



Second Session — Thirty-Second Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

31-32 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Second Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
ADAM, Hon. A.R. (Pete)	Ste. Rose	NDP
ANSTETT, Andy	Springfield	NDP
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BANMAN, Robert (Bob)	La Verendrye	PC
BLAKE, David R. (Dave)	Minnedosa	PC
BROWN, Arnold	Rhineland	PC
BUCKLASCHUK, John M.	Gimli	NDP
CARROLL, Q.C., Henry N.	Brandon West	IND
CORRIN, Brian	Ellice	NDP
COWAN, Hon. Jay	Churchill	NDP
DESJARDINS, Hon. Laurent	St. Boniface	NDP
DODICK, Doreen	Riel	NDP
DOERN, Russell	Elmwood	NDP
DOLIN, Mary Beth	Kildonan	NDP
DOWNEY, James E.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert	Emerson	PC
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
EVANS, Hon. Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
EYLER, Phil	River East	NDP
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	PC
FOX, Peter	Concordia	NDP
GOURLAY, D.M. (Doug)	Swan River	PC
GRAHAM, Harry	Virden	PC
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry M.	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HEMPHILL, Hon. Maureen	Logan	NDP
HYDE, Lloyd	Portage la Prairie	PC
JOHNSTON, J. Frank	Sturgeon Creek	PC
KOSTYRA, Hon. Eugene	Seven Oaks	NDP
KOVNATS, Abe	Niakwa	PC
LECUYER, Gérard	Radisson	NDP
LYON, Q.C., Hon. Sterling	Charleswood	PC
MACKLING, Q.C., Hon. Al	St. James	NDP
MALINOWSKI, Donald M.	St. Johns	NDP
MANNES, Clayton	Morris	PC
McKENZIE, J. Wally	Roblin-Russell	PC
MERCIER, Q.C., G.W.J. (Gerry)	St. Norbert	PC
NORDMAN, Rurik (Ric)	Assiniboia	PC
OLESON, Charlotte	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald	Pembina	PC
PAWLEY, Q.C., Hon. Howard R.	Selkirk	NDP
PARASIUK, Hon. Wilson	Transcona	NDP
PENNER, Q.C., Hon. Roland	Fort Rouge	NDP
PHILLIPS, Myrna A.	Wolseley	NDP
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
RANSOM, A. Brian	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Burrows	NDP
SCHROEDER, Hon. Vic	Rossmere	NDP
SCOTT, Don	Inkster	NDP
SHERMAN, L.R. (Bud)	Fort Garry	PC
SMITH, Hon. Muriel	Osborne	NDP
STEEN, Warren	River Heights	PC
STORIE, Jerry T.	Flin Flon	NDP
URUSKI, Hon. Bill	Interlake	NDP
USKIW, Hon. Samuel	Lac du Bonnet	NDP
WALDING, Hon. D. James	St. Vital	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 29 March, 1983.

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. J. Walding: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .
The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a statement to make, I have copies. I am pleased to be able to announce changes to our province's Competition Assistance Grant Programs effective April 1, 1983. As honourable members will know the Competition Assistance Grant Program was introduced last May to assist Manitoba service stations operating within 60 kilometres of a competing Saskatchewan service station. In 1982-83 approximately \$2 million was spent to assist the service stations in this zone. In its first year of operation the Competition Assistance Grant Program was hailed as a success by those service stations it was designed to assist, but there were some difficulties encountered during the initial year. We have attempted to resolve those difficulties through the changes I am announcing today.

First, the number of assistance zones within the 60 kilometre distance will increase from four to six. The difference in price between zones will be reduced to approximately 1 cent per litre. This will, we believe, encourage Manitoba motorists to purchase locally rather than drive to another Manitoba town for cheaper gas. Grants on diesel fuel will now only be available in the zones that actually adjoin Saskatchewan, and I might add that there is no provincial tax on farm diesel fuel so it doesn't apply to farm diesel fuel which isn't taxed in the first place. The major buyers of diesel fuel are interprovincial and in-province trucking firms, road builders, mining companies and others who cannot usually drive their equipment any distance just to fuel up.

The price assistance for each of the six zones is as follows: (a) Flin Flon, gasoline 7 cents per litre, diesel 8 cents per litre; (b) 0 to 12 kilometres, gasoline 5.2 cents per litre, diesel 6 cents per litre; (c) 12.1 to 24 kilometres, gasoline 4.2 cents per litre; (d) 24.1 to 36 kilometres, gasoline 3.2 cents per litre; (e) 36.1 to 48 kilometres, gasoline 2.2 cents per litre; (f) 48.1 to 60 kilometres, gasoline 1.2 cents per litre.

There will be a reduction in the grant levels of 2 cents per litre to bulk plants and key lot operators as compared to grants to service station operators in the same zone, which will in part recognize the existing retail price differential between the small individual sale from service stations and the much larger individual sale from key lots and bulk plants. Again, I make the observation that this does not impact on farm fuels.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the volume limit or ceiling on grants will be dropped. It is expected

that service station operators will pass on the full amount of their grant through their pump prices once they receive gasoline in April. Revised grant application forms will be forwarded soon to eligible operators, but old forms may be used to claim grants until such time as new forms are received.

The total cost of the Competition Assistance Grant Program for 1983-84 is expected to be \$2.5 million.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do thank the Minister for recognizing some of the problems that we've had in the country along the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border with his competition assistance grants and while he has made certain changes here, he certainly hasn't made some changes that are going to rectify the problem.

In fact, the distance should be related from the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border. That's where the service stations relate from and instead of that they relate from, say, Roblin to the closest gas station in Saskatchewan and that is very unfair. Mr. Speaker, I also recognize that we have the same problems at the USA border with our constituents here who reside in those seats along the USA border. I'm surprised he's not addressing himself to those problems, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while I recognize the change, at the same time I recognize the many problems and the concerns that are out there in the country regarding this matter, where all kinds of people are going across the border and buying gasoline in Saskatchewan, and well they should. A buck's a buck. I still don't think that a wall should be built between Manitoba and Saskatchewan on tax matters. I think we're the same kind of people; we drive the same roads; we wear the same kind of clothes, and I don't see why this government has to apply these taxes. It's absolutely unfair to the people who reside in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I have a statement to make. Mr. Speaker, I indicated last week that I was awaiting a report from the Manitoba Health Services Commission with regard to the unfortunate death of a patient while enroute from Flin Flon to Winnipeg.

The Manitoba Health Services Commission have completed their preliminary review. There would appear to be problems with internal communication and control at the hospital. Based on this review, the Commission are recommending: (1) the Minister of Health ask the College of Physicians and Surgeons to review the medical management of this patient; (2) that the Commission investigate methods whereby formal courses on critical care nursing could be held in rural ICU units by using the services of a traveling ICU nursing instructor; and (3) that the Commission's nursing standards officers make a full review of staffing in the

Nursing Department of the Flin Flon Hospital with special reference to the ICU Casualty Department.

This recommendation, Mr. Speaker, refers to the fact that whereas a particular staffing allowance was approved by the Commission, the hospital had recently made a decision to use this allowance in such a way that full 24-hour coverage of RNs was not available to them. I have accepted these recommendations.

The Commission will be meeting with the governing board of the Flin Flon Hospital shortly to review the operation of this unit, and formalize policies concerning the operation of the unit.

Also, Mr. Speaker, as a result of some recent comments made by Vice-president of the St. Boniface Hospital on the CBC program, "24 Hours," regarding lack of intensive care training resources for rural Manitoba, I had the situation investigated and the situation is as follows:

Approximately one year ago, the budgets of the Health Sciences Centre and the St. Boniface Hospital were increased by \$150,000 to provide for additional training of intensive care nurses for Winnipeg hospitals. This adjustment resulted in a budget for the two hospitals for this function, of about \$750,000.00. Previous to this adjustment, the St. Boniface Hospital had requested additional funding support for their ICU Unit, to provide training for nurses for rural Manitoba.

Subsequently, the Manitoba Health Services Commission and the St. Boniface Hospital undertook a survey in rural Manitoba to determine the need for such a service and whether it would be supported by rural hospitals. MHSC and St. Boniface Hospital were informed by these rural hospitals that they were not supportive of a training program to be conducted in St. Boniface Hospital for rural intensive care nurses. They generally gave as their reasons the fact that the type of intensive care nursing provided in the tertiary hospitals differ substantially from that which is required in rural Manitoba. Also, they pointed out that the majority of their intensive care nurses were married women with families who would not want to come down to Winnipeg for this training even for a short period of time.

It would appear, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that the most appropriate method of providing adequate training for intensive care nurses in rural Manitoba, is to send instructors out to the various hospitals that have intensive care units. As indicated earlier, this is one of the recommendations included in the Commission's recent report.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I will be following up on the recommendations of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, not only in regard to their request that the College of Physicians and Surgeons become involved in this particular incident, but also that the recommendations relating to better internal control and communication at the hospital be implemented as soon as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. L. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for his report on this incident. As all

members of the House are aware, Manitobans have been waiting with some anticipation, a report of an official nature from the Minister of Health and from the government with respect to the recent tragedy and unfortunate situation relative to the staffing patterns at Flin Flon General, in particular their intensive care or critical care unit.

I must say that the incident points up the necessity and the requirement for the kind of investigation and the kind of initiative that the Minister has announced to the House today and so it comes as a welcome announcement. It is unfortunate that the tragedy that occurred had to take place before the problems with respect to intensive care staffing in certain northern hospitals and northern communities were brought to the attention of the Health Services Commission and the Minister's office.

I hope that other northern hospitals can assure their communities and their health care consumers that their staffing patterns and communications patterns with the Commission and with the government are secure and firm, and there is no threat to health and safety among their populations. The one thing missing, it seems to me at this point, Mr. Speaker, is a commitment on the part of the Minister and the government to re-establish the Standing Committee on Nursing Manpower, to assign that body to the critical task of monitoring nursing supply, both in terms of general nursing and intensive care nursing on an ongoing basis. Unless that difficult challenge in professional health manpower staffing is met and monitored on an ongoing basis, I don't think that these cyclical shortages and problems can ever be overcome. So I would urge the Minister to add to the other steps that he's announced today, the step of restoring the Standing Committee on Nursing Manpower and charging it to recommence its work immediately with the objective in sight of resolving the cyclical nursing staffing shortage, from which all jurisdictions in North America chronically suffer.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. A. MACKLING: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to be able to indicate that National Wildlife Week, which was inaugurated by a Wildlife Act passed in 1947, will, as has taken place each year, be a week in which Canadians are reminded of the value of wildlife. The dates for Wildlife Week this year are April 10th to April 16th, and that date includes the birthdate of the person who is considered to be the father of conservation in Canada, Jack Miner, whose birthday was April 10th.

This year's theme is Wildlife Management or man's and woman's positive effect on wildlife for the benefit of the species and themselves. There is an annual poster and poem contest held. Information packages have been sent to all the schools in Manitoba; 10 winners from each province will be selected for the national competition. The grand prize for that competition is a trip for two, the student and the parent, to the 1984 Canadian Wildlife Convention.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, as members of the opposition, we simply want to associate ourselves with

the announcement and to acknowledge the importance that wildlife plays in our environment and our responsibility to so managing it that it continues to play that importance in future years.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Report of the Administrator, pursuant to Section 29.1 of The Fatality Inquiries Act. This is the list of deaths in jails, prisons and institutions as defined in The Mental Health Act for the year 1982.

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

Before we reach Oral Questions may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have seven members of the First Niverville Boy Scout Troop under the direction of Mr. Brunskill. The scouts are from the constituency of the Honourable Member for Emerson.

On behalf of all of the members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Shoal Lake Indian Band Proposal

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

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs. In view of the statement by the lawyer for the Shoal Lake Indian Band over one month ago that the Band's development proposal would be filed within 30 to 45 days, would the Minister advise whether the Band's proposal has been filed and, if not, when does he expect it to be filed?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm aware of that commitment we made on behalf of the Indian Band by their solicitor. As far as I know, I have not been informed that that proposal has been tabled to date with the Federal Environmental Review Organization and I can't comment on when I expect it to be, though I would hope that the Band would keep to its word and file within 45 days of the date of that statement.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, in view of Mayor Norrie's position and the City of Winnipeg's position that no road to the Band is required, could the Minister guarantee to this House that no road will be built connecting Band 40?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot guarantee that no road would be built to the location of Band No. 40. That is one request that has been made by the Band over a number of years and there has not been any agreement with that request to date by the Government of Manitoba. I can't comment on any road access from the Ontario side, because it is

possible by way of causeway to link Band 40 to the existing road in Ontario. In fact, presently their transportation route is through Ontario going across the water by boat and once there by road to the rest of the road network in Ontario and in Manitoba.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Minister appears to approve, or imply approval, for the construction of a road, despite the City of Winnipeg's objections, would the Minister ensure and advise Band 40 that they will not be allowed to do anything that will adversely affect the City of Winnipeg's water supply; that they will not be allowed to create a sanitation problem that may have the effect of deteriorating the City of Winnipeg's water supply; and that the provincial government will do everything necessary to protect the City of Winnipeg's water supply?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe that I had indicated, in my reply to the previous question, any indication that the province was approving or agreeing with the request for the road; quite contrary, I indicated the province has not agreed to any road access to Band No. 40.

With respect to the general broad question of the Member for St. Norbert, the province has taken a very clear and firm position with respect to the protection of the City of Winnipeg water supply. We have stated that we would do all in our power to protect the water of the City of Winnipeg. If I might add, Mr. Speaker, it's been through the efforts of the province, by forcing the Federal Government and forcing the Band to sit down that there was the agreement on the modified FEARO process. Prior to our involvement there was no agreement on that process and we continually pressed the Federal Government, the Band, and the city to sit down and try to resolve this issue and one result of that has been the agreement from the Federal Government for the modified FEARO process that the Band has concurred with. We've also been successful in lobbying the Federal Government to provide Winter Works Activity for Band No. 40, and the province will continue to do all in its power to protect the water supply of the City of Winnipeg.

Lead-in-soil Removal Program

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Honourable Minister of Environment. Today's copy of the Sun reports that more than a year after a promised clean-up Weston area boulevards still contain dangerous levels of lead because of dispute as to who will pay the \$7,500 clean-up cost. My direct question to the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Speaker, whom you will remember continuously asked questions of my colleague, and of the government that I served, on this particular issue - Mr. Speaker, I want to correct, not questions - I think it would be fair to say that he harrassed my colleague and my government for not acting on that clean-up. My direct question to the

Honourable Minister is, it's now been 18 months since he's been Minister, why has this matter not been cleaned up.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. J. COWAN: To the member opposite, indeed it is true that I asked, on numerous occasions, and he can apply any implications he wants as to whether or not that was harrasment, but certainly there was a determined effort on my part to have the previous administration deal with this problem. I did fail in that, Sir, regrettably so. However, upon assuming government, one of the first actions of this government was, in fact, to go in there and to develop a clean-up program. That program was developed; we have undertaken and completed a sod-soil removal and replacement program of 26 residences at a cost of approximately \$49,000 to the province.

Canadian Bronze has undertaken a clean-up of their picnic site which they were asked to do, and we did ask the City of Winnipeg to undertake a clean-up of the boulevards. Unfortunately so, that was not accomplished as part of the original program and it was not accomplished because the City of Winnipeg felt that the province should pay the \$7,500 for that. On receipt of a request by the Mayor, in response to that request, I asked staff to work with the staff of the City of Winnipeg to determine if the issue could be resolved at that level. The issue was not resolved at that level so we're now at the point where I should undertake discussions with Mayor Norrie, and having been advised of their concerns yesterday, I have written to Mayor Norrie and that letter will be in the mail shortly, asking him for a meeting, but also indicating to him that we are not going to let the matter of the \$7,500 stand in the way of this clean-up. That clean-up will be accomplished and, if the province has to pay for it, let it be said right here and right now that the province will pay for it, and we will do that. That's something that members opposite were not prepared to do when they were in government, but I'm certain they had their reasons.

The fact is there has been a regrettable delay. I regret the delay; I wish the City of Winnipeg had undertaken a clean-up project much earlier but, because they have not, I'm prepared to sit down with them now and resolve this issue so the clean-up can be undertaken this year.

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I do thank the Honourable Minister for that short and precise response to the question. I note the patience of the Acting House Leader, the Minister of Natural Resources, in allowing him to give that short and precise answer so I have just one more short and precise question for the Honourable Minister of Environment.

Mr. Speaker, I do not doubt for one moment the sincerity of the Minister of Environment in his concern for cleaning up the environment. Therefore, would he not agree with me that, because of \$7,500 - I say, quite correctly, accepted responsibility for it - but because of the \$7,500 dispute we still have contaminated boulevards in that area, some two or three years after it was discovered; would he not agree with me that the

\$7,200 that his government spent on flying Marxists into a recent conference would have been better spent in cleaning up the polluted area in the Weston areas than on the other more questionable source for spending public money?

HON. J. COWAN: Mr. Speaker, a long question. In his first preamble he said it had been 18 months; in his second preamble he said it's been two to three years, which means that obviously he's taken a very long time to put the second question after the first or time does, indeed, fly when you're having fun, as he was having.

The answer to that is that it is regrettable that the City of Winnipeg did not undertake the project at the time we requested them to do so. It is regrettable that the Province of Manitoba, in response to their request for funding, did not act more quickly so that clean-up could have been undertaken last year, but I think it is commendable that clean-up will in fact be undertaken this year, and I can give you that assurance. That's quite a bit sooner, it took less time for us to accomplish that than it took them to do anything in respect to that long-standing problem; it's been around for a long time and if we can have it cleaned up within 18 months, or within two years, I believe, that we have gone a considerable way towards improving the environmental quality of the City of Winnipeg and we're prepared to do that, committed to do that, and we will do that.

Depositing of atomic and nuclear waste

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I know the Rules of the House. If the Minister chooses not to answer a question he doesn't have to answer a question and he refused to answer that question that I placed.

However, Mr. Speaker, I ask another question to the same Minister on another subject. Recently, I believe, in fact I think contracts are in the process of being awarded with respect to the work that is going to be undertaken at Pinawa by the Atomic Energy Commission in the research in the granite formations as to work that may be helpful to them in the future depositing of atomic and nuclear waste, has the Honourable Minister satisfied himself that the real concerns of Manitobans and the area residents have been met in every way in the signing of these contracts?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. J. COWAN: First, I think the record should be clear that the previous administration signed the lease which in fact allows that activity to be undertaken, so I'm certain that they were assured that the best interests of all Manitoba and the best interests of those area residents were in fact incorporated into the lease which they signed, which would permit that undertaking to be accomplished. It is now in the phase of starting construction, and I can assure you that since the time that lease has been signed and since the time we have been in a position to review it, we have done so, and we have taken the time to consult with the Committee of Concerned Citizens of the area on several occasions. We have taken the time to work with them to develop a monitoring program to ensure that the provisions

incorporated in that lease in good faith by the previous administration are being lived up to by all the parties. For that reason, yes, I am assured that the activity which is being undertaken there at this time is being carefully monitored in such a way so as to allay the concerns of the Committee of Concerned Citizens of the area. However, if there are further concerns which they would like to bring to my attention, I am certainly prepared to discuss that with them, as I am prepared to discuss any such concerns which are brought to my attention by residents of the province respecting that or any other matter which falls under my area of responsibility.

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, you of course will understand, but a big part of our job as members of the opposition is in holding Government Ministers accountable - accountable is a little longer word for meaning "honest."

I simply want to ask the Honourable Minister, and I acknowledge as he just acknowledged, that the arrangements the previous administration entered into were obviously to his satisfaction, and the constant criticism on this issue that he gave when he was in opposition was baseless and he now acknowledges that. He has made no changes to the original leases signed by the then Conservative Government, and the constant charges that he made about our lack of concern for the environment were baseless.

HON. J. COWAN: What I have done is met with concerned citizens of the area, and met with and discussed at staff level with representatives of AECL, a monitoring program which will ensure that lease is being lived up to in the appropriate way. That was not accomplished under the previous administration. It, in fact, has been accomplished under this administration, and we are proud to have been able to play a part in ensuring that that monitoring will be ongoing. Without the monitoring, the lease in itself was a useful document, but lacked some clarity. I think the monitoring provides us with an opportunity to review the operations as they are ongoing and to ensure that in fact the provisions contained within the lease are being lived up to in an adequate fashion.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Minister of Environment. Would the Minister of Environment assure this House that as long as both he, as the Minister responsible for the Environment in the Province of Manitoba, and as long as we are in office, that that facility will never be used for the storage of nuclear waste? And could he also try and see if he can get the same sort of assurances from the members opposite?

HON. J. COWAN: Indeed, the members opposite say it will have to be longer than that, and without wishing to acknowledge any specific length of term that I have in mind, I can assure him that it will have to be longer than that. What we have tried to do is to not only make that statement known and clear, but to ensure that the monitoring program such as I described earlier in place,

to ensure that whatever government is in place, that the people in the area have faith and confidence that the lease is being lived up to and that the environmental integrity of that area is being protected. I hope that answers his questions.

French school for Ile des Chenes

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education. A group calling themselves Parents and Taxpayers Association, which incidentally represents hundreds of ratepayers in the Seine River School Division, have for months been trying to meet with either the First Minister or the Minister of Education regarding the concerns they have about the proposed all-French school for Ile des Chenes. I am wondering if the Minister can indicate why she is refusing to either meet with the group or even communicate with that group.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, I have not received a request from that group for a meeting. The people from the community who did request a meeting - I think there were three people - wanted to meet in very short order. At the time, I was booked up and I think we asked them if they would be prepared to meet with my legislative assistant, or would they be prepared to delay the meeting for a week or so until I had a bit of free time to meet with them. They accepted the offer of meeting with my assistant and he reported to me on that meeting. I have not, to my knowledge, had any other requests for meetings with the people of that area that I have turned down. If he has any letter that indicates something has happened there and we are missing it, I would appreciate hearing it.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: To the same Minister. I have correspondence where they wrote to the First Minister who subsequently, after two months, wrote back indicating he had forwarded the information to the Minister of Education who subsequently would be responding to that, along with the request for a meeting that had 10 questions which they felt they would want to have answered, which has been indicated by the First Minister that the answers would be forthcoming.

My question to the Minister of Education is, would she consider answering those questions for this group, and would she still consider meeting them somewhere along the line?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to answer any questions that anybody asks about any decisions we have made, and to give as full and complete an answer about what was done and why it was done as we are able to give. I am also prepared to meet with any group that wants to meet with me.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: A further question to the same Minister then. Can the Minister indicate whether she has a copy of the 10 questions that were forwarded

to the First Minister who subsequently indicated he had forwarded it to the Minister of Education, and if she has received that, which I believe has been in the mail for two months, would she now consider answering those questions?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, I will take that specific question as notice so I can make sure that I know which letter it is I am responding to. As the member opposite will realize, I think I get in the neighbourhood of about 125 calls a day into my office, and hundreds of proposals and requests, and it is impossible to document and record all of them. I am quite prepared to look into it and to speed up our answer if we have been delinquent in doing so.

Gilbert Plains health facility

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Honourable Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Honourable Minister of Health can confirm that his department, the province, will not provide lab and X-ray diagnostic services in the new health care facilities as scheduled for Gilbert Plains.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: That's correct, Mr. Speaker.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: I wonder, can the Honourable Minister advise the House or me if he is receiving a number of complaints and petitions and requests from constituents in that area who are most concerned, and insist that they feel to fill the health needs of the area, they should have a lab and X-ray diagnostic services in this new health complex.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I have met with a delegation of people from the area to explain the situation. They've met with the officials of the Manitoba Health Services Commission on a number of occasions. I think the reason why is quite clear, but I'll certainly be more than pleased to discuss that during my Estimates with my honourable friend.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: I wonder, then, with the number of letters and petitions that I'm getting from Gilbert Plains people, if the Minister is prepared to sit down with that community and review it. These are maybe not the hospital board, or whoever, of the municipality either; from the local constituents. The individuals are most concerned and feel that the Minister should sit down and review it with them. I wonder if he is prepared to deal with the Gilbert Plains community by going out and sitting down with them on this matter.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I've done more than that; I've asked these people from Gilbert Plains to sit down with me, and the people of Grandview, to discuss the whole situation and they have refused to do that; I've asked to arrange this meeting. It's quite a dilemma because I also review everyday the requests and the statement

and the reminder from this side of the House that we have quite a large deficit, and I don't know what really the member wants at this time.

Main Street Manitoba Program

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. A. ADAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Member for Roblin-Russell requested some information as to the application from the Town of Roblin with regard to the Main Street Program. I have more information and I can indicate that the application has not been rejected outright, but rather has been returned with suggestions for improvement.

The town was referred to our field officer in our Planning Division in Dauphin, and also to the Department of Economic Development for assistance in improving their application. The town did not seek advice from staff or from the department when they made their application. I can advise the honourable member that the Mayor has met with Roger Dennis, the Director of Budget and Finance, this morning to discuss their application, and the Mayor is satisfied that perhaps they were a little hasty in getting their program together, and that they will avail themselves to the assistance that's available from the Department of Economic Development, and also from the Department of Municipal Affairs.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for that information. I also would like to ask the Honourable Minister, is this standard procedure on these applications for them to deal with Economic Development and your department, as well, because my understanding is that there is a lot of confusion out there regarding this program.

MR. A. ADAM: Well, Mr. Speaker, all the information regarding the guidelines and information on the program was mailed out last fall and municipalities have that information. So, it is just perhaps in the haste of preparing their budget they thought they may send in a program; this has not been rejected, it has been returned with suggestions for improvement and I am sure that, given a little more assistance to the town, they will come up with a good program for their town. I would point out that the town has a population of close to 2,000 and, therefore, it is essential that they have a very very good plan if they want to have contiguous impact on the downtown area; it has to be well planned.

Flin Flon Hospital - staffing allowance

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. L. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Honourable Minister of Health. According to the Minister's statement earlier today, a considerable amount of the difficulty at Flin Flon evidently resulted from the hospital's arbitrary use, Sir, of its staffing allowance. My question to the Minister

is, can he advise the House of the extent of this situation; to what extent are hospitals engaging in arbitrary use of their staffing allowances, unknown to the Commission or to the Minister's office?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: If I remember correctly, I think there was an LPN hired instead of an R.N., and a clerk, also, to prepare some of their reports, and, of course, that left certain times that there were no R.N.'s at all and then the R.N.'s on duty had to work many long hours. I think their shift is 12 hours and they signified that they could not go on forever.

MR. L. SHERMAN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. But, is it standard practice that hospitals can adjust those staffing allowances arbitrarily, without conveying that information to the Commission and, therefore, to the Minister?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: No, Mr. Speaker, it is not something that the Commission might be informed immediately, but it is something that the Standards Officer should know, and that information should go to the Standards Officer and we are reviewing the policy now to see if that situation can be improved. But, again, I say that some of the responsibility has to stay with the board, to start with, the community, and certainly with the medical officer of the hospital, and this is one of the reasons why we are also asking the College to look into the situation.

MR. L. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise the House whether the Commission, in the investigation, is checking with other northern hospitals, notably, The Pas, Thompson and Churchill, to ensure that there are not periods of the day or night in which their Intensive Care units, or critical program areas, are understaffed?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, if the member is talking about this special inquiry, no, this special inquiry is dealing only with the Flin Flon issue.

MR. L. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister assure the House that, learning from the experience in Flin Flon, the Commission will check with other northern hospitals to ensure that that kind of flaw is not occurring in their staffing patterns?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be premature to make a statement at this time. Of course, we've learned by the problems that we have; I hope everybody else does also. This is something that there will be some recommendation from the Commission, no doubt, and I will announce them at that time.

MR. L. SHERMAN: A final supplementary at this juncture, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has reported on the preliminary, or interim, review undertaken by the Commission with respect to this problem, and has advised the House that he has accepted Commission recommendations, which include a full review of staffing patterns at Flin Flon. Will the Minister undertake to report to the House as to the results of that full review?

MR. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I will be very pleased to do that. If it's during the Estimates we can discuss in the Estimates. If not, I could make a statement in the House.

Emergency Measures Organization - guidelines

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Speaker, on March 14th, I was asked a question by the Member for Brandon West regarding guidelines on evacuation when bomb threats are received, part of which I took as notice. Since a number of members here will be traveling to Brandon to the Keystone Centre tomorrow, I think it is appropriate that I answer that question today.

I can inform the House that the Emergency Measures Organization does not have standardized guidelines on when a building should be evacuated, nor do we think it is practical to do so. Quite properly, the matter of when a building should be evacuated must be determined by local officials in consultation with local police based on the circumstances of the individual case. As far as how evacuations occur, I am sure that all of the honourable members are aware that the standard procedures have been developed in conjunction with the Fire Commissioner's office for all public buildings.

In the particular case referred to by the honourable member, Mr. Speaker, the Brandon City Police were notified. I should point out that they have on staff at least one qualified bomb technician trained at the RCMP Training Centre in Ottawa. After due consideration, the decision was made not to evacuate by the local officials in consultation with . . .

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

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Speaker, seeing as though the Minister has a rather lengthy answer, this side of the House would appreciate a written reply rather than using up the time of question period the way he is.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am just about finished my answer. It was a question that was asked in this House. It is not unduly lengthy.

Although I am not in a position to comment on this specific decision, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the proper method was utilized in arriving at the decision in that particular case and because of the varying circumstances surrounding bomb threats, it would not be feasible to develop a standardized set of guidelines.

The experts are the police and they should be notified immediately as I am advised they were in this particular case.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the First Minister. The First Minister just indicated from his seat in response to the point of order raised by my

colleague the Member for Virden should be written if we expect a written answer. Over a year ago, I placed a written question on the Order Paper which was directed to the First Minister, asking what criteria the First Minister used in making appointments to boards and commissions. I have been assured on many occasions since then that the question would be answered. The government of course continues to make appointments to boards and commissions. I wonder when I might receive an answer from the First Minister to the written question which I placed over a year ago.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, we will provide those answers. I am also going to check back because I believe there are some unreturned written questions from the days that honourable members sat in government and we sat in opposition not responded to.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the First Minister would be wiser to look after those things that are immediately within his area of responsibility.

A MEMBER: If he can.

Constitutional Amendment

MR. B. RANSOM: A question for the Attorney-General, Mr. Speaker. There was some concern following the Constitutional Conference held in Ottawa about two weeks ago about the wording of the constitutional amendment which was to be put forward. I would ask the Attorney-General whether he could advise the House if there does appear to be a difficulty in the wording of that constitutional amendment, or whether there seems to be agreement among all the participants.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: Mr. Speaker, I have been consulting and others have been consulting with other provincial Attorneys-General and with the Minister of Justice. I am satisfied that there was some confusion as to the decision that was taken at the time, in that a proposition was put forward by the Native Council of Canada that was not in fact discussed. I think there was some assumptions made by them as to the status of that proposal, the proposal, which in fact was circulated as the agreed-upon proposal, was the only proposal in writing and it appears to be the one with respect to which provincial Attorneys-General and First Ministers agreed on March 15th. That will be the one that will ultimately - and I think shortly - be introduced in the House.

MR. B. RANSOM: Just a final supplementary then, Mr. Speaker. The Attorney-General has indicated that there might be a motion introduced shortly. Could he give any indication of whether he expects that to be within two weeks, a month, six weeks?

HON. R. PENNER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I expect that amending resolutions will be introduced into the House prior to May 15th.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a question for the Honourable Attorney-General. — (Interjection) — I might write it, but it would take an awful long time to get an answer, so I would like to ask the Attorney-General now.

Committee meetings scheduled

I notice on the Order Paper that there have been notices given of numerous committee meetings for the ensuing six weeks or more. The question I have relates to Bill No. 5, The Surface Rights Act, which has been referred to the Law Amendments Committee and I notice you have two dates, one at 10 o'clock on April 7th and one at 10 o'clock on May 10th to hear from people interested in making representations on the surface rights. My question to the Honourable Attorney-General is since many of the people appearing will be traveling long distances, would the Attorney-General give consideration to hearing further representations on the evening of April 7th at 8 o'clock at night, rather than having the House sit; or on Friday April 8th, when I notice the Agricultural Committee is meeting at the same time here in the House. I wonder if the Attorney-General would give consideration to those people that have to travel long distances and give them a chance to make their full presentation without having been interrupted for a period of six weeks.

HON. R. PENNER: Yes, I thank the Member for Virden for that question. Indeed, it's my expectation that Bill 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 17 and 19, which are substantially technical in nature will invite little, if any, public representation. The main public representation will be with respect to Bill No. 5. Accordingly, Bill No. 5 as it is listed in the Order Paper, will be the first one called at 10 o'clock in the morning on April 7, 1983, precisely for that reason, that is to accommodate out-of-town persons. It is my hope that by the normal hour of adjournment in the forenoon or early afternoon at 12:30, all of those from out of town who wish to be heard will have been heard. If not, I think that the suggestion that the committee consider meeting that evening is one which the Minister responsible for the bill indicates is certainly acceptable to him and it is acceptable to myself as Government House Leader. I think that accommodation can be made.

Workers Compensation Board

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

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board. Could he advise the House if the morale of the staff of the Workers Compensation Board has been improved as a result of the Minister's expending of substantial public funds in order to purchase

memberships at health facilities and spas for employees of the board?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. J. COWAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's an incorrect premise in the member's question, that is, that the Minister, or this department, spent the funds, in fact, that was a decision of the Workers' Compensation Board. The Board of Commissioners approved that allocation and I will certainly check with them to see if, in fact, the morale has improved as a result of that.

However, I do want to indicate that all corporations and businesses and, in fact, whether they be Crown or otherwise, should be looking at improving the physical fitness of their employees and participating in programs, however possible, to ensure that those employees are more fit. I think that we will all find that, not only do we have a better society for that, but at the same time we have increased productivity, reduced time loss due to illness, and that we have a healthier society which places less strains on the Workers' Compensation Board in the long term because people are fit.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister agree with the decision of the Workers' Compensation Board that he appointed, without consultation with labour and business, does he agree with that decision? If not, has he advised them not to expend the employers' funds that are the sole source of funding for that organization in that type of activity in the future?

HON. J. COWAN: Well, I can indicate that I disagree with it and I certainly assume, as a matter of fact I know, that they took considerable time to discuss it and to determine whether or not they felt it was a productive use of their funds, just as many corporations who do likewise take that time to discuss those sorts of programs and consider if they are a productive use of their funds. They made the decision that, in fact, it was a productive use of their funds and, therefore, I'll support that decision, yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Time for Oral Questions having expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY COMMITTEE CHANGE

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. R. PENNER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make an announcement of a committee meeting change. This follows a request by the Opposition House Leader.

The meeting slated for Tuesday, April 26th at 10:00 a.m., which was to have been the first of two, perhaps more, meetings on Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board will, in fact, consider Manitoba Telephone System, and Hydro will be heard, as scheduled, Thursday, April 28th; and again on Tuesday, May 3rd.

HON. S. LYON: You finish it in two days.

HON. R. PENNER: No, you probably won't, but there'll be other times to be found.

The other change which I would like to note is simply that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to meet on May 17th; it should read, will consider the Report on Public Accounts, and the Report of the Provincial Auditor.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Honourable Government House Leader for making that change in timing. I simply would like the record to show that the request had been placed to the Government House Leader before the announcement had been made in the House. I wouldn't want an indication that, because of a request of mine coming after the timing having been announced, that it was necessary to make the change.

HON. R. PENNER: The Member for Turtle Mountain appears to think that he has some kind of ESP or prescience. I know when I received his communication. He may know when he sent it; I know when I received it, and I received it after the announcement was made.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance that, Mr. Speaker, do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty. This is to consider Estimates in the House and in committee.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for River East in the Chair for the Department of Agriculture; and the Honourable Member for Burrows in the Chair for the Department of Government Services.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY - GOVERNMENT SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN, C. Santos: The Committee will please come to order.

The section of the Committee of Supply will be dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Government Services and we shall begin with the opening statement from the Honourable Minister.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to introduce the Estimates of the Department of Government Services on this first occasion for myself and to present them to your Committee for review and approval. Before highlighting some of the more positive and constructive initiatives in the Government Services Estimates I would like to make some brief introductory remarks on the department's role in government.

Government Services is charged with the responsibility of providing a wide range of support services to other government departments and some agencies, boards and commissions. The Government

Services Act is a service agent within government providing departments with support services they need in order to carry out their mandates. Because of this interplay and the responsive nature of Government Services it's Estimates are somewhat contingent upon the intentions and Estimates of other departments. The inflationary costs of procuring supplies and providing needed services, for example, appear disproportionately in the Government Services Estimates. Nevertheless, we have endeavoured to introduce a number of novel and, I believe, innovative cost-containment measures to minimize government spending and achieve real dollar savings and cost avoidance in a number of very important areas.

An overall comment on the department's staff years should first be made to apprise the honourable members of how we have dealt with this very important human resource of the department. In 1982-83 the department had 1209.24 SYs, and this was after the transfer to the Cultural Affairs of the Queen's Printer and the Manitoba Gazette, 68 SYs, and the Word Processing Centre and Operations to Finance 8.26 SYs.

In the new fiscal year a greater emphasis will be placed on long-term project planning with the establishment of a new Planning Branch in the Project Services Division of the department. This will result in the addition of five SYs. There will also be some increase in janitorial staff, eight SYs, as a result of conversion to in-house janitorial services; and a very small increase, two SYs, in the Central Administration Division to support our systems development.

However, these additional SYs will be more than offset by a reduction in other areas. A staff reduction of 20 SYs has been made in the Construction Services Branch; a reduction of four SYs has been made in the Material Distribution Services Branch; and three term positions in the Project Services Division have been given up; and one term position has been given up in the Purchasing Branch. By not filling some existing vacancies and some redeployment of existing staff the department will achieve a net reduction of 12 SYs overall.

As I mentioned in my Budget speech, my department's Energy Management and Technical Services Branch has been applying numerous, innovative, and proven energy conservation techniques to reduce energy consumption in the operation of government buildings. Relative to the 1979-80 base year, a 20 percent to 25 percent reduction in energy consumption has been achieved. This translates to a cost avoidance of over \$3,000 per day which has been achieved without major Capital expenditure. With further application of innovative energy conservation techniques, we expect to achieve a real operating cost avoidance of approximately \$1.5 million this year and project a cost avoidance of \$1.8 million in 1983-84.

On the same topic of conserving energy in government buildings, I would like to reiterate that the introduction of daytime cleaning of government buildings has, not only improved staff morale considerably, but also significantly reduces energy costs by limiting the amount of time lighting and ventilation are required, and has a significant effect on energy consumption.

Another area marked for conserving energy and, thereby containing costs, has been the government's

vehicle fleet. This government has stepped up the downsizing of its vehicle fleet, begun by the previous government, to the point where 93 percent of all sedans will be compact, or sub-compact, models in the coming fiscal year. Greater emphasis is being placed on sub-compacts and no full-sized sedans are being authorized. The lower purchase price, greater fuel efficiency, and reduced maintenance costs of compact and sub-compact cars, makes them more economical than larger sedans and good economic sense when costs are being contained.

A new policy, the replacement of executive driven sedans with compact models, will increase the proportion of compacts in the fleet and result in further government savings. With regard to vehicle repair and maintenance costs, a more consistent replacement program maintained over the last couple of years has resulted in a reduction in the incidence of repairs. This year our estimate of repair costs has been reduced by \$733,000.00. We are continuing to develop ways of cutting costs attributed to the government fleet.

I also mentioned in my Budget speech that postal services in the department will be bundling mail in an effort to reduce postage costs and encourage greater utilization of inter-departmental mail delivery, rather than relying as heavily on Canada Post. These, and other measures, will serve to contain our costs, assuming no substantial increase in volumes of mail. To reduce the province's postal costs the department has put forward several recommendations to all departments; it was suggested, for example, that departments disseminate Civil Service Bulletins to employees at their work station, rather than mail the bulletins to their home address. The recommendation was put forward, as well, that all pay cheques be delivered to employees at their work station, rather than to their bank.

In addition, acting upon our department's advice, the Department of Agriculture will be reducing the frequency of mailing certain publications. However, despite these efforts, the Canada Post Corporation's recent changes in class specifications, regulations, and in postage rates will result in a substantial increase, 13 percent, in postage expenditures during the 1983-84 fiscal year.

The department has been involved in several new initiatives in the past year; one which will come to fruition during the new fiscal year is the city-wide Centrex System. Centrex is a custom designed telephone system for the government that would allow incoming calls to reach a user without switchboard assistance. The Centrex System will offer a number of advantages over the present telecommunication system, including direct in-dial, total transferability, dial access to in- and out-of-province WATS, an accurate direct departmental billings for rental of services. The system will also allow for integration of electronic mail communications for the transmittal of data and for word processing facilities. Greater accessibility of government offices to WATS, as a result of Centrex, will result in decreased usage of direct distance dialing, and a net saving to the government of between 15 percent and 30 percent for overall long-distance telephone costs. The cutover to Centrex will be completed in June, 1983. While extolling the advantages of Centrex to the government, I might add that with the increased flexibility of this system, the public will now have greater telephone accessibility

to the government. Calls will be transferable to any office throughout Winnipeg and the Citizen's Inquiry Service will be able to integrate and extend local or long distance calls into the Government of Manitoba or Government of Canada network. The in-WATTS is also available for the public to call their MLA in Winnipeg free of charge.

The Department of Government Services recognized the importance of planning in every facet of its operation. Planning is essential in meeting the challenges of difficult economic times and facilitates the complex rationalization and repriorization of programs and resources necessary for contemporary government. As you review my department's Estimates, you will see evidence of numerous planning initiatives. One such initiative is the formation of the new Planning Branch which I referred to earlier, in our Projects Services Division. It will evaluate the functional stability of existing and proposed premises, define the immediate and long-term accommodation requirements of client departments and assess the benefits of leasing versus building options.

There is also a great deal of systems planning and implementation taking place within the departments in the areas of materials and purchasing, and others that I'm sure we will have an opportunity to discuss later.

Mr. Chairman, there are many other areas I could highlight at this time, however I feel that this introduction is lengthy enough. Let me just say that I look forward to discussions with my honourable colleagues and commend the Estimates of the Department of Government Services to the honourable members for their consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The Chair now wishes to call upon the leading opposition critic, the Member for Virden, to present his customary reply, if he so wishes.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. One of the things I think that, first of all, we have to say to the Minister is that we appreciate the efforts that are being made to continue the program that was brought forward by the previous government in trying to conserve energy in this province.

I think it's fair that we should ask the Minister now so that he will have the opportunity to provide us with the actual details because this is the time when we do get the opportunity, once a year, to examine in detail the various programs that are put in place. I would like to ask the Minister now so that he has lots of time to prepare the information for us, if he would give us a list of all the buildings that are under his jurisdiction; the cost of the energy consumption in those buildings, whether it be gas, oil or electric; the buildings that are leased, whether the government supplies the energy for that or whether it is supplied by the person that leases the building - all of that information so that we can look at the actual figures ourselves and see where the energy savings are.

He is the one who has made the statement that there is a \$1.5 million energy saving in the current year and projected \$1.8 million in the coming year. We would like him to show us, item-by-item, where that saving has occurred and how it has occurred, so I give him

advance warning now that we will be expecting that information as we go through the Estimates and come up with the various items under the Estimates as printed.

The second thing that I would like to ask of the Minister at the present time is, we have noticed a change has occurred in the physical appearance of the Legislative Assembly, where there were some changes made in that building, the Chamber, I don't believe that there was any authorization in the Estimates of last year for it. I would like to know where the authority for those changes came; whether it was by Order-in-Council or how those changes came about. During the course of the Estimates, the Minister can expect to receive some questions regarding those changes.

Another area that does cause a little bit of concern, we notice that under the present Budget there is about a \$200 million Job Creation Program and a major portion of that is in Capital construction projects. Yet, we notice there is a 20 staff-man-year reduction in the staff of his department with respect to construction. So I would presume from that that probably most of the work that will be done in major construction will be done under a tender basis and his department will not be involved to any significant extent. Whether it be done by the province or by the Federal Government or on a cost-sharing basis, we will find out as time goes on.

Other than the telephone system, I do say that we welcome the change to the Centrex System that again it was a change that was approved by the previous administration. I think most MLAs will agree that the present WATTS system in here is far from being satisfactory. MLAs have a great deal of difficulty with long distance using the 151 system; most of the time the service is busy and you have great difficulty getting long-distance telephone calls through, so any changes as it affects this building in particular would be most welcome.

Other than that, I think that I would be quite willing to allow further discussion, although the Honourable Member for Pembina may have a few things he would like to address.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At this point in time, the Chair wishes to invite the administrative staff of the department. Now we are going to Item 1.(b)(1).

The Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: I had suggested that in the reply to the Minister's statement, I only addressed a few points and I believe the Honourable Member for Pembina wanted to add to those. We do split our jurisdictions up in that respect.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the pleasure of the Committee? Usually it is customary for only one leading critic.

The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, I think it has been customary that on the Minister's opening remarks, one might offer comment as a member of the committee and a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the Committee wish to go on with the Item 1.(b)(1) or to hear these comments which

are usually after we consider the Minister's Salary - at the end?

The Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. A. MACKLING: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm not particularly familiar with the change, but presumably the Rules Committee thought it appropriate that staff - I was surprised that staff weren't present from the outset - but there has been a change and I gather that the change is that the Minister makes an opening statement and then the opposition parties, through the named critic, gives a reply and both of those things are relatively short. Then you get to the review, detailed, where it's pretty wide open and I think that if you depart from that then you're going to get maybe six statements and you'll get some other member perhaps, wanting to make a further contribution. I think we should try and confine it that way. I'm sure that after, on the first item, the Member for Pembina can get right in there. I would think that the rules should be followed - I'm not saying strictly - in the manner that they're designed to accomplish; a formal statement, a formal reply, then you get right into it. I don't think we should depart from that because if we do, where are we going to end up. And I'm not sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair wants to direct a question to the leading opposition critic. Is he yielding his role as opposition critic to the Member for Pembina?

MR. H. GRAHAM: Yes, for the completion of this statement.

MR. D. ORCHARD: If I might help you out of a - not a tough spot - it's just that the tradition, I think, has been in the introduction of Estimates that the Minister make an introductory statement which is replied to by not only the opposition critic, but by anyone else who might have an interest in the department.

A MEMBER: Not true, not true. I'm telling you, you're wrong.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Why don't you talk to the mike and be recognized by the Chair, then?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: And the staff isn't there for the introductory remarks. Then when we wind off, the last item we pass, of course, is the Minister's Salary, once again, without staff being there and it's a debate which involves any and all Members of the Legislature on the Minister's Salary.

I think what is being suggested here is that if we follow the letter of the law, only one person could reply at the passing of the Minister's Salary at the end of the Estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May the Chair offer an explanation? The usual procedure is for the Minister to make an opening statement and then the sole prerogative, as is customary, with the leading opposition critic to make a reply. After the reply, we will invite the administrative staff and then we begin the items, except the Minister's

Salary. The last item to be considered is the Minister's Salary. At that point in time, any and whatever members of the committee can make all kinds of comments and remarks that they may wish, but the procedure is to confine the reply to a single leading opposition critic.

The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, I've already wasted more time than I intended to take in my remarks, so why don't you call in the staff and then we can get on with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good point. The Chair wishes to invite the administrative staff of the Department of Government Services so that we can proceed with the business of this committee.

The first item that we shall consider is Item 1.(b)(1) because it is also customary to defer the first item, relating to the Minister's Salary.

The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister has indicated a 20 percent saving that has been referred to by my colleague, the MLA for Virden, on energy consumption costs over the past short while. I understand that he used 1979 as the base year. I wonder if the Minister might provide information in addition to that requested by my colleague. Is 1979 as the base year, the calendar year 1979 or the fiscal year 1979? Could the Minister, since he's indicating a 20 percent cost saving, and I assume that's over 1982, on the same, whether it's calendar or fiscal year, would the Minister provide for us the mean temperatures, by month, for the base year 1979 and the year in which he is indicating the 20 percent saving, and also the maximum and minimum temperatures experienced during each of those months for which he is going to provide the mean temperature? That will allow a comparison of climatic conditions to be included in his Energy Cost Saving Program

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that we can have that information for the honourable member. The mean temperatures for each of those years, is that what you're asking for, each month as well? I can advise the honourable member as well that we're dealing with the fiscal year in the references that I made.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, let's just make sure we're talking the same thing. We're talking the fiscal year 1979. Is that the one that ended March 31, 1979 or began April 1, 1979 and what is the comparable year for which he is claiming his 20 percent saving? Whatever the answer is, I would request, when he provides the information that he provide the mean temperature by month for the two fiscal years and the maximum and minimum temperatures by month for those same years.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, we're dealing with the fiscal 1979-80 which starts April 1st of 1979 and ends on March 31, 1980 and comparing that to the

fiscal year 1982-83 which began April 1, 1982 and ends at the end of March, 1983. Yes, we can get that information. As well, Mr. Chairman, the appropriate time to deal with it at that time would be when we're dealing with Physical Plant, which deals with the Energy Program under Field Services (b).

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(b)(1). The Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, when you're dealing with the Executive Administration I would like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of this side of the House to the Deputy Minister of Government Services who, I understand, will be shortly taking another position. It's our belief that he has served the Department of Government Services well and we want to take this opportunity to formally recognize those services and wish him well in his new job when he takes that position.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister provide us with a rationale for the salary increase of \$180,000 to \$231,700, and I suppose the first and most obvious question would be, is that salary increase based on a fixed number of staff, a comparable staff complement for each year. If so, could the Minister provide details of the breakout of that increase, it's in the neighbourhood of 25 percent, I believe.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, with your indulgence. First of all, in answering that specific question it does represent the same number of staff. However, the members will notice, Mr. Chairman, that in almost all cases there is significant increase in the salary component, and in some cases it involves different numbers of staff, but in most cases it can be attributed to a number of other reasons and I would like, at this time, to perhaps give some breakdown of how those salary increases have come about.

If I could just take time to go through the overall department salary figures for last year and then compare it to this year, and then we can deal with the individual ones, if I could. The overall estimates shown in the 1982-83 Estimates was \$24,519,000 for Salaries; there was a transfer out during the 1982-83 year to the Department of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources - the Manitoba Gazette, the Queen's Printer and so on - of \$1,197,000; there was also a transfer out to the Department of Finance - Word Processing Branch - \$174,000, so that the total transfer to other departments was \$1,372,000 which results in last year's Salary component being \$23,146,000.00. Added to that is a lump sum allocation that was made in the Budget last year by the Department of Finance, it was not in our Budget, but it was a lump sum for Salary increases of \$1,330,000 which represented slightly over half of the required amount for Salaries, so the total adjusted vote for 1982-83, shown in the 1983-84 Estimates, is \$24,477,000.00.

This year, in 1983-84, the Estimates provide for \$29,938,000, and I will compare the two figures.

MR. D. ORCHARD: You used '83-84 for \$25,447,000.00?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I said that was the amount shown in the 1983-84 Estimates book for 1982-83. On the

left-hand side of the page, if you add up all the salary components in your Estimates book, you would get the figure \$24,477,000.00. I was trying to show how that was arrived at. If we were just to compare last year's Estimates you wouldn't get that; you only get that after taking the transfers to other departments and so I referred to that.

Now, I will get down to the information that the honourable member, perhaps, was asking for specifically. In 1983-84 the Estimates provide for a total of \$29,938 million for salaries. This is an increase of \$5,460,000 or a 22 percent overall. This is made up of a number of factors. First of all, the remaining 46 percent, slightly less than half of the base for last year, where there was not quite a sufficient amount allocated in the lump sum Budget last year, so the base had to be brought up, that was \$1,049,000 of that \$5 million, or 19 percent of it. As well, the total salary increase at 9.5 percent that we allowed was \$2,425,000, so that's 44 percent of it. The additional 27th pay period accounts \$1,075,000, or 20 percent of the increase, and merit increases and reclassifications, and so on, account for another 17 percent or \$911,000, that adds up to your \$5,460,000 increase over last year.

So it's attributable to, first of all, last year's base; contributing to that the total salary increase, the 27th pay period, and the merit increase and reclassification.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, the figure under the Reconciliation Statement of \$1,330,500.00. Does that represent the 54 percent of the overall increase that the Minister referred to, or the 46 percent of the overall increase?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That represents the 54 percent that was allowed in last year's lump sum, but not in our Estimates, in the Department of Finance.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Is the Minister saying that the column of figures on the left-hand side of each page for year ending March 31, 1983 - let's use \$180,000 which we are discussing right now - is adjusted by \$1.335 million, which only represents 54 percent of the raise given that year, and to go from the \$180,000 on the left-hand side to \$231,700 on the right-hand side for this particular category, what you have done is factored in the balance of last year's raise which you attribute to be 46 percent of the total? The 9.5 percent total salary increase for this fiscal year, plus the 27th pay period for this fiscal year, plus any and all merit and reclassification increases for this fiscal year.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that sounds correct to me.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then we have in the difference between the left-hand column and the right-hand column the entire raise for the fiscal year 1983-84 which was recently negotiated.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, this is the original settlement, 9.5 percent was allowed for that figure for 1983-84, that's the amount we're budgeting.

MR. D. OF.CHARD: Then to make my question maybe clear to the Minister, is the figure for the salary increase

for fiscal year 1983-84 the original contract salary negotiation that was agreed to some year-and-a-half ago or 15 months ago, or does that increase represent the renegotiated increase?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, the figures that are in the book since it was drafted long before the renegotiations took place, do not reflect the latest negotiation. They reflect the best estimate of the costs under the previous agreement that was budgeted at 9.5 percent.

MR. D. ORCHARD: One can assume then, since the government has claimed a saving in salary by the renegotiation, that all of the Salaries in the right-hand column for fiscal year ending March 31, 1984 are overstated?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That would be correct.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Well, Mr. Chairman, there are one or two questions yet. I think the honourable member touched on some of them. There was then a transfer from last year to this year, of 46 percent. Is that correct?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: There was a transfer of 46 percent from this year to last year.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Well, 54 percent was accounted for. There's 46 percent that was not accounted for; a transfer from last year to this year. Is that right?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Of the increase.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That's right. The amount budgeted last year was only 54 percent of the requirements for the increase last year.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Does this meet with all the requirements of The Financial Administration Act, that you can transfer from one fiscal year to the other without getting additional authority?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, it was my understanding that it was necessary to make up that difference for this year in budgeting for this year's salary, that the base had to be brought up to the actual requirements for the previous year. But that does not mean that money from this year was actually transferred back for last year to be spent - obviously it's been spent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: The Minister indicated that the money has already been spent. Does that mean that the deficit projections made by the Minister of Finance are also understated, because the left-hand column states a salary position which is some 46 percent below

what was actually spent for that fiscal year? Will the deficit be likewise understated by that amount?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, obviously the amount spent last year would have had to be accounted for through Special Warrant. The amount this year is a reconciliation to bring that base up the amount required that was not included in the Estimates last year. We have to have the proper base before we apply the increase this year.

The excess amount that was required for Salaries in the previous year was paid out, as we said, and obviously had to be handled through Special Warrant.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Well, if that is the explanation the Minister is using, then why did not those Special Warrant figures show up in the total for Salaries in the left-hand column for year ending March 31, 1983? When you prepared the Estimates, surely you knew at that time what your salary costs were going to be and what the Special Warrants were.

It seems to me that the Minister's explanation may be correct, but it wouldn't avoid the fact that the deficit would be understated, because you have carried forward a full 46 percent of last year's salary increase into this year's detailed Estimates of expenditure.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, 46 percent was required to bring the base up to the actual expenditures, so that we then could then apply this year's increase to that figure.

As far as the matter of whether it should have been applied or should not have been applied to the figures on the left-hand side of the page in your Estimates book, I would submit it would have to be addressed by the Minister of Finance.

MR. D. ORCHARD: That may well be, but we're not dealing with the Minister of Finance's Estimates right now, we're dealing with the Minister of Government Services. It would appear as if, in the presentation of his Estimates, that we are not comparing apples and apples when we look at the Salaries; that, in fact, the Minister has indicated that despite the fact he wants to bring his base year up, he is asking us for approval of funds on the right-hand column for year ending March 31, 1984, some 46 percent of Salaries already expended completely in another two days.

We're being asked to give approval to money that's already been spent. I submit that when the Estimates were drawn up, surely the Minister and his staff were aware of what the contract settlement was for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1983, and by only including 54 percent of that via the reconciliation statement, the purpose of which is to bring forward any salary increases and make them known in the statement of the Estimates of Expenditure for the previous fiscal year, has given us a situation where last year's deficit would be understated, for instance, in the Department of Government Services by some \$1.35 million and probably by a similar amount in every other department. That means that the deficit for the fiscal ending in two days will be understated. Not only that, but it will give the government an excuse for next year when the deficit is higher than projected, to say well, we had to roll in 54 percent of last year's Salaries.

As was said, I think, by the Minister last night, you can't have it both ways. I suggest the Minister is trying to have it both ways in the presentation of his Estimates here.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, we've indicated quite clearly that this is the amount that is required for this year and we are dealing with this year's Estimates. The amount of money in the right-hand column is the amount required for Salaries, to meet salary increases this year.

In terms of whether the amount on the left-hand side as shown is correct or not correct and reflects any special warranting that took place during the previous fiscal year, or the one that's just ending at this time, would be something that I'd be prepared to get additional information on and bring back to the committee.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, the Minister has just indicated something that's not factual. He has indicated that the column on the right-hand side that we're being asked to approve for this year, contains the increases in salary for this year.

Five minutes ago, he told us that some 46 percent of the last year's raise is included in the right-hand column for fiscal year ending March 31, 1984. That isn't to be expended this year; that's already been spent. So the Minister is either incorrect in his last statement or in his statement approximately five minutes ago. Would the Minister care to clarify which statement is correct?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, the correct statement is that the figure on the right hand side reflects the corrected base amount for last year's figure as well as the projected budgeted increase for this year.

MR. D. ORCHARD: So then to make it perfectly clear, the right hand figure for a fiscal year ending March 31, 1984, contains part of the salary increase from last year, which is already spent.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That is not my understanding, Mr. Chairman. I think I said that it has brought the base up to the proper amount for this year and then we've added the increase on top of that.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Well, then, is the Minister telling us that the Salaries in the left hand column, in this case \$180,000, represents the entire salaries paid out in fiscal year 1982-83?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I believe that there are additional costs for Salaries in the previous year, as I indicated earlier, and those would have had to have been covered by Special Warrant, and what time that was done, I'm not certain. I don't know if that would have been done before these Estimates were drawn up.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Where would the Minister care to hazard a guess, those extra dollars for Salaries from fiscal year ending March 31, 1983, would appear in his Estimates.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, we're not dealing with last year's figures; we're dealing with this year's figures, and I've just informed the honourable member that the \$231,000 for Salaries in this particular appropriation is the amount that is required to pay for this year's Salaries and bring the base up to the proper amount.

MR. D. ORCHARD: And in bringing the base up to the proper amount, as the Minister is indicating is contained in the right hand column, is there a carry over of Salary allocation from last year's raise that does not appear in the left hand column?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, and I think I've explained it several times, if it's not clear to the honourable member, I will, as I said, find out exactly what is in that \$180,000 on the left hand side, if it includes the total Salaries for last year. My belief, as I stated earlier, my information is that it did not include the total amount that was required for Salaries last year and the amount that was allocated last year was about 54 percent of the required amount. Therefore, there would have to be approximately slightly over \$1 million required that had to be made up in last year's Estimates for Salaries. That was obviously done. It does not mean that it's shown in the figures on the left hand side, but that was obviously done. That's my understanding at this time.

The right hand figures will show that full increase for last year because this money has to be spent this year and it's a cumulative amount that's needed for Salaries. Therefore, the right hand side will reflect the full increase for last year, and that will form the base, and then there will be the increase that is required for this year which we've said we have budgeted 9.5 percent. So that would make up the \$231,000.00. I think that is very clear.

MR. D. ORCHARD: I'll just refresh the Minister's memory to a piece of paper he was reading from a few minutes ago where he indicated that the overall increase of 22 percent was made up of four areas; one being the remaining 46 percent of last year's Salary allocation; the 9.5 percent total Salary increase from this year; the 27th pay period in merit increases; and the Minister indicated when I put that on the record some 10 minutes ago that that was correct. Now the Minister is saying that isn't correct, that the 46 percent from last year is not part of it. The Minister must clarify this at his earliest convenience.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would say that the member is taking a different interpretation of what I said. In the increase for this year, the 46 percent is required to bring that base up to the required amount. So that's why we refer to that and require it in Expenditures for this year. It does not mean that was spent for last year's Salaries. It's simply to bring last year's base up to the requirement as of the end of March this year so that we can then apply the correct factor, the 9.5 percent, to this next year's salary increase. So it is, for this fiscal year '83-84, part of the requirements but it is not money that is spent in '82-83 that we're now voting for, for last year's Salary.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Would the Minister just provide further clarification for that next time we meet?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, if there is further clarification and if I have in any way not made it clear, then I certainly would provide more information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(b)(1) - the Member for Virден.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. In an effort to try and assist the Minister, perhaps we should go back and come at it from a different direction.

The Minister has indicated a total salary requirement of \$29,938,000, I believe, for this coming fiscal year and those figures were the best estimate that he could provide when these Estimates were printed, and he has indicated that occurred before the \$10 million saving was renegotiated with the Civil Service. He has indicated that figure is an inflated figure.

Perhaps the Minister could have information for us when next we meet, giving us the total amount that the figure \$29,938,000 is overinflated, how much it is overinflated as a result of the Civil Service \$10 million saving in the renegotiation. It would be useful for us to know exactly how much there is extra in the Estimates here, just relating to Salaries, so that the Estimates may be corrected by that amount.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I understand the honourable member is asking then for the revised figures that would take into account the requirements after the renegotiated increase and the difference between that and the amount that was budgeted originally.

MR. H. GRAHAM: That's right. The \$29,938,000.00.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, we will endeavour to have that information as soon as possible, as soon as the amount that is to be encumbered from our Budget is indicated to us in Government Services. We have not received that information at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The pleasure of the Committee as to 1.(b)(1)?
Mr. Minister.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I just want to add that the amount that is encumbered then would go towards the contribution of the MGEA towards the Jobs Fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(b)(1) - the Member for Virден.

MR. H. GRAHAM: You have called 1.(b)(1). Would you call 1.(b)(2) please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(b)(1)—pass.
1.(b)(2) - the Member for Virден.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister indicate, under Other Expenditures, what this \$56 million would entail?

MR. D. ORCHARD: Don't give him more money than he wants.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, that is \$56,000 and it is down, as the members can see, by \$2,000 from

last year. Included in that is the Health and Education levy that was found from within that expenditure and it had to be found from within in that appropriation, so that is why it has been reduced by the amount of the Health and Education levy. As well, it includes all materials and furniture and other requirements for the running of an office.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, is the Minister indicating that part of the \$56,000 of Other Expenditures includes the 1.5 percent payroll tax?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Could the honourable member please repeat that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Pembina, please repeat your question.

MR. D. ORCHARD: I certainly will, Mr. Chairman. Did the Minister indicate that the 1.5 percent payroll tax is part of the \$56,000 Other Expenditures?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I said the health levy has been provided for within that figure. I might also mention that part of that \$56,000 is the travel budget for the department which has been consolidated in that figure and has been reduced significantly over last year as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(b)(2)—pass; 1.(c)(1).
The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Could the Minister give us the same-style breakdown he did as to how the Salaries have increased from \$497,400 left-hand column to the \$622,500 in the right-hand column?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to determine whether there are any staff changes in terms of the numbers. The numbers are consistent, we are referring to the same number of SMYs in both cases, so basically the difference between the two figures would reflect the explanation that I gave earlier on the overall figures. Again, I was dealing with the amount that was required to bring the base up from last year for the previous year, for last year's salary settlement to be reflected in this year's base, as well as the 9.5 percent settlement, as well as the 27th pay period and merit increases and reclassifications.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Does the Minister have dollar breakdowns on those four items?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I don't have the dollar breakdowns on those figures for this particular appropriation at this time, but I can certainly get that information, if the honourable member would like it.

MR. D. ORCHARD: That would be useful for after supper, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(c)(1)—pass; 1.(c)(2)—pass; 1.(d)(1)—pass; 1.(d)(2)—pass; 1.(e)(1).
The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, would the Minister indicate what he views the role of EMO to be?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, one of the major roles that I see, Emergency Measures Organization involvement of course is in assisting Municipal Governments with the overall planning for emergencies. Certainly that has been expanding and taking place during the last period that I have been Minister responsible for the Emergency Measures.

As well, this is carried out through municipal advisors working with the municipalities in different regions of the province in putting together emergency plans for those municipalities. In the event that emergency should occur, the local governments are then prepared for those emergencies, are aware of what kinds of emergencies could occur and what kind of resources they have available to them when emergencies should occur. There are a number of emergency plans that have been developed. I think that was one of the major roles, as I said, to make municipalities more aware of their role in emergencies. Emergencies are best dealt with, I believe, at the local level wherever possible, but wherever provincial input is needed, certainly Emergency Measures has to be able to provide that as well. That is another role that they are certainly involved with and I feel is necessary.

Right now, during the time when we're not dealing with specific emergencies, the role of Emergency Measures is to work with municipalities through seminars, through emergency planning, planning meetings that they have to set up emergency plans in the various areas.

Of course, they have to as well, co-ordinate the overall response when an emergency should occur, an emergency that is significant, results in a particular significant disaster, then Emergency Measures may be called on to co-ordinate the response and that is certainly done when necessary.

MR. D. ORCHARD: What does the Minister deem as an emergency? What strikes him as an emergency for which EMO would play this assistance and co-ordination role?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Certainly there could be a broad range of emergencies; some may be localized and some could affect large areas of the province. Floods certainly could be emergencies; forest-fire situations could be emergencies that would be EMO involvement; chemical spills could involve EMO involvement depending on the nature and the kind of spill and how it affects the environment and so on. There are various others I imagine, that would be as limited only as one's imagination, insofar as explosions and so on; that could be an emergency situation where Emergency Measures has to get involved.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Would ice storms be considered an emergency?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, ice storms could certainly be considered an emergency, the degree of which would depend on the way that it affects services and so on.

MR. D. ORCHARD: The Minister says, could be classified as an emergency. Under what circumstances would the Minister believe that an ice storm would constitute an emergency and require the services of EMO?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I would consider it an emergency when the designated agencies and departments could not deal with it. If the Municipal Government had an emergency plan and then working with the provincial departments that are assigned that work best in those areas such as Highways for dealing with road problems and Manitoba Hydro for dealing with electrical problems and so on - when they cannot meet the needs within a reasonable time and are not reacting to the situation as it emerges and of course this sometimes develops over a period of time. Emergencies develop over a period of time; they are not necessarily instant emergencies. Monitoring has to take place at the time that it is felt or requested certainly from the agencies that they can't handle the emergency themselves, then Emergency Measures might be involved.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Well, the Minister is artfully giving answers here. But I would just like to ask him, what is the reasonable time within which agencies dealing with this problem should meet the needs of their customers, be it Manitoba Hydro, be it the Highways Department. What is a reasonable time in the Minister's estimation?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, that would depend, again, on the situation that is there and the kind of hardships that it's causing to individuals who are feeling the effects of the particular "emergency", as we could call it. Certainly if there is a situation where there is danger to life and so on and the Hydro cannot react to provide electrical power in time then there could be an emergency and in that case Emergency Measures would be contacted to help with evacuation, should that be necessary and that kind of thing to co-ordinate the evacuation procedures if they are required, such as, if there was a senior citizens' home or a hospital which lost their backup electrical supply during something like that, if the primary power was cut off and their backup supply was not working, certainly, there would need to be involvement in terms of moving people to a safe place and this is where emergency measures may be involved. In the actual carrying out of repairs, and so on, emergency measures would not undertake that as a matter of course.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Would the Minister consider it an emergency if someone was without electrical power for seven days?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, that would certainly depend on the situation. I guess we can go back to the pioneer days and know that people were without electrical power for long periods of time, as a matter of fact they never had it. In the winter, of course, the dangers involved or the emergency involved with lack of power is felt in a different way. Certainly there is, perhaps, lack of heat but many people have other backup ways of heating their homes and also looking

after their operations particularly on farms. Some farms would need electrical power for their operations. In many cases where it is crucial that they require electrical power they would certainly want to provide backup power so that they could deal with those emergencies when they occur. I believe many operators do that, they can look forward and see where they might encounter emergencies and therefore take steps to alleviate the effects it would have on them when those emergencies occurred. So I would find that a poultry farmer, for example, who might need heat to operate pumps or a dairy farmer or beef producer that needs power to operate water supply facilities would, obviously, want to take some backup steps to make sure that he had other ways of getting that water to his livestock when and if an emergency should occur.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Can I take it that the Minister doesn't consider a customer of Manitoba Hydro being without power for seven days is not an emergency?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I said at the very beginning that it would depend on the situation.

MR. D. ORCHARD: The situation is that the customer is without electricity for seven days. Is it or is it not an emergency?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, the interpretation of an emergency would certainly be different from the individual who is involved and how ingenious he is in meeting his needs without calling on external help. Certainly though the Manitoba Hydro would be advised that in their eyes this is an emergency, they must get on this as soon as possible. But I don't see necessarily unless there is a danger to life or so on that emergency measures would be involved in that.

MR. D. ORCHARD: What the Minister is telling us is that his interpretation of an emergency doesn't include the fact that customers with residences to heat with electricity, with, I suppose, water systems to run with electricity to prevent from freezing up, being without power for seven days is not an emergency in his eyes or the government's eyes.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I wouldn't attach myself to those words that the honourable member has said. It does not mean that I, as an individual or as a Minister, would be uncaring and would not be concerned about an individual who is without power for seven days. I would certainly be concerned but the member is asking for my opinion in my role as Minister responsible for Emergency Measures Organization and how they would react in that situation. I say that they would probably not get involved in that kind of a situation, first of all, there are agencies to deal with that situation and when emergency plans are set up in the rural areas the people who are affected would go to their local authorities, go to their neighbours for help and so on, and would assist each other until such time as the authorities were able to get the power back on. I think that's probably what happened in the particular cases that the honourable member may be referring to.

Perhaps the honourable member might want to suggest the role that Emergency Measures should be, in his eyes, taking in a situation where a person is without power for seven days.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, the Minister - and once again we have this difficulty of knowing when Ministers are speaking as individuals or for the government. I'd just like to have the Minister tell me, as the Minister speaking for the Government Manitoba, as to whether he considers a person, a farmer, being without power for seven days with the agency, Manitoba Hydro, making every available effort to get the power back on but faced with a rather massive problem is unable to do so for seven days, that farmer is without power for seven days. I want the Minister to tell me what his position, not as an individual, but as a Minister of the Government of Manitoba, hence the Government of Manitoba's position, on whether that constitutes an emergency?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: From the point of view, Mr. Chairman, of the Emergency Measures Organization because that's what we're dealing with here, it certainly isn't a danger to life in that particular situation at least it hasn't been brought to my attention that there ever was a danger of loss of life. As I said, the people in those situations would call upon various resources be it their neighbours, various agencies, local officials and so on, for assistance. It would depend on how that particular individual was coping with the situation. If there was a danger to life and there had to be evacuation certainly Emergency Measures might be involved in making sure that the proper authorities were notified to make sure the evacuation took place, but that would depend on the situation. So, in terms of my position as Minister responsible for Emergency Measures Organization, the involvement that would be necessary in that case, I would say that from that point of view, the situation that he is describing would not be classed as a mass emergency, an emergency situation that there is a loss of life imminent or maybe a danger of loss of life. In terms of whether it is an unfortunate situation and whether the people deserve help and so on, certainly, I would sympathize with the situation. I've been in that situation myself in cases as a child and I'm not saying it's pleasant, but it is something that people learn to cope with in the situation. They can't always rely on outside help for every need that they may have during some of these situations. Sometimes, the best help they can get is very close to them and from friends and neighbours and within their own family. If they're able to cope, that is the best way to do it until such time as these services are turned back on again.

MR. D. ORCHARD: So, if I might, and if the Minister - if I'm interpreting his remarks correctly - is it fair to assume from what the Minister has said, that in his estimation - he's speaking on behalf of the government - that Emergency Measures Organization and the government has no role in a circumstance where a person's hydro-electric power service is cut off for seven consecutive days?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, is the honourable member speaking about a widespread seven-day cutoff, or one individual? I'd like some clarification on that.

MR. D. ORCHARD: I'm asking the Minister, he has indicated that there is no emergency situation that would involve EMO when power service is cut off for seven days to residents in Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is not clear whether it is a community or one person.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, when a individual does not have power, does it really matter if it's one, two, three, a whole community? You mean to say that if it's the Town of Dauphin, that EMO gets involved? If it's a farmer in Arthur constituency, EMO doesn't get involved? Where do you set your criterion for determining when EMO responds? That's what I'm trying to find out from this Minister. So far, he hasn't been able to answer it, Mr. Chairman.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member is obviously changing the tone of his question and the emphasis of his question. He was dealing with one individual over the period of time that we were discussing it. I said that it depends on the situation and how it is affecting that individual and the ability to cope under those particular circumstances.

When you're dealing with a whole community cut off for seven days, such as you mentioned, Dauphin - it could be any community in Manitoba, and it certainly would not have anything to do with my feelings towards it, whether it was Dauphin which is in my constituency, or whether it was a farmer who lived in the Honourable Member for Pembina's constituency or a town in his constituency, it would make no difference as to how I would feel about it. I would be concerned.

I would think that if there was a situation where the power was cut off for seven days in a community, that there probably would be a role that emergency measures would be playing, but that would be quite a different situation than what the honourable member was referring to throughout his line of questioning.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Since communities would then receive assistance from EMO, if a community was without power, then what if 20 farmers in a given area were all without power for a prolonged period of time, would that constitute emergency under which EMO would react, and the Minister would deem that EMO should react?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: If there was a role for emergency measures to play, other than to make sure that the proper authorities who had to be notified were notified to deal with providing supplies, or heat, or clothes, or whatever was needed for individuals in that situation, water, if those people were not being notified, and therefore, the services were not getting to the people that were isolated in the situation where they did not have the electrical power at their disposal, then EMO would have to make sure that those proper authorities were notified and would, no doubt, do that. They are always notifying or monitoring the situation.

I'm not saying an across-the-board statement that a town or a village in Manitoba would receive any different attention. Of course, it is easier to react to emergencies when you have a situation where all of

the affected people are in close proximity to each other, and if a local emergency plan is in place and the local officials know where to go and are utilizing that plan, then that would also affect whether EMO had to become more directly involved or not.

MR. D. ORCHARD: So then, an emergency depends on how easy it is to solve it, whether EMO gets involved. Is that what we interpret from the Minister's remarks?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, that is obviously a very important factor.

MR. D. ORCHARD: So that, Mr. Chairman, if it's an easy emergency to solve, EMO will help under this Minister's direction. If it's a difficult one, EMO won't help? That's what he's saying.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, that's not what I said at all. I said it may be taken the opposite. If it's an easy emergency to solve then it probably isn't an emergency. If the local authorities and agencies can obviously react and take care of the situation, then EMO would not have to become directly involved.

If there was a situation where the local authorities and the agencies and government departments were not reacting, and were not able to react, then perhaps EMO would have to be involved.

There's a judgment call in most situations that is made by the co-ordinator of EMO in consultation with the executive director responsible, if it becomes more of an emergency situation, the Deputy Minister and the Minister. Then, it can go onto a Ministerial committee; a committee of Cabinet that would be involved if it was a dire emergency. As I said, emergencies quite often evolve and don't exist just like that. They usually evolve and take time to build up, we're dealing with a fire or flooding conditions for example, and in those cases, EMO is monitoring and reacts when necessary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(a)(1).

The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, we're fast approaching 4:30. I wonder if the Minister would be kind enough to bring back after the supper hour at 8:00 o'clock, a copy of the correspondence that the Premier read out on Tuesday, March 8th.

Also, Mr. Chairman, if I might ask him for a little further information, could the Minister also bring and table for the committee, the correspondence that EMO had with him as to the nature of the requests made of them during the ice storm and the monitoring reports that EMO gave to the Minister as to the situation of the ice storm in southwestern Manitoba.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Certainly, Mr. Chairman, first of all, I'd just like to clarify, is the honourable member asking for the statement made by the Premier in response to questions by the Honourable Member for Pembina and the Honourable Member for Arthur? Is that the response to those questions? Is that the statement that the honourable member's referring to? I'd like to get that clarified.

In terms of the log and the information given to me by EMO, there's no problem. I'd be very pleased to provide that information.

MR. D. ORCHARD: The letter that I'm referring to was used by the First Minister. He made reference to a request by a member opposite, and that is when I asked him certain information. He was volunteering information and it was a letter that he took the liberty to show me after the question period. That's the letter that would be most helpful to be tabled. It was March 8th, incidentally.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If it is a Tuesday, it is March 8th.
Mr. Minister.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Just before we call it 4:30, Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to ask, who is it to and from; who was the correspondence from and who was it to? I'm not exactly clear on what he's talking about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Pembina, please clarify.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, the letter certainly wasn't to me, but your First Minister had a report on the ice storm. I assumed it originated through your office, from EMO. I didn't see to whom it was addressed, or who signed it, I only saw the relevant passage which referred to assistance provided to a member.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, we could very easily then be talking about something that was not a piece of correspondence at all then, just some information.

MR. D. ORCHARD: That may well be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour being 4:30, I am now interrupting the proceedings for Private Members' Hour. The Committee will reconvene at 8 p.m. this evening.

SUPPLY - AGRICULTURE

MR. CHAIRMAN, P. EYLER: Committee come to order. We are considering the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, Item No. 4. Agricultural Development and Marketing Division, (a) Administration—pass?
The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, in the absence of the Honourable Member for Arthur, maybe I've got to raise a couple of questions and ask him if he can give us any idea of the SMYs in this Development and Marketing Division; any changes in staff; possibly the number of contract employees; that type of information would be most helpful.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, it might be the opportune time for me to put on the record certain questions that were raised by the Honourable Member for Arthur dealing with all the staff in term positions. It'll take me a little while to put these names on the record, and to make sure that they are there for the honourable members as to who is where. We may as well deal with this now if it's agreeable. That was taken as notice by myself some time ago.

I'll go through first, positions that been filled since April 1 in 1982. There's the Co-ordinator of Programs and Policies; my Executive Assistant who is located in Arborg - again, that's in Planning and Management. In the Department of Management and Operations Division there's a computer programmer, a position that was filled; Ag. Development and Marketing Division, we have the Chief of the Beef Section position filled, the Dairy Cattle Specialist position, Livestock Section Co-ordinator in Brandon, the position has been filled.

In the Veterinary Pathologist, a clerk position - the Veterinary Pathologist and clerk, and the following ones, are from the Veterinary Services Branch - a medical technologist, laboratory technologist, clerk, clerk-typist, and another clerk-typist in the Veterinary Services Branch.

In the Crown Lands Branch, there's the Eastern Regional Supervisor's position filled, and the Land Representative out of Neepawa position filled; in the Northwest Region, the Regional Engineer in Dauphin position, the Home Economist position in Dauphin, and the Director of the Northwest Region was filled.

In the Southwest Region, the Admin. Secretary in Melita was filled, Regional Engineer in Brandon position was filled, Ag. Rep. in Minnedosa position was filled, Administrative Secretary in Brandon was filled; in the Central Region, Ag Rep at Pilot Mound position, Admin. Secretary at Portage, and Admin. Secretary at Portage; Eastern region, Home Economist at Steinbach, Admin. Secretary in Dugald; Interlake Region, Regional Engineer Arborg, Ag Rep Arborg, Ag Rep Fisher Branch, Home Economist in Arborg.

Soils and Crops Branch, Grassland Specialist and the Director of Soils and Crops; Technical Services Branch, Technical Engineer Officer position was filled; in the Marketing Branch, an Administrative Secretary position was filled; Farm and Rural Development Division, an Assistance Deputy Minister's position was filled, and was publicly announced, that was the appointment of Cliff Cranston.

Agriculture Training, 4H and Youth Specialist in The Pas position was filled; Water Services, a number of positions there, Technical Engineering Officer, Drafting Technician, Engineering Aid, Design Engineer, General Manager; Manitoba Water Services Board, Technical Engineering Officer, Technical Engineering Officer, Chief Engineer, Secretary to the Manitoba Water Services Board, and a clerk typist position.

In the Policy and Economics Division, the Executive Director's position was filled, Senior Statistician's position, Ag Resource Economist, Director of Economic Analysis, and a Director of the Policy and Development Branch.

Those were the positions that were filled since April 1, 1982, in full time positions, in bulletined positions that have been filled since April 1, '82, term incumbents in vacant positions.

In the Veterinary Services Branch, a Laboratory Technologist and a Clerk in the drug centre; in the Animal Industry Branch, Secretary to the Feed Analysis Lab; Soils and Crops Branch, a Wheat Specialist; Agricultural Training Branch, Secretary to 4H and Youth; Crown Lands Branch, the position of Administrative Secretary.

There are a number of term positions that are on staff as at March 18, 1983 when the work had been done.

I think the Honourable Member for Arthur wanted names, Mr. Chairman. I can certainly provide him the names. Most of the people that are involved are either in the Ag Extension Centre, and various secretarial positions and the like. If the honourable members want those names, I will give them the positions. I have not given them the names of people who have been bulletined and posted; I ask for guidance from the honourable members, if they wish the names I will give them.

In those term positions on staff, many of them have been long time positions in the Ag Extension in Brandon and medical technologists, secretary assisting in Deputy Minister's office, and those kinds of positions. If they like I'll give them the positions and the like.

The secretary assisting in the Deputy Minister's office, students assisting at the Vet Services Lab in clean-up duties, feeding animals, etc.; there are three positions there; medical technologist in the Vet Services Lab, some of the permanent staff are on maternity leave, so there's a term replacement there.

A dealer-inspector in the Farm Machinery Board, a short term position there; secretary on Soil Survey Section at the University of Manitoba, it's a term position; media services support to my office, it's a term position.

Secretary to the Crown Lands - Steinbach office; it's a part-time position, I believe; Secretary assisting in the Eastern Regional office and a lab technologist in the Milk Laboratory.

There are 11 term staff to maintain their residence and the food services at Ag Extension Centre in Brandon that are term staff; there's a term staff position, short term, assisting in the Admin Office at the Ag Extension Centre in Brandon.

Mr. Chairman, insofar as the Beef Commission are concerned, there is a General Manager; a Marketing Manager; a Manager of Administration; accounting supervisors, and a senior clerk; 5 accounting clerks; secretary to the Marketing Manager; two Marketing clerks; an Accounting clerk, making up the Office of the Beef Commission.

There are the casual field men, there were seven hired by the Commission. As I mentioned, they were on a part-time basis. I believe their positions, their work has been concluded for the springtime in terms of the work they were to do for the Commission at the present time. There were seven of them hired and there was one casual secretary hired while one of the staff was away on sick leave. That, Mr. Chairman, gives the breakdown of the positions and the permanent-staff positions that were asked for by the Member for Arthur and some other members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Honourable Minister could advise, is there any Capital Expenditures or expenditures of monies in this Item 4 for Capital Works in the year ahead.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I could probably give a bit of the background for the honourable member. There is no change in staffing in this branch. It has a complement of three staff and provides the basic activity for the Marketing Administration Division.

The reduction in salary in this area is to deal, as I've mentioned earlier, with the costs associated with the Health and Post-Secondary Levy in terms of the reduction in costs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a)(1) Salaries—pass; 4(a)(2) Other Expenditures—pass; 4.(b) Animal Industry Branch (1) Salaries.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I should mention to the honourable member, that office is really the Assistant Deputy Minister's office in terms of administration of the whole division. That's Mr. Pringle's staff, in terms of administration and areas of responsibility.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd ask the Minister which of these next two areas where he could possibly elaborate on the dispute with the Milk Marketing Board over the legal suit, can he tell us presently what the status is of that whole messy affair.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, this would be the area where one could raise the questions. The Dairy Branch is within this section. The honourable member well knows that there has been a Statement of Claim filed and that's the extent of the situation that I'm aware of at the present time.

MR. C. MANNESS: Can the Minister give us some indication when he can see this matter being resolved, either legally or by whatever means? Does he have any timetable within his department?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, as the member knows, the Statement of Claim was filed initially about a year ago and no moves were made pending a joint review of the procedures, the hiring of a specialist to review the procedures. Certain findings were made and those are in the process of being reviewed. One has a difficult time trying to say this matter will be dealt with, resolved or what will happen in the course of events.

I believe that the only way any item can be resolved satisfactorily is ultimately by a meeting of minds on the respective responsibilities of the province versus those of the Milk Marketing Board. If there cannot be a resolution and a meeting of minds as to the future of it, ultimately, I presume if we are pressed, that a third party might have to adjudicate it. The member no doubt is aware that there is a \$5-million suit against the Province of Manitoba, claiming damages as a result of, basically, testing of milk for butterfat content, since 1979. That's basically the suit and it becomes a matter of technical expertise and advice in terms of how the equipment operates; how it has operated; how it relates to other areas; Those kinds of questions are primarily on the technical side.

I should mention, Mr. Chairman, that I am concerned about the aspect of a suit naming specific individuals in any kind of suit from an organization. I can certainly accept a suit against the Province of Manitoba and the Department of Agriculture as being the responsible agency, but I do personally have some difficulty about

the naming of actual staff or persons who are employed within the Department of Agriculture in any kind of a suit.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Minister can indicate whether attempts have been made to bring forward a meeting where a meeting of the minds can take place on this issue, and probably many others, but in the dairy industry. I'm wondering, first of all, whether they've proven successful in any degree, and if not, what approach is he going to take to attempt to see better harmony within this whole milk industry come about.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would say that in terms of relationships within the industry, notwithstanding this issue where there is a legal suit in place, we have had and continue to have many meetings and much good rapport vis-a-vis the Milk Marketing Board, vis-a-vis all the participants in the industry, notwithstanding that, the discussions going on here have really ended up in terms of study, I would have to say in my layman's terms, would be inconclusive one way or the other in terms of the operations of that equipment. But I'm not an expert and I don't know what the end result will be, but it becomes a very technical matter which I don't feel that I am very qualified to elaborate on, but in terms of relationships with the present board and the government and staff, I certainly don't detect any ill will or feeling. The board feels that they felt that the equipment was operated not to the advantage of the board in terms of the milk shipped. That is the position they have taken; a monitory position. I don't believe that the position - I hope not, at least - has been taken as to something anymore than that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(b)(1)—pass - The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I understand that the department has cut back on the Sheep Specialist position, or am I correct on that statement?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, no, that's not quite accurate. The person who is filling the position of Sheep Specialist has now taken over the Beef Specialist's position, and that position has not been filled at the present time.

They're all working in the same section, but it's been a promotion to that individual who has been working in the sheep industry, and has taken on the Beef Specialist's role. The previous incumbent went to Ag. Canada or somewhere and moved on the promotion of the Sheep Specialist into the Chief of the Beef Section occurred.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, the position is vacant at the present time? The person that occupied the position is now in the beef plant, so there is a vacancy in that position at the present time then?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, we are looking for a replacement for them, but the individual is still working in the same branch and would devote some time, but

not specifically to the tasks that he had previously, but certainly would be involved.

I should tell the honourable member that there are four vacant positions in this branch, and that is the Chief of Beef Section, which has just been filled; Farm Services; Assistant Provincial Animal Nutritionist and a secretary in the Feed Analysis Lab. Those have not yet been filled at the present time in this branch of a complement of 52.4 staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you. Am I correct in assuming then that the Minister has indicated that he will be filling that position as a Sheep Specialist, and if that is a correct assumption, can he indicate when does he want to fill it?

HON. B. URUSKI: As soon as we can.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Well, that's fine. I'm just a little concerned about these open-ended kind of "soon" things. We've had that from the Minister of Municipal Affairs for some time about calling a meeting. We wonder how long these things take because the sheep industry in this province is, I think it's a part of a vital agricultural community.

I know that in my area, we have many people that are in it and going into it. I think it is prudent that we have some indication how soon this will be filled. Is it advertised right now? If not, will the Minister advertise? I'd like to have it a little bit more specific.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the filling of staff is an ongoing process within the department. We have just filled the position of Beef Specialist, the Chief of the Beef Section position. The present incumbent who has a good background in sheep is within the department and can still provide that technical advice on a need basis.

However, I have to tell you that good people with the expertise in sheep are not easy to find. If the honourable member wants to know what the process is when a position is open for filling, the department requests Treasury Board approval for the position, and then the normal bulletining goes through, whether it's Manitoba or outside of Manitoba, and the bulletining process goes through. It does take time.

When the honourable member says how soon, we still do have the technical expertise of the present person on staff who has been promoted into the other position.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Well, my question then is to the Minister, what stage is that at right now? Has it gone through Treasury? Is this position now posted?

HON. B. URUSKI: It's being prepared to go to Treasury Board, Mr. Chairman.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: A further question regarding the beef inspectors that are out in the field right now, would they have come under this department here, or is that strictly under the Beef Commission Program?

HON. B. URUSKI: Under the Beef Commission.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I have a question that was raised to me by a constituent, Berg's Hatchery in Russell. Maybe the Minister is reasonably familiar with it. He mentions here in his letter that they asked the Marketing Board what would happen if a 15 or 16 year old son or daughter wanted to raise poultry to help the family along. The answer is that they can't be allowed to do it. It's only those who traditionally raise poultry would be allowed to continue. I certainly have no personal disagreement with the Marketing Board, but it seems that each time an amendment is made against the small registered producers, they get pushed farther into the background. This Mr. Berg says it's his personal view that registered producers cannot control their production, and in turn the Marketing Board cannot or will not police them.

I wonder if the Minister has any response or comments he'd care to offer to the Berg's Hatchery regarding this problem? He says he's got many customers that produce poultry that are sold locally, in turn the money us spent in rural areas. A lot of it goes to taxes and other expenses on the farm. He suggests that the Marketing Board people go before the Legislature for their amendment, instead of being penalized by doubling the amount of unregistered producers to 2,000. He says here if they can't all abide by the privileges and rules, let them know that he may lose them. He said he received a phone call from the hatchery president that a motion was in place to reduce from 500 to 300, the amount of pullet placements that a small farmer could have in Manitoba.

He goes on and he says, "I believe an amendment made, there should be a basis quota attached to every parcel of agricultural land", etc., etc. Of course, that would support the family farm concept. I wonder if the Minister would care to comment on Mr. Berg's problem?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I can say that this whole matter presently is being reviewed and discussed with our staff, the Natural Products Marketing Council and the Broiler Producers Marketing Board.

The member is aware that in Manitoba, there is presently an exemption of, I believe, 1,000 bird limit on broiler raising in the Province of Manitoba where they do not have to be registered with the board.

There has been a fairly substantial increase in production. I believe it's in terms of, I think, has increased to over 100 producers and about half a million pounds. I'm going from memory on this, Mr. Chairman, so I want to tell the honourable members that my figures may not be precise, however, there is concern by the Broiler Board that any increase in unregulated production that presently exists, of course, cuts into the national quota that the registered producers are in and it is posing a dilemma for the board. How that should be resolved has not yet been determined, Mr. Chairman. Those kinds of discussions, whether there should be a vote on behalf of the producers who are in place now, whether there should be a change in regulations to kind of follow the other provincial guidelines and we're looking at that to see what other

provinces have done in these areas and what should happen. Certainly, in terms of those producers who are there I would find it quite difficult to say, no longer, that you are actually out of production of broilers.

In terms of the eggs, I believe the numbers of chickens that are unregulated is anything under 500 and the Egg Board, as you will recall there were amendments passed in this House in 1979 to deal with that question. Your administration brought in amendments to deal with that question and the Egg Board is, I would have to say, wrestling with this problem. I don't believe it's as difficult a problem for the Egg Board as it is for the broiler industry and it's not an easy one to resolve but there are discussions now in place. What the recommendations will be to the government from the board and from the council we have yet to await those kinds of recommendations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(b)(1)—pass; 4.(b)(2)—pass. 4.(c)(1) Veterinary Services Branch, Salaries.

The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: I wonder if the Minister can give us a breakdown as to what the situation is with the veterinary clinics throughout the province whether all of them have vets that are on these sites right now?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I believe, at the present time, that every clinic that is in place has a practising veterinarian. There are no shortages of veterinarians. I'm told that the clinics are operating and I should point out that I believe there has been a split of the clinic in the Erickson-Minnedosa area where the municipalities to the North have - and it's been an ongoing problem - and they have pulled out of that clinic. The clinic is being maintained and being operated as it has in the past but there has been no resolution as to what the municipalities to the North of Minnedosa will end up doing. That has sort of, as I can recall, been the area where there is some contention and some dispute as to sharing of costs within municipal districts and, of course, the service that is offered and that is in the Minnedosa area.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: To the Minister, then, are there any new veterinary districts contemplated? Are there any applications at the present time where people are considering forming a district or requesting a veterinary building?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the only one that is being discussed and there are discussions with the Veterinary Services Board and that district is the Minnedosa-Erickson situation presently. There are no new districts being discussed or contemplated in this coming year.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Just a final question, is the Minister contemplating getting heavily into the dispensing of drugs again through the province. At one time . . .

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, that is an ongoing program that was established a number of years ago and the costs of the drug program are in Acquisition and Supply Item No. 15. That would include the

information. I could give the member the information in terms of supply. The program has been ongoing since 1976 and I should tell the honourable member that the increase over the last five years has actually been very substantial and I'll give the honourable member as an example, in 1976-77 there was a net sales of \$743,000 and it has increased in 1981-82 to \$2.22 million. So it's been fairly substantial and the program has been very well accepted throughout rural Manitoba and the sales have, to say the least, mushroomed in the area of supply of veterinary products to veterinarians and farmers alike. Of course, depending on the type of drugs that are being dispensed.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: I just want to ask is there a problem developing between the various veterinary clinics - I'm referring to a case in point the St. Pierre Vet Clinic district and the Hanover Vet Clinic district and then you have the Vita district in terms of the municipalities having members on the boards and it encompasses certain area where they participate financially. Is there any problem in these areas at all in terms of the costs shared by the municipalities in terms of the district where they would - we always have a little bit of a grey area there to the south of the village that I represent. Grunthal, for example, where the Vita area clicks in and where the St. Pierre area clicks in and where the Hanover area clicks in, in terms of the cost-sharing of this.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that there is some discussion within the R.M. of Tache in terms of whether they are staying in. The R.M. of Tache has pulled out of the St. Pierre clinic in terms of discussions at the present time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Yes, I'd like to ask the Minister, Mr. Chairman, if all of the vet districts operate under the same plan now or is there a different plan still in existence. At one time we had the Selkirk Plan and the Manitoba Plan and, I believe, there was one other plan. Are those still in existence or are all the vet districts operating under the same situation today?

HON. B. URUSKI: Those plans that were in existence are still in existence. I understand that each district picks and chooses the plan that is to their best advantage financially. Those plans are still available. There has been no change to say that we are no longer going to be offering this plan or that plan, no. Those components of the vet program are still in place and a district which is operating has to examine in terms of its benefits from whichever plan it chooses and has the option of choosing any of the plans in existence - three plans have been in existence and they are still in existence.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have another issue and I am wondering whether it falls under this category. The meat inspectors at killing plants, would that be under this category?

HON. B. URUSKI: In terms of inspectors at killing facilities, at packing houses, the province is not involved in that area at all and never has been. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, those funds and those expenditures - I was mistaken - there is a cost to the province. The staff, I believe, are federal staff. But in terms of provincial costs, those costs are borne by the Department of Environment in terms of dealing with health standards and health regulations. The Minister of Environment would have those kinds of costings not within the Department of Agriculture.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few questions that I would like to ask the Minister. We have a problem developing in the R.M. of Rhineland where up to now they were so short of water over there that hardly anybody was in livestock at all. But in the last couple of years, water has been made available to a couple of communities within that particular municipality and as a result of that, some of the farmers have gone to livestock. They have been trying to get their municipality to join the veterinary clinic which is situated at Morden, but so far the municipality is reluctant to go ahead with this because there are not enough producers that would take advantage of this. Yet, these people who have gone into livestock are finding it very difficult to get any service out of the veterinary clinic at Morden. The only time the vets are going to come out to service them is if they're not busy servicing those people in the municipalities that belong to the veterinary clinic and, of course, they have to pay an extra fee in order for them to get any service at all, plus they have to pay more for drugs.

I wonder, is there any arrangement that these people could enter into so that they could qualify for the same services that some of the other municipalities are getting, like Stanley?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I understand that the offer from Rhineland - and the member speaks of the R.M. of Rhineland - I am advised that their offer represents about one-half of what other municipalities are paying and has been rejected by the Morden Board on the grounds that this would cause dissension in their municipalities. The board have agreed instead to their veterinarians imposing a higher fee schedule and a drug charge on the Rhineland and Winkler ratepayers.

So I have to tell you that there's no doubt that there is some difficulty, as is experienced between the municipal components of this board. If the member would like and at the request of the parties, if they request, we might try and get the Commission involved and see whether we can kind of mediate the situation and see if we could come up with a solution. If that is acceptable, I can certainly ask the Commission to raise it. But, frankly, we prefer that there be a request from the board either directly to the Commission or to my office saying, look, could you give us a hand. I think we would be prepared to assist. But ultimately, the decision is a local one in terms of participation and cost.

MR. A. BROWN: I believe that the Minister must understand the situation that municipalities find

themselves in because they only have a few people that are in the livestock industry. These people would like to have access to the same facilities as all the other people have, so if some kind of arrangement could be worked out, they would be only too pleased.

There is another question that I would like to ask. Is there some kind of discrepancy as far as a charge for services is concerned? I understand that anybody from the R.M. of Rhineland who wants the services of a vet has to pay about double the fee charged for anybody living in the Municipality of Morris. Morris also does not belong to the veterinary clinic as I understand it, but anybody wanting to use the services of vet over there is only charged about half the fee that the residents in Rhineland are charged.

HON. B. URUSKI: I understand, Mr. Chairman, that the St. Pierre Clinic and the Morden Clinic are both on the same fee schedule. How they treat residents outside the district who do not financially participate would be a matter of discussion if the Commission was requested to get involved in this. But I understand that the fee schedules if the districts that serve the areas in question are on the same fee schedule.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Mr. Chairman, I don't think I quite got myself clarified before in terms of what my concern was. Over the years, I recall when we were in government, we were being lobbied by the licenced abattoirs to take and licence all meat cutters, the stores that were cutting meat and the guys that were having private slaughtering houses. The concern that has been expressed to me is, is this Minister considering a move in that direction to cut out the small operators that do a little bit of custom cutting in various areas, the private entrepreneur.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member should know and I think he does, that the jurisdiction of that matter falls under the Minister of the Environment under whose jurisdiction the inspection of meat and health inspectors falls. However, I should point out to the honourable member that I believe the discussions that have centred around that area have gone on for a number of years. Notwithstanding the regulations that have been placed since the early Seventies, that red meats can only be killed for a person's own consumption - that has been in place for a decade. However, that whole area of producer and relative relations is not being disturbed with any change.

Where the problem, as I understand it - and I will comment briefly on it - is the matter of rural or small businesses who are primarily in the business of custom cutting, and where there has been a problem is where there have been complaints primarily dealing with meat that was actually sold which was not inspected at the premises. To disallow further cutting on a premises, in my mind, would place a great hardship on those establishments. Certainly, in terms of the ability of those enterprises, some regulations are being worked on to allow that to be continued, but somehow be able to differentiate in terms of an inspection or whatever, that the meat that has been inspected for sale across the counter can be clearly identified and the meat that is there for custom killing, whether it be game, whether

it be beef, or hogs, or whatever the case may be, be identified. That is the area that is being looked at.

I should tell the honourable member that it's been the practice for example in the sheep industry in terms of the slaughter of sheep on a farm where people come to the farm and have the animal slaughtered, they take the entire animal and all its components slaughtered on the farm, home for processing. That kind of a situation should not be disturbed. Although, Mr. Chairman, in terms of the strictest sense of the legality, that has been outlawed for over a decade. The fact of the matter is that kind of relationship is not to be disturbed unless of course, Mr. Chairman, there is an outright complaint where someone is going door-to-door, which the city already has passed regulations outlawing that kind of situation without a permit, of red meats being sold and peddled door-to-door, because that has been illegal and the city itself has already dealt with that by regulation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In light of complaints I've heard over the years, I was wondering if the Minister could tell me if there has been a cross-analysis done recently on the veterinary clinics and their operating grants?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, that whole matter is under review by the commission at the present time as to where we are, how we have evolved and where we should be in the future. The commission presently has undertaken that kind of a review. There is nothing definite from the review as yet.

MRS. C. OLESON: Could you tell me when there is going to be a report on that study?

HON. B. URUSKI: It's my hope that by the end of June we will have some report back from the commission.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: I just have one last one question before we move along. Grandview apparently has backed off in their application for a veterinary clinic. I've had meetings with groups there and from individuals. There is no record of it in the report to date.

HON. B. URUSKI: As I understand it, Mr. Chairman, what has happened is that the R.M. of Grandview is now participating in two clinics, Roblin and Dauphin, in fact, it's not unlike the situation we had in my own riding of Fisher Branch wanting a satellite clinic. I think costs and the economy being what it is, they have not proceeded with it. Financially, they were involved and that in their case, was part of the problems that initiated it, but I'm pleased to advise that's what they decided to do, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(c)(1)—pass; 4.(c)(2)—pass. 4.(d)(1) Soils and Crops Branch, Salaries. The Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Minister can tell us at this time as to what has developed in new strains of weeds or new problem weed areas that are coming into this particular province of ours and could he give us some indication as to what is new in fighting the whole area of the difficult noxious weeds.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, one of the weeds that has been identified within the province is the Red bartsia. This primarily, I believe, is located in the Interlake in terms of forage pastures and the like. We have undertaken an Agro-Man proposal and are trying to not only identify, but use various means of trying to eradicate and control that weed.

There is of course an Agro-Man project I believe as well, dealing with the Napweed in the Morden area and those are the two main ones that are presently under review by the department as being the most contentious.

I believe the Honourable Member for Emerson last year raised the question of the Bladder Campion in the gravel pits and those areas. Those are the three main ones that are under active attempts to control by various means, either through an Agro-Man project or through regular departmental means and work.

MR. C. MANNES: Changing the subject somewhat, Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Minister can tell me, firstly, whether the subject of soil erosion comes within his area or the Minister of Natural Resources? If it indeed falls within his area I'm wondering if he could tell us what his department is doing to convince us as farmers to farm differently in some situations to prevent this occurrence. Are there any regulations at all?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I just want to bring up the area of the weed districts which comes under this category, am I correct? We, over the years, have had extreme difficulty in the southeast area with the southeast Weeds district, I believe it is called, involves the LGD of Piney, the LGD of Stuartburn, part of Franklin, and I think I've brought this up before specifically as I mentioned before, the Bladder Campion problem.

We have various weeds, very hardy weeds out there that are creating some problems to the point where there has been some concern about the movement of feed and grain out of the area in terms of forage feed, and many of the roads among the areas there - the municipal roads as well as some of the forestry roads - we have these weeds developing and spreading and the difficulty that the southeast weeds district has is the financial aspect of it. They have a limited base on which to levy costs against. I think their levies, if I'm correct, are higher right now than possibly many a weed district is and comparatively their taxes are a lot higher. Maybe the Minister can correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe there were special grants given to that weed district or is being considered. Could the Minister indicate what the position is there because these people are having extreme difficulty, never mind maintaining property, but to be able to put a hold on the problem?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised there has been no specific proposal to myself or to my office as yet. I would assume that in terms of discussions, the member is aware that we did increase the grants to weed districts in the last Budget and the increases were implemented this year.

Insofar as some special consideration and the like, I have not to my recollection received any specific requests from the district. There may be some discussions within the department with departmental staff but I have to tell the honourable member I'm not aware of any.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Morris raised the matter of disease and noxious weeds. There are several diseases that are being actively, not only monitored, but worked on in the area of special crops and that is the Sclerotinia disease which attacks a wide range of special crops including canola, mustard, lentils, soya beans, field beans, field peas and fababeans. I'm advised that in 1982 the disease caused an estimated 10 to 15 percent loss in canola throughout our province.

It has also been severe on field peas and lentils, but because of last year's above-normal precipitation in July of last year over most of southern Manitoba, the disease development increased because of the high precipitation. There are a number of fungicide sprays, crop rotation and a number of things that have to be done and there's work going on in that area. As well, there's the Verticillium wilt in alfalfa. In 1982, 15 fields were surveyed but no diseased fields were detected. The wilt was found to be a severe problem wherever there was irrigation, especially in the interior of B.C. in 1979, and more recently in 1982 it was found to be common and widespread in the irrigated fields in southern Alberta. So that wilt was very common wherever there was a lot of land under irrigation.

Fortunately it hasn't appeared to be a problem for the Prairie Provinces. This disease, I am advised, also attacks potatoes and sunflowers but different strains of that disease are involved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Mr. Chairman, I want to just pursue the area of the weeds district in the southeast a little further if I could. One of the problems that I think makes it relatively unique is that in the LGD of Stuartburn, I believe somewhere around 50 percent of the land is privately owned and the rest is either Crown land, LGDs, vested Crown lands, and in the LGD of Piney it's even more so. We have forestry involved, we have Crown lands involved, we have an abandoned rail line involved and when you consider that a limited amount, percentage wise of the land is privately owned, especially in these two areas, the financial pressure on the district becomes dramatically more so. I wonder if the Minister would, in view of the weeds district there, presents a financial picture to the Minister, possibly consider under these circumstances to give some consideration in terms of helping them maintain their service at least to some degree in the area.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I believe the formula or the cost-sharing that is involved now that has been

in place for a number of years deals with the salary costs of the inspector and the grant level was increased in 1982. Funding is based on a 50-50 cost-sharing to a maximum grant of \$9,000 for supervisor's salary and \$1,500 for supervisor's expenses. Of course, the weed district must employ a weed supervisor who has completed the Correspondence Course Training Program to qualify for the full grant.

That has been the grant structure to date. The total grant paid out to weed districts for 1982 is \$342,622.99 that has been the total amount of grant that has been paid to the districts.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Would the Minister possibly consider, under the unique circumstances that we have out there, that possibly people like Forestry maybe absorb some of the costs of controlling weeds? I realize that with the abandoned rail line - that is a big problem that abandoned rail line out there - but how you charge any costs to anybody out there, I don't know, with the changes that are taking place? But possibly the Natural Resources Department, which are also involved in Crown lands, could maybe consider some assistance in terms of helping maintain the control of these weeds because it is on many of these lands where the weeds are running rampant and spreading. On privately owned land the individual, in most cases, is going to look after his; it is the Crown lands that are creating part of the problem. I'll be talking with these people, meeting with them and maybe suggesting to them to forward some kind of a proposal to the Minister. I just want to raise it at this point that maybe, with the Minister's support, some of the other departments could be involved in trying to help the financial situation in that area.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, certainly we would be prepared to receive and consider any proposal. I would hope that some identification, and maybe that's what we can do of the source of the problems in the area that he speaks of, can be identified and to the area that is involved in terms of which lands, to what degree and the type of problems that are there. If the honourable member wishes to advise the people involved, in terms of making representations, I'll be pleased to hear them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Portage.

MR. L. HYDE: Mr. Chairman, I want to, while we're discussing the weed problem in the province, we, in our area and I believe it's pretty much prevalent too throughout the province and possibly more so from the southern points, but we have a weed that can become very much of a nuisance, the milkweed. It seems that it's spreading to a greater degree each year into the agricultural fields and I do believe that it is very prominent - in fact I know it's very prominent - in our public roadways in our province. I'm wondering if you would be considering any definite program on that particular weed because I'm afraid that should we not check it soon that it is going to be one that is going to be difficult to deal with.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'll have to take that question under advisement, in terms of how difficult it

is to control, and to what extent the problem, in terms of the difficulty of eradicating them.

My own limited knowledge in this area tells me . . . I don't believe it's a very difficult weed to control, but that's not to say that it doesn't spread very rapidly. I'll take the honourable member's question under advisement to see what knowledge and background there is within the department and how it is viewed at the technical level.

MR. L. HYDE: Mr. Chairman, if he could work hand-in-hand with his colleague, the Minister of Highways, on that particular program. It has been brought to my attention that it is spreading from our roadways into our farm areas. You are right, I don't believe it's that difficult a weed to control if it is handled at the proper time. This, I think, is most important that we get on top of that. — (Interjection) — Purple flower, yes. It has a purple flower.

At the same time, Sir, I wonder if a more severe program couldn't be taken on in regard to the control of noxious weeds in our Crown lands - I'm speaking north of Portage right now. It has got to the point where the noxious weeds such as Sow-Thistle and Canadian Thistle is blowing from our marsh areas into the farmlands, and the north wind, hell, they're blowing all over the Portage Plains. It's pretty difficult to take and control it when the weed is running at large, you might say, in the Crown lands north of Portage. The Minister could answer me on that because I do think that we're going to have to keep pressure on the government on this particular issue.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I was going to answer that after the honourable member spoke. We'll certainly look at that in terms of trying assess what the honourable member is saying and what action, if any, can be undertaken to lessen the problem that he says is there.

MR. L. HYDE: Well, Mr. Chairman, and to the Minister, I would suggest that possibly he could take a good look at spraying some portions of the marsh and control them.

MR. C. MANNES: Well, I'd just like to add on a comment to what my colleague from Portage said. Certainly driving through the Dakotas, in the summertime, one sees miles and miles of milkweed along the road allowances. Of course, we'd be terribly concerned as we see this move into the fields.

I'd like to ask the Minister as to what his department tells him as they may see, in looking into the future, regarding pests, specifically grasshoppers, for 1983? How prepared is his department to deal with an outbreak should it occur?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that, in terms of the forecast, are for a very light infestation in our province. The supply of chemicals through private dealers is available, and the municipalities have been advised all they need to do, wherever there is an outbreak that they will purchase whatever chemicals they need to deal with the outbreak and the province, on an ongoing program, will reimburse them.

The province has exhausted its stock of chemicals which they purchased a number of years ago and had some difficulties. The outbreak that was anticipated at the time, was not as bad as was originally envisaged and, as a result, chemicals were held for a number of years which did cause some problems because, as I understand, containers rusted, they had to be recontained. There were problems over the years because there was a fairly large stock of — (Interjection) — Pardon me? I don't know what the brand name was, Mr. Chairman. However, those supplies have now been exhausted and the relationship of the program is that municipal councils have been advised that wherever there's an outbreak, that they are to purchase the chemicals. We will try and make sure that there's ample supplies at the right prices, so that those chemicals will be available. They will be handled through the existing dealers in the Province of Manitoba.

MR. C. MANNES: Well, I'm encouraged to hear that the forecast appears favourable at this time.

I'd like to change the subject, again, and ask the Minister whether his government, and specifically his department, et al, is in tune with some of the great changes that are taking place in the breeding of wheats. I guess I bring up this whole issue to mind because, although I'm reluctant to ever see governments overlap jurisdiction, I think maybe the time has come where this provincial government should become a little bit more in tune with what is happening in that whole area. Of course, the long-run goal is to ultimately to see we, as Manitoba producers, have available to us those varieties that will yield the most and, therefore, give to us the greatest return.

I'm wondering if the Minister has any, first of all, understanding of this subject, and secondly, if he doesn't, if he would have any comment as to whether he should see the department, in other words, the Province of Manitoba, moving into a more active situation as to where they direct breeding and licensing, even though licensing is under federal jurisdiction. I'm wondering if he doesn't agree with me that the Province of Manitoba has something at stake here, and that indeed, they should be more in tune with what's happening in that whole area?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would like to get from the honourable member his perception of the problem areas that he sees. He's getting at something that I'm not sure that I may be aware of even. He's making some suggestions. In the broadest terms, unless I was provided with certain propositions as to problem areas, we may want to look at them.

On the general side, I would be very reluctant to try to get into a situation as we have now, for example, in stabilization where there should be across this country, a one basic plan if we're dealing with income stabilization and not get into this Treasury versus Treasury competition that is going on. I just wouldn't want to lead ourselves down that path. I'm not sure what the honourable member is getting at, and I'd like to have his comments.

MR. C. MANNES: I acknowledge the Minister's concern. Certainly, I wouldn't want to see any type of

agriculture activity move into that type of situation which appears to be happening in some of the stabilization plans.

I suppose my concern to be a little bit more specific, as to whether we, as growers, for instance, of wheat, should be expected as Manitoba producers to continue to grow a Marquis type quality wheat; a very high quality type wheat at the expense of a higher-yielding grain? It sort of mitigates against us as Manitoba producers, who, in effect, are precluded in some instances for adopting higher yielding wheats that may be there. Again, I am just asking the Minister, I am not advocating that the Provincial Government should jump into this. I am just asking if the Minister has any thoughts and whether he sees a place here for his department to lend comment?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether this situation will ever be settled in terms of what the ultimate solution is. As I understand the honourable member, we are really talking about the hard wheats versus the feed - soft wheat competition and I gather, as I understand it, the acceptability of either product on the world market. Because that ultimately, many of those grains or the bulk of those grains and specifically wheat, are grown for export. For example, Glenlea, the soft wheat, great in terms of production, but I believe in terms of export salability has not gotten off the ground that well. So, it becomes a difficult problem in terms of not only what you are growing, but what are you able to sell and who will buy it if you do grow it. It's a double problem, not only from the point of view of saying, let's grow something that will produce great amounts. We have that problem today of what has happened in the grains industry.

I don't know where the end is in terms of the dilemma we are faced with. I really don't know - pardon me? — (Interjection) — well, maybe I'm not aware of what the honourable member is getting at. That's the tenor of his remarks that I received and that's how I interpreted them.

MR. C. MANNES: Well, with respect, Mr. Chairman, this isn't the time or the place to move into this whole area. I just want to put on the record that I think there is beginning to take place, a major debate within this whole grains industry, and when we realize what that sector contributes to our province, I believe that the Minister and the department should be in tune certainly with what's happening in that whole area because it is moving into the area of small "p" type politics debate. Certainly, our province has a lot to gain or to lose if the wrong decision is made. I would therefore . . .

HON. B. URUSKI: What is the situation?

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, the Minister asks, what the situation is. The situation is specifically whether one licencing organization should have the total right to indicate some uniform method of determining what we as all prairie growers should be growing in terms of class of wheat. I am just wondering if the time hasn't come where regions within the province shouldn't maybe be growing their own class. Certainly Manitoba is suited differently to grow a class of wheat that does

not resemble the high quality of wheat that is grown in other areas.

I am saying that this is a whole major of area that is opening up in debate now and the Province of Manitoba should have an understanding of it and be prepared to comment at certain times.

My — (Interjection) — well the Minister indicates he's giving his broad comments. The Minister should realize that Glenlea is not a soft wheat, indeed it is a very hard wheat. — (Interjection) — Well, the Minister said he is talking about the programs. He should realize then also that three quarters to 80 percent of the world trade in wheat is of a medium quality. It is not and indeed only 20 percent is devoted to hard red spring qualities, hard breed wheats.

Now, Mr. Chairman, one final question in this whole area. I am wondering if the Minister of Agriculture is satisfied that the procedures that go with the management concepts or surrounding the growing of corn - is he satisfied that all the growers of that special crop are well understanding of all the risks inherent of growing crop. As you know, we've had two out of three years when the experience has been less than satisfactory. I am wondering if he's satisfied that all those people that are growing corn understand fully well the risks of growing that crop.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the ongoing extension work and trying to transfer technical information from say the department through the universities and the like, is an ongoing situation. Not always will farmers heed all the advice, for example, in the corn area, that is given. There are farmers who will want to experiment and continue to experiment in areas that the general recommendations say that corn should not be grown. We have done through, for example, through Agro-Man, projects and at least trials so that we will even be better informed by actual trial situations in areas that historically have not grown. So that it's an ongoing process of learning and education in the entire system. I don't think it ever stops frankly speaking, that farmers, those who generally who have gone into the area of corn production, and in areas where production has been recommended, I think generally understand. But to say that everyone does, I don't think that would be an accurate statement. I don't think everyone understands all there is to know and there are changes ongoing all the time.

They do understand that they take out crop insurance to protect themselves against eventual losses. But, understanding the ability of the production of the crop, no, I believe in any crop notwithstanding corn, it is an ongoing process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Minister indicated earlier that some research work was being undertaken in the area of special crops, Sclerotinia and some of the other types of fungus diseases that attack special crops; is the department carrying out that research or is it financing research at the university? Or are there some research plots throughout the province undertaken by the department?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, we are doing monitoring and surveys. I believe work is being done at the universities, but our co-operation in terms of the field work is done, I believe in co-operation with Ag Canada.

MR. D. GOURLAY: As the Minister is probably well aware, we do have a lot of Sclerotinia and fungus diseases of special crops particularly in the Swan Valley area. Is there monitoring going on in that part of the province?

HON. B. URUSKI: I believe so, Mr. Chairman. That is going on. To what degree, I will certainly take that under advisement and see if I am mistaken in what I have said I will provide the honourable member with more up-to-date information. But, as I understand it, yes, we are surveying and monitoring the situation in areas where those kinds of special crops are grown.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Also, maybe the Minister indicated this earlier, the number of weed districts that we currently have in the province and whether there has been any change in the last year in the number of districts? Are there any changes in the number of weed districts in the province last year?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, no there are no changes in the weed districts. I should mention that 6 percent of the samples taken in term of diagnosis of samples are taken in the northwest region of the total samples taken within the province. That is in terms of monitoring with respect to the functions of the plant pathology lab, so that within those samples, Sclerotinia would be part of the surveying that would be done, I believe. Samples are taken throughout the Province of Manitoba, and they vary anywhere from 15 percent in certain areas to 1 percent of the samples taken in the north, in terms of diseases. It varies from there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to go on a little different topic on the special crops. I think the Minister well remembers a particular day that we had in this Legislature, oh maybe, five, six years ago. We spent an entire day talking about black beans.

Black beans, however, and other beans, pinto beans and so, have become a rather important crop in the area that I represent. Two years ago, if you would have gone down from my area to Fargo and so on, every other field just about was beans. It was very popular in the United States. The market has somewhat slackened off, and it's probably only about half the amount of beans that are grown at the present time, as what they were a couple of years ago. Mainly because of the fact that the countries that we were growing the beans for can no longer afford to purchase the beans because of the serious financial situation that they find themselves in. What they eat, I don't know because beans is their staple food. But certainly countries like Venezuela say that even at four cents a pound, they could no longer afford to buy beans.

Nevertheless, it is going to be a rather important crop in Manitoba. I wonder, are there any plots grown,

that is, is there any experimentation done on beans other than at the Morden experimental farm?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I understand that there probably are - I'm not 100 percent sure, but I can check that out - variety plots that are done in conjunction with the University of Manitoba. I will check that specifically in terms of beans being grown.

To the Honourable Member for Swan River I didn't supply him the accurate information with respect to weed districts. I'm sorry, I checked my notes. I should advise him that the Town of Morden ceased operation in 1982 as a weed district, deciding to operate a co-operative program with the surrounding Stanley-Thompson weed district. They've amalgamated into that district. A new district has been formed, the Brandon-Cornwallis District in '82.

There are 37 weed districts which existed in 1982; 37.

MR. A. BROWN: Mr. Chairman, I would appreciate it if the Minister could find out about beans, and especially about soya beans. I think that there's also going to be a big future as far as the new varieties of soya beans are concerned. I would appreciate it if the Minister could arrange some time or other to have a field trip with those of MLAs who are very much involved with this type of thing; arrange a field trip so we can go and see what kind of crops are grown and in which particular areas, so that we have more awareness as to actually what kind of experimentation is going on as far as special crops is concerned.

HON. B. URUSKI: I certainly appreciate the honourable member's suggestion. With respect to soya beans, Mr. Chairman, there is an Agro-Man project ongoing and there are trials and work being done maybe in several locations. I certainly will ask staff because there are annual field days dealing with the special Agro-Man projects and the special commodities to make sure that MLAs in the areas where the Agro-Man projects are, be invited and if they are available at the time, that they can participate. Certainly, I'll make sure that staff arrange to have the MLAs invited in the areas where the field days are occurring.

MR. A. BROWN: I would appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. Sometimes we get to hear about these field days about a week after they've happened because we have not received notification.

Another area that I'd like to discuss is the sunflower midge. The midge in the agricultural book that we're going through over here - the Annual Report is 1981 - it says that there was not all that much damage in 1981 as far as the sunflower midge was concerned.

In 1982, however, I would say that some of the sunflower fields lost a yield of at least 75 percent. There was very small yield due to the midges. That's becoming a very large problem for sunflower producers. As a matter of fact, the area that was always growing the most sunflowers is going to be growing very few sunflowers this year.

I wonder if the Minister could tell me whether they are working and trying to get the midge under control? What is happening in that particular area?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, our people at the technical level are involved with people from the United States. There are exchanges of information; staff do attend conferences on technical information and advice. We are co-operating in this respect with technology and whatever can be done. The problem originated south of the border and we're certainly involved in trying to see what we can do with this matter, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The hour is 4:30, time for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR
ADJOURNED DEBATES - SECOND
READING
BILL NO. 32 - THE MUNICIPAL
ASSESSMENT ACT

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time being 4:30, Private Members' Hour.

The first item on the agenda for Tuesday is debates on adjourned second readings. On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert, Bill No. 32, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise very briefly in support of Bill No. 32 which was presented by my colleague, the Member for St. Norbert, An Act to Amend the Municipal Act. I don't think there is much more I can add to the comments already put on the record by the honourable members, so I'll just move it along and hope the bill will get the full support of the House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: On the motion of the Honourable Member for The Pas, second reading of Bill No. 36.
The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. A. MACKLING: The honourable member isn't here, Mr. Speaker, could we have the matter stand?

RES. NO. 5 - FARM FUEL TAX

MR. SPEAKER: Proposed resolutions. On the assumption that the members wish to hold Resolution No. 1, Resolution No. 5, the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Pembina and the motion proposed thereto by the Honourable Member for River East.

The Honourable Member for Morris has 20 minutes remaining.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I move into the main part of my comments, I'd like to

leave some numbers with the members; something they can digest throughout my next 20 minutes, and that is that the price of clear gas in Manitoba today is some \$2 a gallon and the price across the line in terms of Canadian dollars, Canadian gallons is \$1.46. I'm wondering if the members can keep that in mind as I go through my comments.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that I'm happy to second the original resolution or motion made by the Member for Pembina. Unfortunately, it's subsequently been amended for some reason. — (Interjection) — My colleague says emasculated and that's certainly true. The Member for Pembina reviewed the reasons why this resolution should be adopted unanimously, I might add, by this House, and he went into great detail. He showed how the high cost of farming in combination with low commodity prices was raising havoc with all of us and those in this province who produce crops. He went on further to indicate how the members opposite had again supported unanimously a Crow Rate Resolution which drew reference to, as one of the items, the fact that the taxation on farm fuels should be reduced and eliminated and yet had the gall to bring forward an amendment to, indeed, his very resolution.

Well, Mr. Speaker, all members of this House, if they're not aware, should realize that grain prices are dropping almost on a daily basis, and I suppose one encouraging offset of that is that interest rates have fallen. Hopefully they will continue to do so. We're also aware that some input prices, although they're not dropping, seem to be holding, seem to be maintaining their values and, no doubt, would be dropping were it not for the fact that existing labour rates have forced in a fixed cost of manufacturing that precludes the final price from dropping.

There is one level of costs more or less indirect that are not falling, and of course that's farm fuels. Of course, the main reason that particular input is not dropping is taxation, federal taxation. So I believe the request by our member was legitimate, asking for unanimous support.

Well, Mr. Speaker, just to review again some of the figures, the Member for Pembina indicated that indeed the federal taxation's share today in purple gas is some 67 cents a gallon. In purple diesel, it's some 60 cents a gallon, an increase of 7 cents a gallon over last year - just for those that want to have some feeling as to what we're talking about.

And, of course, we're well aware of the pricing changes outside of Canada. We're well aware of what's happening with OPEC and the general falling prices of world oil values. Again connected with that, the Member for Pembina has drawn out the fact that two taxes, namely, the incremental oil revenue tax and the petroleum compensation charges, all of these would appear to be incidental taxes understood by virtually nobody, I might add - how they have been reduced to save us some impact, at least, of increasing federal taxation.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose if you wanted to sum up where our relief is coming, as Canadian farmers in this whole area of federal taxation or fuel prices, it seems that the only reason we'll have any relief at all is because of what's happening in the outside world. The relief that's being extended to us, certainly it is not coming about because of our own wishes of our own

government to alleviate some of our concerns. No, indeed, any relief that we have is coming from outside influences. It says a lot about our misguided attempts at achieving self-sufficiency through something called a National Energy Program where indeed we were so bent on reaching that goal that we could care less which of our citizens and which of our groups of people we taxed, and indeed, I reiterate, the only reason we've enjoyed any relief at all as producers of food is the fact that OPEC to a degree has collapsed.

While my colleague, the Member for Pembina, went on to point out that the actual levels of taxation imposed indirectly on farmers is some one-half of the total retail value of the product. In other words, as users of fuel, it seems to me that today my price is around \$1.70, \$1.75 for purple gas on my farm, and that indeed one-half of that approximately goes into taxation, provincially and federally.

Of course, you take that figure and you extrapolate over a certain acreage of farm and you have no difficulty seeing where indeed on our farm some \$7,000 is paid by just taxation to the Federal Government - \$7,000.00. Well, I suppose it begs the question, in view of these facts and figures and statistics and arguments, why would the members opposite see fit to bring in an amendment that again emasculates the whole attempt or whole objective? Why would they do that?

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Because they have no feeling for farmers.

MR. C. MANNES: Well, if you try and follow the convoluted argument of the Member for River East, the individual that introduced the amendment, he said basically the same thing this year that he did last, although I have to feel that the amendments that he brought in this year are even more ridiculous. They border on absurdity. Some of his figures I believe are suspect. He says that oil companies need 5.3 cents to produce gasoline and yet they want 7.5 cents a litre in profit. I would say, Sir, that's a misleading comment, and I make reference as I will in the time I have, to something that was published in the Sun, where it breaks down how the retail price of gas is broken down into all the components, all the government taxation levels and all those that take a share of that retail price that you and I pay when we drive our vehicles.

I suppose what is most interesting is his claim that the oil companies are taking some 12.5 c.: 13 cents per litre and that indeed, 8 cents of that is a ripoff; it's pure profit by his indication. Of course, he doesn't seem to realize that there's a real cost to refining oil, that indeed there are other costs associated with that, he just takes it as a total profit slice, and of course a little later on I'll compare that with some of the U.S. situations and really point out how ridiculous his comments really are.

I suppose it could lead us to the next question, what would be wrong if our companies were making larger profits? What happens to them? I know, in this nation, that indeed if the money that is taken from companies by way of taxation, a huge part of that is being pushed back to them in terms of incentive grants, and of course he's well aware, as I am, how much support that our oil companies receive through the National Energy

Program in attempting to find new sources of oil, and it leads to the incentive HIP Grants and all these types of incentives.

He may also say that he would like, and I think he does indicate that he would like to see rebated the sales tax of 2.7 cents, and I am sort of reluctant to move into all the breakdown of Federal Government taxations because this Schedule in front of me indicates that there are some five, of which he is correct in saying the excise tax is rebated to those of us that are bonafide farmers. He would like to rebate, he says refund the sales tax of 2.7. He doesn't mention anything about the tax on Canadian crude or the wellhead price I believe is another way of calling it, of some 6.9 cents per litre.

Of course, he makes no reference to the foreign oil subsidy of 2.4 cents. In other words, he feels that we as farmers and indeed as food producers should be paying that subsidy through the fuel that we purchase. He says that the reason he could support a rebate on the sales tax or a reduction, but not all these others, is because we have to be prepared, as all citizens of this country, to finance oil exploration. Of course, I suppose that begs the question as to how economic some of our oil exploration is. Indeed you look at some of the costs associated with offshore drilling in this nation, particularly in light of world values that are dropping significantly over the past couple of months, and you really question what our goal is and indeed whether self-sufficiency in itself is the proper course to be in search of today.

Well, he says the real problem then is Alberta. What we have to do with Alberta is to make them take 75 percent, make them live up to the bargain that they've had over the past couple of years or whenever, since the National Energy Program has been hammered out that indeed that they subsidized the Nation of Canada over that period of time on the way up, that indeed that province now should be prepared to do the same on the way down.

At this point I think we realize that the NDP really care less about the farmers in Manitoba, they could care less. I mean the whole attempt becomes one of politics. First of all, we see where the Crow rate, they give lip service to this particular area in the area of the Crow rate and then they change the resolution. Of course, then we have the political posturing centred around this Interest Rate Relief Program that's supposed to help the farmers of Manitoba, supposedly some 700 have been able to qualify. We don't know who they are, we don't know where they are, we don't know how they qualify.

Then we bring forward a fuel tax resolution where we ask them to support it, it's a simple understanding of the problem. It doesn't need to be changed around for some political posturing. No, it's very easily understood, but do they choose to leave it that way, Mr. Speaker? No, of course not. In their view they decide to change the resolution and to hammer Alberta. They want to muddy the argument it appears. They want the Province of Alberta to ask that province to subsidize all the consumers of Canada with the price going up and for it to drop down. They play on the irresponsible statement of the First Minister who says he wants lower fuel prices and he seemed to leave the impression that the producing provinces take less.

Then of course this statement was somewhat clarified by the Minister of Energy the other day under

questioning from the Member for La Verendrye. He said he wanted the price of Canadian oil to remain at 75 percent of the world value with the offset, with the decreasing offset in taxation by every province except Manitoba, of course. Manitoba can't decrease its share of the take by the way of taxation, but all the other provincial and federal jurisdictions should. He then went on to say why we had to increase the tax on gasoline by way of our last Budget by some 5 cents a gallon and then the Member for Inkster tried to argue why Manitoba maintained its thick share when gas wars were in existence in this province.

So here we have those on the other side speak with forked tongue, Mr. Speaker. We have them saying, "Well let all the other government jurisdictions decrease their share, but we here in this province have different priorities and let's maintain it." Why does the Minister of Energy and the Member for River East, in his amendment, why do they want to shed light upon the wellhead price values of which they've drawn some note, rather than the world prices? Why do they do that? First of all, they want to muddy this issue and then, of course, they want to divert the whole issue to an Alberta, 75 percent National Energy Program type of argument.

I know why, Mr. Speaker, at least I think I do, because the consumer in this province will soon realize that in Canada, 65 to 70 percent of the retail value is taxation. If they haven't realized it before, they will in short order. What's happening in other countries? Well, members may be interested to know that in Japan 31 percent of the retail price, only 31 percent is the percentage taken in all taxes. Austria, 50 percent - just to name a few - West Germany, 35 percent; Canada at 65 to 70 percent. But what about the United States? I'm sure members opposite are interested to know what taxation makes up of their total retail value. Well, in case they want to know, it's 12 percent. I am wondering if that has something to do with why the price of clear gas here is \$2.00 a gallon and why across the border it's some \$1.43.

So in review, Mr. Speaker, we pay \$2.00 a gallon, our American friends pay \$1.43. We are at 75 percent of world value upwards to 85 now. The Americans have been at 100 percent of the world value of oil now for some period of time. Oil companies in the United States are making much larger profits than ours and paying large taxes and yet the price there is cheaper.

What do we have in Canada? Well, we have where the governments are taxing heavily and they are giving much of it back to oil companies by way of incentive grants and oil exploration and to go after that elusive goal and that costly goal of self-sufficiency. Where are the taxation revenues through all this? Our provinces, indeed our country, are they better off? My goodness, on per capita bases in spite of this, our per capita debt is far in excess of the United States.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I am wondering why the members opposite attempt to bring in these amendments. What are they trying to do? The issue was very specific. Why would they want to amend this particular resolution? We on this side notice that every resolution that we bring forward, every one of them has to be amended in some form. It is unacceptable. Yet here was one which we thought would reach their hearts and souls and indeed they could support but, no.

A MEMBER: They had no heart, they had no soul.

MR. C. MANNES: Of course the reason is because of the Canadianization within the whole energy area, firstly; and secondly, the whole attempt by Ottawa to take over energy policies in this nation is a dismal failure. Who is it supported by? Who were the big pushers? By the NDP. When people in this country realize that we are paying \$2.00 a gallon, and when they realize that our American friends are paying \$1.43; and when they realize when American oil producers are receiving the full world value of oil, they are going to ask questions. They are going to say, who were the supporters of this insane policy? Then of course the members realize that they are implicated. So they are trying to turn the whole argument to focus on Alberta and make them look like the bad people in this game.

Well, just a final comment, Mr. Speaker, of course the big issue is our competitiveness vis-a-vis American farmers. You know, when they're paying 75 cents a gallon less for a gallon of fuel in which to produce their crops, I say the matter is serious. Again, will the members opposite please take into account these differences and would they withdraw their amendment and support ours. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate as I did last year when this same resolution was brought forward by the Honourable Member for Pembina and we brought it forward again this year with no changes. When the Honourable Member for Morris says, well, why do they try to amend it? Here's a chance for them to support something that the opposition has brought in. They know very well what our stand was last year and why we presented an amendment to this resolution. They knew, Mr. Speaker, at that time, that we would undoubtedly be bringing in an amendment again this year.

But I am genuinely concerned. Representing a farm community, I am concerned about the price of fuel for farmers. I know that in many cases the farmers are approaching me and saying that it is very difficult for them - it's not just farmers though, it's everyone - they are all concerned about the price of fuel and the price of gasoline for their cars and are wondering why it continues to go up despite the fact that the world price is going down. I think that brings us to the real important issue here, the guts of this issue, Mr. Speaker, and that is the world price and the price that Canada is paying in relation to that.

The agreement that the Federal Government, through the National Energy plan, the agreement that they have with the producing provinces, is to reach 75 percent of the world price. We have reached that and gone beyond that, Mr. Speaker, a position that is supported by the opposition. They have said before that they were moving to a world price, that they were in favour of that; that they wanted to have the price of oil in this country moved to the world price. They said that was the only way that they were going to have the kind of money to have exploration in this province and so on. So they were in favour of that. They wanted it to move

upward and they said that in 1981, the then Premier, Sterling Lyon, said that he wanted it to move towards the world price. This has been the consistent policy of this government. So he wants farmers, he wants everyone to pay world price for oil in this country. Well if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if he was also proposing that it should drop when the world price goes down. He did not propose that.

We are proposing to stick with what we said earlier and that is, that it should not go higher than 75 percent of the world price. That was the spirit of the agreement between Alberta and Saskatchewan, the producing provinces and the Federal Government. The spirit of the agreement was that Canadians should not pay higher than 75 percent of the world price and when it was going up, that was fine but when it's coming down then Alberta says, oh no, we didn't look after that kind of eventuality. We couldn't have thought of that and we are not going to allow that price to come down. I think we have to send a strong message to Ottawa and to the Government of Alberta, that we want the price of oil in Canada not to exceed 75 percent of the world price at any time.

If we could achieve that, Mr. Speaker, if we could achieve the spirit of that agreement in the first place and if we could have Alberta not renege on their responsibilities in that regard, certainly Alberta does not need any defending by this opposition here. Certainly they don't need any defending. That government is receiving billions from their oil revenues in the province and they are certainly in a position where they are getting benefits from the oil industry that no one in the rest of Canada, that certainly no other provinces, are getting. They are getting that simply because their borders happen to sit over the top of all the oil fields. So they have hosed the rest of this country, Mr. Speaker. They are continuing to do that. Now when the price of oil is dropping and world price is going down, we have a chance to bring some relief to the farmers of this country, bring some relief to the other motor vehicle drivers and so on, everyone in this country and this province, then Alberta decides to change its policy, change its agreement and go back on it and what do they say? They say cut your provincial taxes.

Well, they know very well that we have cut provincial taxes. As a matter of fact, we don't have provincial taxes on farm fuel. That's what Lougheed said. He said let's get the provincial taxes down perhaps to the level of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Oh, yes. They get more per barrel in Alberta from royalties than the rest of the provinces do from taxes. They get more money from that and yet they want us to reduce our taxes down to nothing. That's the solution that they offer. It is the kind of benevolency that we can see in Alberta and is part of this country. They don't care about the rest of the country as long as they can fatten their own back pockets and they are supported, Mr. Speaker, by this opposition here. They are in line with them all the way. Sure, raise the price of oil, that'll be fine, we don't care about it.

MR. C. MANNES: Are you going to burn the Alberta flag next, John?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: We are concerned on this side that we do not let the price of oil continue to rise but

to drop to 75 percent of the world price so that we can have a break for our farmers in this province. It is estimated by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture that \$350 costs to each farmer on average - there is a \$350 cost for every dollar increase in the price of oil.

Now, if we are going to have that kind of a decrease as well, we would have that savings to the farmer, a very significant saving, \$350 per dollar. And if it reduced by \$3, which would bring it down to 75 percent, once again, of the world price, that would be over a \$1,000 saving to each farmer and we are in favour of that on this side. The opposition is not in favour of that, Mr. Speaker, and I can't see how they can talk about me speaking about that. Members on that side, speaking out of both sides of their mouth, when they, on that side, are not in favour of reducing the price of oil in this country and in this province. How can they talk about reducing taxes without getting to the fundamental problem, and that is the problem of the price of oil per barrel? That is the problem that we're facing in this country.

Sir, what they want to do is have the Federal Government take off taxes on oil products, on fertilizers and chemicals, as well as fuels, but what's going to happen there? There are millions of dollars in there collected, billions probably in this country. — (Interjection) — From that, off the farmers, that's right. What they want to do is fill that void. What'll happen is the oil companies and the fertilizer companies will fill that void quite promptly after those prices are taken off, after those taxes are taken off, they'll fill that void with profits. That's where it'll go. It'll go to those companies, it'll go to Imperial Oil, it'll go to Cominco, that's who will get that. Instead of the Federal Government and the people of this country getting the benefits of that taxation as they are now, it will go instead to those private companies, to Cominco and to the Imperial Oil Company. That's exactly where those millions of dollars will go, in addition to the windfall profits that those particular companies are already getting off the farmers of this country.

That is the unfortunate thing about what is being proposed from the opposite side, Mr. Speaker, that they are proposing to eliminate taxes that they have no way of controlling. First of all, it's very difficult to eliminate taxes at the extraction stage for farmers, certainly, and at the refinery in that stage, but it's not that difficult to eliminate the taxations or to rebate certain taxation that is on the refinery exit stage, Mr. Speaker.

So we have proposed that the excise tax which is already rebated, that we would join that with the sales tax which is 2.7 cents per litre, about \$10 million or \$11 million in this country, that would be rebated as well to the farmers of our province and we'd save our farmers a significant amount in fuel costs. That's what we're saying we'd like to see happen and that would definitely be a saving passed onto the farmers. But what the honourable members opposite are saying is that they want to see these taxations removed and have the companies, the corporations, pick up this extra profit, because that's what will happen and it has happened already. There was a decrease in the petroleum and gas revenue tax, from 12 to 11 percent, and the Honourable Member for Pembina referred to

that. But what happened? That was reduced and it is admitted that it was reduced to pass on the extra revenue and extra profit to the oil companies. That's what happened with that.

Now, let's not pretend that when we cut these taxes out that that's going to be passed onto the farmers of this province. The honourable members know that, Mr. Speaker, and they are not concerned about the farmers. Now who they're really concerned about, Mr. Speaker — (Interjection) — well, I appreciate the accolades from the members opposite. I'm very pleased to see that they welcome me here and I appreciate that.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well, it's very nice to be here, Mr. Speaker, and just to get on to what I was talking about, the primary goal of what these members opposite are after here, what they're trying to accomplish with this resolution is not to pass these savings onto the farmers as they would have us believe - we know that. We know they wouldn't do that. They wouldn't even talk about the Crow last year, they weren't concerned about that. Mr. Speaker, what they want to do is discredit the National Energy Program and particularly they want to discredit Petrocan and this is another way for them to get in on knocking Petrocan, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Pembina on a point of order?

MR. D. ORCHARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indicated that it wasn't our intention to have the lowered price of fuel passed onto the farmer. Would the Minister please refer to the text in my opening remarks or any text from this side of the House which indicates that? I believe, Mr. Speaker, if he does, he will find that he has made a patently false statement to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is my opinion that the honourable members are not intending to bring this resolution forward because they want that as a primary objective, to have that tax reduced and passed on, that money saved to the farmers. That's not their primary objective in my opinion, Mr. Speaker. I believe that their primary objective is to discredit Petrocan and what it is doing for this country, Mr. Speaker. They want to see the profits going to the private companies, Mr. Speaker, the American-based private companies, as they've so fondly alluded to their Americans. — (Interjection) — Exxon and the rest of them and Imperial Oil.

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

MR. D. ORCHARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indicated that it was our intention to pass additional profits onto Exxon. Could the Minister please refer in one of the remarks of any member in this House where that statement is contained? And once again, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Minister has made a patently false statement to the House and should withdraw.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Speaker, I've indicated what my feelings are as to the true motives of this resolution. Whenever I am speaking in here and we're all debating on these resolutions, Mr. Speaker, we're giving our opinions, and that's exactly what I am doing at this time.

Mr. Speaker, if the honourable members want to give their opinions in this House, they have all kinds of opportunities. They do that very well and I give them all the credit in the world. They do an excellent job of putting their opinions, even if they aren't worthy of us listening to a serious consideration on our part, they certainly do put their opinions forward and I give them credit for that and I'm very pleased for the fact that they are able to do that. It certainly makes it interesting in this House and we enjoy life a lot more because of the extra spice in our lives because of the opinions they bring forward. We all share the humour every evening before we go to bed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to close in saying this, that we have proposed what we feel is a practical amendment to this resolution, an amendment that we feel the honourable members opposite can support. It will go to Ottawa and indicate that we feel there should be a break to the farmers of this province. We also are giving a very clear message that we want to see them if they are supporting the position, that 75 percent of the world price is what it should be, whether the price of oil is going up or down, that it should not go higher than 75 percent. We want to support that position. We want to give that message clearly to Ottawa.

We want the opposition to join us in that, Mr. Speaker, to forsake the previous statements that they made that they want the price of oil to go up. We want them to join with us now so that all Manitobans can benefit and that we can have a practical amendment here that can be indeed implemented by the Federal Government. That's what we would like to see and we are going to make sure that this message gets through to Ottawa. I would ask the members of the opposition to give us their support on the amendments that we have made, something that can be attained by the people of this province and benefits can be passed back on to the farmers and consumers of this province.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually had not intended to speak on this resolution until I heard some of the comments made by the Minister of Government Services and it created some difficulty in my mind. In the whole text of his speech, I didn't really know what he was promoting, what he was for or against, if it was a matter of fudging and, Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to befuddle the government side with all kinds of figures. I think they have a problem comprehending facts and figures sometimes because the Member for Morris just illustrated very capably some of the differentials in the prices, etc., and it didn't seem to register at all. When the Minister of Government Services got up, it was totally lost.

What bothers me a little bit, Mr. Speaker, is the resolution is relatively straightforward. I think it's a very

sensible resolution. The Member for Pembina submitted it last year and the government at that time chose to amend it. I can't see for what reason they feel they cannot support a resolution of this nature because basically what it does - and I think they missed the whole point and maybe that is because they don't have a feeling for the farm populace or the farm people, the farm community - because the purpose of the resolution is to try and give some relief to the farmers of Manitoba, of Canada, in terms of the cost-squeeze that they're in, the costs are dramatic.

What has happened over the years, gradually as the costs kept going up, the product basically has been staying the same or even decreasing in some cases and you get this kind of a squeeze effect, and the fact that these members opposite, the government side, cannot support this kind of a resolution to give some relief from taxation in the fuel aspect of it, which is a major cost to the farmers in Manitoba, why they would not support it. It is not money out of their pocket, I can't understand it.

I have difficulty when the Minister of Government Services rambles on about the big corporations and the wellhead price of oil, etc. Then what bothers me even more when we read the amendment that the ex-farmer from River East submitted here, and obviously he must have a real background in farming to really appreciate when he drafted his amendment to the resolution, and I want to read that one portion in his amendment:

"WHEREAS these additional costs to the Manitoba farmer through federal energy taxation ultimately are passed on to the consumer through higher food prices."

If we take out the amendment the way he has proposed it:

"WHEREAS these additional costs to the Manitoba farmer ultimately are passed on to the consumer through higher food prices."

Well, I wonder where this man has ever got any of his figures together. I'm really disappointed because when he considers the cost of the product, and this is one of the arguments that farmers have always had, it's not like a company where you have a cost of production and then you say, well this is my cost of production, this is the return on investment that I have to have and this is the cost of the product on the market. A farmer is not privileged to those kind of situations.

A farmer and his wheat that is based on the world market, he cannot set his own price. He cannot say, this is my cost of production and this is what I have to have, a return on investment and this is the price that I'm going to sell my wheat at.

A MEMBER: He takes what he can get.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: You can't do that, virtually, with any of the agricultural products that are being sold and he indicates in his amendment, that ultimately the costs are passed on to the consumer. It doesn't happen that way.

So I had difficulty, I should say, but somewhere along the light went on for me. I've indicated this before, that the members on the government side have no feeling for the agricultural community and it's been illustrated by the Minister of Agriculture who does not even speak

to this resolution, never mind supporting it, and he is the individual that should be coming forward, supporting and fighting for the farmers of Manitoba and to date in the 16 months that he has been Minister he has done nothing but actually create big problems for them and let them down every time when it was needed for him to show some leadership. That is the reason why I think we have some difficulty here.

When those members that are elected from rural seats - and there are not very many - in fact I don't know how many have ever been involved in active farming to any degree except possibly the Minister of Agriculture who, I don't know why he has that kind of approach, you would think that he would be concerned as well, but I suppose the fact that he lives under the umbrella of Supply and Management within his own means of livelihood, has some bearing as to why he has that cold attitude towards the farmers at all.

But the Member for The Pas, the Member for Dauphin, the few that I can see there, they have invariably not stood up and defended the farm people in this House. Again, instead of having one of those people out there concerned, instead of having one of those people amend it, the Member for River East, the ex-farmer is the one that amends it and destroys the whole concept of the resolution, and for the second time. I can't for the life of me understand why they would not support a benefit to the Manitoba farmers. They always keep turning it around. As we said, muckers, they keep turning it around, putting the onus on the big oil companies at this stage of the game and somehow it seems as if they feel they have to protect the Federal Government in terms of their taxation.

That's what bothers me. Why would the Liberal Government that's in power at the present time, when we could as a joint group here forward a resolution saying, remove the federal tax on energy and oil. But why would they say no? They turn it around and try and put it towards the oil companies. Why would they not support it? It doesn't cost them any money. Mind you in the back of my mind the first thought that comes up, if they would support it and the Federal Government would do it, then they'd probably have a chance to tack on more of their own taxes again on the farmers. Invariably that thought would probably enter their mind because they've proved that that's along the lines that they think.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put some comments on the record after I heard the Minister of Government Services speak. I feel really disappointed that from time to time it's nice to get unity in this House, and this certainly would be one resolution . . . — (Interjection) — Not very often but, invariably, anything that comes from this side of the House, government side somehow has got a mental block and it was referred to by the Member for Morris. They cannot support it. This is a good, clean little resolution here which would benefit Manitobans. — (Interjection) — Was, now it's touched up; now it's a nothing resolution. Why can we not get together once in a while for the benefit of Manitobans and work towards something?

Yesterday, when speaking to the Port of Churchill resolution, I indicated my support for it. I gave my concerns and thoughts about it, but I indicated that I support it. But these members of the government side

can never support a resolution on this side and that is because they have no feeling for the farm people. With those remarks, if they do have concerns about the major industry in this province, which is agriculture, then get up and indicate that once and for all because your actions to date have not proved that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in support for the amendment to the resolution. I must say that I am very disappointed in the opposition, in the attack they've taken on the amendment. You know, the previous member talked of the need to have unanimous approach on certain issues within this House and certainly I agree with him. It's nice to see that approach on occasion.

In looking at this amendment, I can't see why really he hasn't adopted that approach that he talks so much about in regard to this particular amendment itself. In reading it, I think it is a good improvement on the previous resolution; it takes out some of the rather stronger editorial comments which were enclosed in some of the Whereases. Also, it adds to it something which I thought the members opposite would agree to and that is, and I quote, "Be It Further Resolved that this Legislative Assembly urge the Government of Canada to allow the price of oil and gas to drop to follow the present agreement of 75 percent of the world price."

Am I to understand, Mr. Speaker, from their opposition to this amendment that they are opposed to that agreement, that they are opposed to having the price of oil and gas set at 75 percent of the world price in Canada? Because if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, I would like members opposite to say that. Their position on oil prices is ambiguous to say the least. Do I speak, on the one hand, of their Conservative Federal Government, that great epoch in Canadian history? I believe they lasted eight months, was it? I refer to the Budget that was brought down by John Crosbie, the Minister of Finance at that time, and I remember quite distinctly an increase in taxation on oil and gas that would have affected Canadians. I believe it was 18 cents a gallon at that time. So, on the one hand, at certain times they seem to be in favour of increased prices at the federal level.

I look at the provincial level and I see a similar situation, Mr. Speaker, in Alberta where there is a Progressive Conservative Government. I look there and I see continuous requests in previous years for increases in the price of oil products and, you know, I hear that quite consistently from Progressive Conservative Governments there, but the members here appear to be taking a bit of a different approach. They are trying to somehow say that they are in favour of lower prices on oil and gas. I think what they're trying to do basically, Mr. Speaker, is ape the Saskatchewan model whereby the recently elected Conservative Government of Saskatchewan eliminated the gasoline tax.

So I must admit there is something of a difference here between the approaches that members opposite have taken. I would have thought this amendment would

have given them a chance to clarify their position on the price of oil and gas. All they had to do, Mr. Speaker, was get up and say, yes, we support the amendment which states that it be at 75 percent of the world price. I think that position would have been greatly appreciated by many Manitobans because I feel that is the general feeling of people in Manitoba, that we should follow that 75 percent of the world price. In fact, I would like to address a few comments to that, Mr. Speaker, why I personally feel that should be the course we follow.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, there is an agreement that says that is indeed the practice to be followed in Canada, and that is that we follow the 75 percent figure. Now when the price was going up, it seemed to be a fine agreement for both the Federal and Provincial Governments of Alberta. They both seemed to enjoy it quite considerably because it resulted in quite a windfall to them in terms of revenues. I think, Mr. Speaker, they were quite supportive of that 75 percent price. I think the Canadian public also accepted it as a legitimate compromise between those who would like to have gone to the 100 percent figure and those who would rather have kept it closer to the cost of production, which would be not even a small fraction of the present price at the world level. So I think most people in the general public in Canada supported that 75 percent price figure, Mr. Speaker.

Well, if that was okay when the price was going up, I will say, Mr. Speaker, it's also okay when the price is going down. If we have an agreement, it's an agreement. It is like a contract. You don't sign a contract under a certain set of conditions and then go crying to the law courts several months later and say, well, things have changed. I want that contract changed. You don't do that, Mr. Speaker, a contract is a contract. If the parties to that contract want to sit down and renegotiate that contract, that's another thing totally, Mr. Speaker. If that is implicitly what members opposite are suggesting that the various levels of government should do by the fact that they don't support the 75 percent price, then I think that's fine, Mr. Speaker. But I would suggest if there are to be any negotiations in this regard that we be very careful about what new agreement that is signed, because if this agreement isn't good, how is any other agreement going to be good? How are we going to be protected against a sudden dismissal of the agreement and a new set of rules, a new set of pricing formulas? So, as I said, Mr. Speaker, I hope that they will consider that part of their position as indicated by the fact that they do not appear to be in support of the amendment.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, generally the problem I am getting from members across the way is not so much their unwilling to take a stand on this particular issue, but that they want to take all stands on this issue. They want to be in favour of an increase in the price of oil and gas and they want to be against it at the same time. It just depends on which one of their constituents they're talking to, and I use the word "constituents" in a Canadian sense, Mr. Speaker. When they are talking to the people of Alberta, they're in favour of increasing the price of oil and gas. When they're talking to the people of Manitoba, apparently they are saying that they're against it. I think that is highly inconsistent.

There is an even more specific example, Mr. Speaker, of how inconsistent that approach is and that is within

Manitoba itself. That inconsistency can be found in some of the recent statements made by members opposite in response to the concern I have expressed about the high price of gasoline and oil products in one particular area of the province, that being the North.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, quite distinctly the comments from the Member for La Verendrye on this particular point. We were discussing some other matter at the time and he made reference to gasoline taxes and the Budget and started raising the position of Northerners on that gasoline tax. I responded, but what about the overall price differential of 9 cents a litre that we're faced with at the present time? I responded, what about the price differential of 26 cents a litre that we faced only a few months ago? That's right, Mr. Speaker, we, in the North, paid 26 cents a litre more for our gasoline than did people in Winnipeg. I responded, what about the price differential? And the Member for La Verendrye, on his feet, spoke to this particular point and said, well, Mr. Speaker, that is the Northern differential. You pay more up there because there are a lot of higher costs of living up there.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is complete and absolute nonsense. The difference in terms of transportation costs between the North and the south is between 2 cents and 3 cents a litre. It is between 2 cents and 3 cents a litre. Then why are we paying 9 cents a litre more at the present time? Why did we pay as much as 26 cents a litre more only several months ago? Mr. Speaker, it is not because of some accepted fact that we in the North should pay more because we're isolated and what not. That's nonsense. We don't accept that in the North, Mr. Speaker. We're willing to pay a little bit more for transportation and some other legitimate expenses. But the fact is that we in the North reject totally the idea that that 9 cent a litre difference, in the price of gasoline, is legitimate but apparently the Member for La Verendrye doesn't.

Now the other members of this Assembly, members on the opposite side, have been notable on this issue by their silence. You know, I find it incredible, Mr. Speaker, that they have not picked up on this issue. I find it absolutely incredible. It's something that's been talked about for many years in Thompson. They were in government, they were in government for four years. They had four years to do something about it. They had a representative from the constituency of Thompson who I'm sure must have heard this concern in the past. Then why didn't they raise this matter?

Well apart from the fact that they really don't care about the North, Mr. Speaker, apart from that. Apart from the fact they're totally out of touch with the concerns of northerners. I think it gets down to the fact that this issue hits rather close to home.

It really does, Mr. Speaker, it hits rather close to home because when I criticize that price differential, as I said, I'm not criticizing the fact that transportation costs account for two or three cents a litre. I'm criticizing the other 6 cents differential. I'm criticizing that 26 cent overall differential which would be, if we subtract a transportation cost, comes down to approximately 22 or 23 cents a litre. I'm criticizing that, and they know that, Mr. Speaker. They know exactly that is what I'm criticizing. So why then are they so silent on this issue?

Well, I hate to say it, Mr. Speaker, but it really hits close to home because I am basically criticizing the oil

companies, their pricing practices, and the fact that they're screwing the people of Northern Manitoba continuously in terms of gasoline.

Now, the members opposite are silent because as everyone knows they've stood by the oil companies at the federal level, they've stood by them at the provincial level. They've said all along that the oil companies need a greater rate of profit. They've opposed a national energy program. They've supported the sell-out of our oil industry to Exxon and the other corporate giants.

That's where they stand, Mr. Speaker. And they've been repaid in kind. They've received their campaign contributions continually year after year, after year from the major oil companies. And why, Mr. Speaker? Why do those oil companies give to the Conservative Party and not to the New Democratic Party either at the federal level, or here in Manitoba? Well, it's because they know who stands up for their interests. They know that those members opposite couldn't care less about that 9 cent a litre difference in gas prices that we're paying, Mr. Speaker. They couldn't care less.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

The Honourable Member for Pembina on a point of order.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the MLA for Thompson indicated the oil companies donate to the Conservative Party, not the New Democratic Party. Similarly unions donate exclusively to the NDP and not to other parties that are recognized in the province.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a point of order?

The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. D. SCOTT: If there is a point of order, Mr. Speaker, could I address it?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. There is no point of order.

The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: As the Member for Pembina knows that is not a point of order. It is not even relevant to the debate because I said, Mr. Speaker, that the problem with gasoline prices, a large part of it, is the pricing practises of the oil companies. I'm talking about the oil companies.

If he can indicate somewhere, anywhere, where the unions, where the labour movement has anything to do with that price differential I'd like to hear it. I would like to hear it, Mr. Speaker, because in the the case of the gasoline industry I don't think anybody in the retail business is unionized. If they are responsible for the other 6 cents a litre I'd sure like to know about it.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, that is your classic red herring. The point I'm trying to make, and the point I think that the people of Northern Manitoba are trying to make, is that we're being ripped off. Will somebody please listen to us? We've been ripped off for years, will somebody please find out why? And that is the approach I've taken on this, Mr. Speaker. I want to find out why we're being ripped off so badly. Find out for myself, for my own interest, and find out for my constituents.

I am saying on the record that I am absolutely shocked at the fact that members opposite, not only have said nothing in terms of trying to find out why there is this differential, but at least one of their members has actually tried to justify it. I'd like to see the Member for La Verendrye come to Thompson and justify that 9 cents a litre difference, or that 26 cents a litre difference.

If he wants to get up there and tell us that we have to pay more because we're living in the north, I will tell him no way. We've paid enough as it is, we've been ripped off for years. It's about time we got some justice and started getting some more fair pricing in terms of gasoline.

But, Mr. Speaker, that is one aspect of it. But as the Member for Dauphin so properly pointed out that is not the only aspect of oil and gasoline prices. I'll address those in my remaining few minutes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

When we next reach this resolution the Honourable Member for Thompson will have six minutes remaining.

The time being 5:30 the Chair will accept a motion to adjourn.

HON. A. MACKLING: I so move.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The House is accordingly adjourned, and will stand adjourned until 10:00 a.m. on Thursday.