civil servants in this Province of Manitoba. For that reason alone, Mr. Chairman, because what we could do is say that now we have less civil servants but we are paying for them through the nose by having outside contracts through a scheme of pork-barrelling, Mr. Chairman, nothing else but.

So, Mr. Chairman, let the Leader of the Opposition not stand in his place here this evening and tell us how cost effective his administration was in terms of how they handled the auditing. That is only one example, Mr. Chairman, of how they've handled the Civil Service in the Province of Manitoba. That was the game that was played; a pure shell game; a numbers game. But, Mr. Chairman, obviously it didn't work. It didn't work and people didn't believe him that they were, in fact, saving money because they knew that it did and I gave him one example. I would have to go through the figures — the one example that I know for certain and they admit it, Mr. Chairman, that it would cost more. What did we gain by those additional costs?

So, Mr. Chairman, I say again, I find the words of the Leader of the Opposition quite hollow when he tries to make a case and stand in this Assembly and indicate that we want to examine the records of what the government is doing in this area, because governments are only transient and the system that was in place for eight years is only an aberration and we want to go back to the transitional, traditional system in this province.

Mr. Chairman, in the last 12 years, who has been the aberration? Mr. Chairman, it has been the Conservative party since, in the last decade, in the last decade-and-a-half we will see who has been the aberration. We will see, Mr. Chairman, and frankly speaking —(Interjection)— oh yes, the Honourable Member for Pembina indicates "you bet we will." Well, Mr. Chairman, absolutely we will. The people of Manitoba have judged; they've judged your administration - the one-term administration and they will judge again. There is just no doubt about that.

**HON. S. LYON:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the Minister for making the level of contribution to this debate that we have come to expect from him. It's obviously pointless in pursuing further questions with one so cynical and one with so little understanding of how professional services are obtained and so I'm not going to waste my time, or the time of the House in

trying to get blood out of a stone or information out of this Minister.

I merely serve notice that we will want to see in this House and he can give it to his colleague, the Minister of Finance or whomever, the facts and the figures upon which the Treasury Board of Manitoba makes any determination with respect to returning to the rather abnormal system that the NDP established in this province in 1969, 1970.

I can only say for the record, without getting into any of the detail at all, that of course professional people are nine times out of ten appointed without tender. If my honourable friend knew anything about professional life he would understand why that is the case and he would understand as well, Mr. Chairman, that one of the responsibilities, as I understand it, of the Provincial Auditor was to negotiate the price of the fee that the auditors from the outside would charge. My honourable friend will perhaps be unaware of that kind of information but I've put it on the record merely for the sake of those who do better understand what we're talking about.

It's not my purpose in raising this point to get into a long diatribe about transient governments or anything of that nature at all. But I merely say again to my honourable friends that they need not think, during their all too short term of office, that they will be making any fundamental changes to the institutions of this province without hearing from this side of the House.

I need not remind the Minister in question that it was the previous government that gave this province the greatest accountability, in terms of quarterly reports of the financial statements, which were supported by the Provincial Auditor. It was the previous government which acted upon the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor with respect to the combining of the accounts of current and capital, because the Provincial Auditor had been saying to the previous government that he really couldn't tell. He put a footnote in his Annual Report each year. He couldn't say how much was capital, how much was current because flim flammery could go on with respect to items being charged against capital accounts when they should really be current accounts. So it was our government again that went along with the recommendation of the Provincial Auditor, not only with respect to accountability, but with respect to the method of presentation of the Estimates which, by the way, politically is not as good. It was not as good for our government and certainly is not as good for my honourable friends opposite as the previous method, because you could hide things in Capital and that's precisely what they were doing. But it is better in the public interest that it be done this way, and if my honourable friends - and I say this in the absence of the Minister of Finance, who's apparently according to the newspaper, spreading his great wisdom with respect to hydro-electric energy somewhere in California tonight — (Interjection)— no, I don't object to it at all. I just make mention of the fact that the Minister is not here and my comments are directed particularly to the Minister of Finance that any suggestion of change, any suggestion that he makes of trying to change the method of accounting which is now in place in this province which follows, I think, the method of accounting that

is used not only by the Federal Government, but by at least six or seven of the other provinces, if not more than that of Canada, will be met with the same kind of resistance that we will meet with any other attempted badgering of the fundamental institutions of this province by those who are temporarily in office.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

**HON. A. MACKLING:** Mr. Chairman, I want to add a few remarks in this debate to indicate my concern about the tenor of the Leader of the Opposition's remarks. I admire the Leader of the Opposition in the manner in which he speaks. He speaks well; he argues well, but he destroys his argument by arguing so completely one-sided and including in that argument the use of unnecessary vitriolic, unnecessary partisan trigger words that add nothing, Mr. Chairman, to the otherwise logic of an argument he's presenting. I, Mr. Chairman, want to indicate that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition presents a logical argument, but it is so completely one-sided.

To be fair to this institution, you have to consider the value of the Provincial Auditor's role to this institution and to the public. You know, if you were to follow the logic of the Leader of the Opposition, you would expect at least some of the large private corporations in this province to be fair to call upon the Provincial Auditor or some public auditor for which they had no control to audit the books of the private corporation because that, in essence, is what he's saying. You should have a check, a balance. Now, the shareholders of large corporations don't have the privilege of calling upon the Public Auditor, someone who is appointed and he has tenure to check on their own auditors of their private company, but that's the kind of logic he's suggesting, that you should have some measure of this in society.

The argument he's advancing really is that you can't trust public institutions. You have to have private institutions to be a check on them and that's the philosophy that underlines the concern and the negative attitude of the Leader of the Opposition. He is not pro-government. He has, through his administration, been anti-government and the administrative mechanisms of this institution are really not all that enthusiastically endorsed by him and so the Provincial Auditor is government; less government, more in the private sector. That's the philosophy of the Leader of the Opposition, but that indicates a basic distrust of this institution and a basic distrust of the role of the Provincial Auditor.

I think that, sure, there may be a role for private auditing and that happens. I don't think that in the life of this government or in any successive government, all audits will be done 100 percent by the Provincial Auditor because that may just not be practical or possible, but the idea of having Crown corporations who are controlled by the people, controlled by this Legislature, accounted for and audited by a servant of this Legislature, that makes sense philosophically, logically, accountable here. That's the way the system should operate.

I am not saying it should be exclusive, but the Honourable Leader argues so much for private enterprise

and against government. That's what is the underlining premise of his philosophy; it's negative to him to have to accept a greater role for government in society and that's his problem. I am sorry he has such a problem philosophically.

**HON. S. LYON:** Mr. Chairman, on the comments of the Minister of Natural Resources, I'm sure that he is aware as I am aware, my understanding - I haven't cracked the statute recently - that regardless of whether the actual mechanics of the audit are done by X firm, Y firm or Z firm, the Provincial Auditor still, according to my understanding, is responsible for that and reports to this Legislature. Really, all you are talking about in terms of this rather odd digression that was made by the Member for St. James or the Minister of Resources, is really my honourable friend is arguing against the proposition that the Provincial Auditor should be able to hire outside hands to do a job for which ultimately and statutorily he is responsible in any event.

I have never heard this Provincial Auditor argue against that proposition. In fact, I put the question to him, I think it was in the Public Accounts Committee of 1977 and the Hansard's there for checking - my memory is as faulty as anyone else's - but my recollection of the discussion with the present Provincial Auditor in that committee and that's perhaps where we should be talking about this because the Provincial Auditor there has a voice and can say, as he did in 1977, that he had absolutely nothing against private audits at all because that was extra help for him, that he and his staff benefited from the additional exposure that private auditors have to the private sector and that, indeed, a particular audit of one of the Crown corporations had been handed over by him to a private auditor because he thought that was the most efficient way to have it done at the time of the Schreyer Government. I daresay that my recollection again was that some of the Ministers of the Schreyer Government were rather surprised that the Provincial Auditor was using that kind of an approach because it made so much sense.

We have always, Mr. Chairman, had the mixed system in Manitoba and what we are arguing about is degrees. We are not arguing so much about ideology or philosophy about government or anything else. What we are arguing about is degree because it's always been a mixed system. It is true that normal nonsocialist governments in Canada tend to favour a greater utilization of professional outside firms whereas socialist governments - and I suppose if I wanted to become ideological about this - in service of their rather funny ideas of a big centralized growing bureaucracy which ultimately will control the whole world and the state and so on, want to —(Interjection)— well, no, I'm not getting into that argument at all.

I wish I could attribute this aberration to something that has some basis in intellect or logic, rather than sheer prejudice, but all I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that my honourable friend is a bit mixed up on it as well because he talks about the private sector having access to the Provincial Auditor. Well, maybe in the great socialist state of all socialist states someday that will come about where big brother auditor who is

employed by the Provincial or the Federal Government will have to pass judgment upon all the books.

I rather have the feeling - and I can't speak for the Provincial Auditor of Manitoba - I rather have the feeling that the present Provincial Auditor has quite enough to do, thanks very much, and wouldn't relish the thought, even though his ideological transient masters, for the time being, might favour that kind of an approach. But what rather intrigued me, Mr. Chairman, was the analogy that was drawn by the Minister of Natural Resources in saying that somehow or other there's something wrong with government. We're not saying that at all.

We value and respect the office of the Provincial Auditor and we demonstrate it by giving him all of the extra tools that he can have in terms of the best people that he can draw in, not necessarily as bureaucrats, but the best brain power that he can have access to right across this province. It reminds me and it doesn't any more astound me, although it used to, and I used to hear people such as the Member for St. James, the Minister of Resources, argue in student parliaments many more years ago than either of us would like to remember, his thinking hasn't changed one bit. Not one bit. He has an absolute misunderstanding of the private sector and the tests that he applies are always amusing.

Under our corporate law, our companies law in Manitoba and indeed under the federal companies law as well, private companies are required to have outside auditors. All large companies, medium sized companies as well, especially public companies, do have their internal auditing staff and wouldn't it be cozy if they could just do their own books every year. But in the public interest and for the benefit of shareholders and for the benefit of seeing that things are properly run and even with this protection in place, mistakes occur and inventories are overvalued and undervalued and so on and so forth, but notwithstanding that, the law as it applies to the private sector is that private sector companies by the law passed by this Legislature are required to have outside auditors - are required by law.

My honourable friend is arguing, I think, from a rather sticky wicket when he tries to say that all of the audits should be done internally by the Provincial Auditor, even though that's not the most efficient way of doing it, and even though the private sector, Mr. —(Interjection)— what point of order? You haven't got a point of order.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order please. Order please. Order please.

The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources on a point of order.

**HON. A. MACKLING:** The honourable member is implying to me that I have stated a set of facts which I have not. I have not indicated that all audits must be done by the Provincial Auditor, not at all. You see, the honourable member wants to get into this philosophical trap that he puts himself in, that everything has to be black and white and that's not the case. —(Interjection)— Well, I did not say that all audits had to be done by the Provincial Auditor.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** I do not believe the Honourable Minister had a point of order. However, he will feel better; he has clarified the record.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**HON. S. LYON:** A difference of opinion is not a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad that you, as a new member of the House, have come to understand that. My honourable friend and I will always have a difference of opinion until he comes to his senses, but that's not my problem; that's his problem. All that I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, is that I found his analogy a rather odd one in that he is prepared as a member of this Legislature, as indeed we all are, to support a law which makes one test for all private companies in Manitoba, but on the other hand, he and his colleagues temporarily in office, are saying that the same people that we forced by law to do the audit of private companies shouldn't be helping the Provincial Auditor of Manitoba to do the public audit. Now, if you can find any logic, if you can find any intellectual persuasion in that position, then it escapes me, but I think the point has been made even to the point where perhaps the Minister understands it, so I have nothing more to say except this: that we want the figures. We want the figures that are used before any change is made from the utilization by the Provincial Auditor of outside firms.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 5.(a)—pass - the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**MR. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Minister would also be prepared when he provides the information that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has requested, to prepare comparative information for the years immediately after the changing government in 1977 showing the costs of the staff versus the costs of the new audits and also provide information on how those audits were awarded and whether or not any proposals were made in terms of those awards when he provides that information.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 5.(a)—pass - the Honourable Minister.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would think that we should be able to provide all that information. I repeat to the Leader of the Opposition as well that we will try and have an assessment made in terms of the other costs dealing with office and furniture, but in terms of the figure that I gave him with respect to staff, is the figure that has been widely accepted and has been presented to me. It isn't my figure. It is the figure that is used for accounting purposes by the Provincial Auditor and that is the normal figure that is attributed to all staffing costs, the additional office costs, and it is by Order-in-Council and that information will be made available.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**HON. S. LYON:** I'd like to thank the Minister, Mr. Chairman, and without casting any aspersions on the ballpark figure of 25 percent, the figures I'm asking for

are the real actual figures, not the ballpark figures.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** To the best of our ability, we'll try and provide them for you

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 5.(a)—pass; 5.(b) Other Expenditures—pass.

Please see items under Resolution No. 2 - Therefore be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,044,800 for Legislation, Provincial Auditors's Office, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1983.

Item No. 6. Ombudsman, 6.(a) Salaries—pass; 6.(b) Other Expenditures—pass.

Please see items to be considered under Resolution No. 3 - Therefore be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$206,600 for Legislation, Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1983—pass.

Resolution No. 4, the Electoral Office, 7.(a) Salaries—pass.

7.(b) Other Expenditures - the Honourable Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, dealing with the office of the Chief Electoral Office, I think perhaps this is probably the year in which because an election was rather fresh in our mind, we should be considering the electoral procedures and considering the possibility of any change or pointing out some of the weaknesses that appear to have been prevalent during past elections.

I refer specifically, Mr. Chairman, to the problems that seem to have occurred in the operation of the Chief Electoral Office with the payment of poll clerks, deputy returning officers and rentals of various halls for the conduct of the poll. It would appear from my recollection that there was quite a bit of a holdback in the actual office of the Chief Electoral Office where they checked and double-checked every set of figures before they were put forward for payment. Then, I believe, after they had been checked and double-checked there, those figures were then put forward and were checked and double-checked before they were approved for payment. The result was that there was a time lag of six, seven, eight weeks and in some cases even longer before legitimate accounts were left unpaid. I believe that, as a result of that, I think there should be an internal review probably taken of methods of speeding up the payment of quite normal election expenses. I know it would leave the citizenry of the province much happier. I know in my own personal case, I had numerous telephone calls from people wondering when they were going to get paid.

I think that this is a good time now, while these things are still fresh in our minds, to cause a review to be made in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer probably by himself and two or three other probably independent people, to see if there isn't some way of streamlining the payment of electoral expenses that are quite legitimate and do cause an embarrassment to a numerous amount of people in the province, when there seems to be no logical reason for holding up the payments.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I have to tell the



honourable member that there were problems and even I happen to have been on an open-line radio program in the City of Brandon when calls of that nature, dealing with expenses which were not paid; this was, I believe, in the month of January or February. There were delays in payments. Part of it, as I understand it, was the problem that exists, I think, in every election where a number of the people that are hired are hired basically off the street. As well, I believe the system that was set up internally was to try and deal with certain segments of the bills that were there and if there were problems the whole batch of them were being held.

Those kinds of reviews, I agree, should be undertaken to see whether or not the possibility of even having someone full-time assigned from a department in terms of accounting persons to oversee that the payments are made as they come in, rather than wait until there is a whole host of payments come in and then the payouts made on that basis. But, there is no doubt about it, that there were problems for several months in terms of payments not being made.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, I believe that maybe there was too conscious an effort being made to make sure that all the checks and balances were in place. I believe the same accounts were checked and double-checked, not once, twice, but probably three and four times by various steps before it got to the final payment. I would hope that there is room to remove some of those, what I call repetitive steps, and expedite the payment of the accounts so that the citizenry doesn't suffer.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** I just wondered if the Minister might confirm to the House that those receiving late payments, they were equally distributed between Conservative workers and NDP workers.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Minister.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, to be quite specific, I don't know; I cannot answer that question. I think the question should be raised with his colleague, the Member for St. Norbert, who was the Minister responsible, I believe, for bringing in the legislation and it was your colleagues who had the authority for hiring in terms of the staff for the election. I honestly can't give him that answer, but I believe in terms of the problems of nonpayment, they were in many ridings.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**HON. S. LYON:** Just a couple of comments that I think would not be inappropriate at this time. I have participated as a candidate in six or seven general elections and one by-election. My comment, which I have voiced to other members of the Legislature since the election of last November, even though we were not terribly pleased with the outcome of that election, I must say that in my experience there certainly came to my attention, I can't speak for other members of the

House, as few complaints about the conduct of the election as any election that I have every been involved in. I think that is a tribute to the Chief Electoral Officer, to his staff, to the returning officers whom the Chief Electoral Officer and his staff had an opportunity to train before the election and so on.

I merely wish to put on the record that in every election you have complaints and some of them serious and legitimate complaints about people being left off the enumerator's list and so on, but I must say that at least from my vantage point, that kind of mechanical complaint was at a minimum this time and I merely want to put on the record the fact that the Chief Electoral Officer, his staff, the returning officers deserve a nod of congratulations for the good work that they did.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Springfield.

**MR. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, I wanted to rise to concur in the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, not because I share his lengthy experience in being a candidate in elections; in some ways, I am very glad I don't share that experience, but I certainly was impressed with the administration of the election and having some experience in that field, I can say that not only was the election very well administered, and great credit should go to a relatively new staff without a great deal of experience, who performed very well under very difficult circumstances considering the relative newness of the statute and the many changes that were made in the statute.

I think also a substantial amount of credit has to go to the former Attorney-General, the Member for St. Norbert, who piloted through one of the most thoroughgoing changes in an Election Act in the history of this province and modernized and updated a lot of the things which had been creating the problems that the Leader of the Opposition refers to. So a substantial amount of the credit for the fact that the complaints were not there lies with the former Attorney-General and the legislation he piloted through the House. That does not in any way diminish the well earned compliments that the Leader of the Opposition has made to the Chief Electoral Officer and his staff because they, too, did an excellent job.

On the other question, Mr. Chairman, and I must say in most in those amendments on that Election Act were not only supported by this side of the House, but this side of the House made a contribution when they were in Opposition to the improving of that Act and making it the vastly improved vehicle that it is.

With regard to the payment problem, Mr. Chairman, I have to tell the Member for Virden and the Member of the Board of Internal Economy, who is dealing with these Estimates tonight, that I solved the problem that the Member for Virden had very simply, by telling him that the administration of the elections had been in the hands of the previous government when I got complaints about payment.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 7.(b)—pass - the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**HON. A. ADAM:** Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to point out that we should be paying more attention in regard

to polling stations during the elections - any elections. I'm not sure whether - that's been quite some time that we haven't paid too close attention to where we establish our polling places and I noticed that in the Ste. Rose Constituency in the last elections that many of the polling stations were in buildings that had steps. There were very very few polling stations that had a street entrance and this created a great deal of difficulty for people who are handicapped; people who went down to vote on wheelchairs.

Place after place, after polling place, we found that older people had to climb two or three steps to get into a polling booth and I'm not levelling that as a criticism. I'm just saying that we should, when we do have elections, ensure that the returning officers should be instructed, if at all possible, to try and find polling places that have street access.

While, in fact, there were provisions, Mr. Chairman, whereby the returning officer, the deputy returning officer could take the ballot box out on the street to assist someone to vote on the street, but you know, the question is, how about the handicapped person who comes to a polling station on a wheelchair and it happened, Mr. Chairman; it happened in Neepawa. I'm not sure whether it happened in any other place, but we do know that in one instance the person in a wheelchair got up to the polling station and waited for some time and finally wheeled away. As a result of this, he lost his right to vote because he could not get into the polling place. Had it been a street entrance, there would have been no problem. I'm just not levelling any criticism. I'm just saying that in future elections that the returning officer should be advised by the chief returning officer, if at all possible, to try and have polling places that have street access.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 7.(b) - the Honourable Member for Virden.

**MR. G. GRAHAM:** Just in case there could be an impression left that I was being critical of the operation of the Chief Electoral Officer, I assure you I was not being critical of the activities of the Chief Electoral Officer in the conduct of the election at all.

All I was asking was that perhaps in the light of the experience, while it's still fresh in our mind, of what some of the complaints that we have had brought to our attention, that we could look at possible ways of streamlining the payment of accounts after an election so that the citizenry of the province doesn't have to wait too long to get their cheques.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Member for Springfield.

**MR. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased that the Honourable Member for Virden has clarified his remarks and that he is now insisting that the criticism he was directing was not at the bureaucracy for the way the election was administered and the accounts were handled, but rather of the government that administered and was responsible for that election.

**MR. G. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, I have always had a fair degree of respect for the Honourable Member for Springfield, but I have to tell you that is rapidly dimin-

ishing. It would appear that he has difficulty understanding or maybe it's possible he does have difficulty with the hearing in the place. I would assume that it was probably difficulty with the hearing.

No, Mr. Chairman, I am talking very specifically about the bureaucracy that we apparently seem to have in place, whereby the accounts that have been approved for payment by the Chief Electoral Officer are then further scrutinized, checked and double-checked; they are then approved for payment and then further checked before the cheque goes out. I think there is far too much bureaucracy between the Chief Electoral Officer's okay and the time that the cheque gets to the person who is authorized to be the recipient.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 7.(b)—pass. That completes the items under Resolution No. 4.

Therefore Be It Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$200,100 for Legislation, Electoral Office, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1983—pass.

That completes the Estimates for Legislation. Committee rise.