



First Session — Thirty-Fourth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

37 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fourth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIBERAL
ANGUS, John	St. Norbert	LIBERAL
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BURRELL, Parker	Swan River	PC
CARR, James	Fort Rouge	LIBERAL
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIBERAL
CHARLES, Gwen	Selkirk	LIBERAL
CHEEMA, Gulzar	Kildonan	LIBERAL
CHORNOPYSKI, William	Burrows	LIBERAL
CONNERY, Edward Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
COWAN, Jay	Churchill	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose du Lac	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James Hon.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Emerson	PC
DRIEDGER, Herold, L.	Niakwa	LIBERAL
DUCHARME, Gerald, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIBERAL
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Laurie	Fort Garry	LIBERAL
EVANS, Leonard	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen Hon.	Virden	PC
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIBERAL
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Ellice	LIBERAL
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HEMPHILL, Maureen	Logan	NDP
KOZAK, Richard, J.	Transcona	LIBERAL
LAMOUREUX, Kevin, M.	Inkster	LIBERAL
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANDRAKE, Ed	Assiniboia	LIBERAL
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
McCRAE, James Hon.	Brandon West	PC
MINENKO, Mark	Seven Oaks	LIBERAL
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
OLESON, Charlotte Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald Hon.	Pembina	PC
PANKRATZ, Helmut	La Verendrye	PC
PATTERSON, Allan	Radisson	LIBERAL
PENNER, Jack, Hon.	Rhineland	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
ROCH, Gilles	Springfield	LIBERAL
ROSE, Bob	St. Vital	LIBERAL
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
TAYLOR, Harold	Wolseley	LIBERAL
URUSKI, Bill	Interlake	NDP
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
YEO, Iva	Sturgeon Creek	LIBERAL

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 18, 1988.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): I have a statement for the House.

Today is "Person's Day" across Canada, which marks the first official recognition of women's rights and privileges as "persons" in society.

It gives me great pleasure today to announce the Government's plan to launch a major initiative on behalf of the women of Manitoba.

The women's initiative will focus on two main areas: programs and services related to violence against women and their children; programs and services that focus on economic supports and women's economic development.

The problems of child abuse and abuse of women today cannot be overstated. They are problems demanding society's priority attention and Government's serious commitment. Better coordination of services is required to ensure an effective approach.

Many of the socioeconomic problems women face can be tackled through the economic climate. Improvements in that area must be considered a major step forward.

We have appointed a four-member committee to consult with the "real" experts on these issues, the women of Manitoba. The committee will schedule a series of consultations designed to solicit the views and opinions of Manitoba women about the programs and services Government offers and how they might be improved. From these consultations, Government will be able to identify gaps, inconsistencies and duplications in existing services and move to address them.

The committee will be chaired by Gerrie Hammond, MLA for Kirkfield Park, and members include: Doris Mae Oulton, Executive Director of the Women's Directorate; Dorothy Hill, Community Coordinator for Osborne House; and Janet Fontaine, Policy Analyst with the Women's Directorate.

The consultations will begin in rural Manitoba during November. Fourteen rural sites have been chosen, including Swan River, Dauphin, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk, Ste. Anne, Steinbach, Brandon, Ashern, Minnedosa, Morden, Powerview, Boissevain, Beausejour and Russell.

* (1335)

Northern sites include Thompson, Flin Flon, The Pas, Norway House, Wabowden and Snow Lake.

Consultation sites will be selected for Winnipeg with those meetings to be held during January.

While these consultations are occurring across the province, an intergovernmental review will be conducted to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of Government programs and services for women.

The committees have been asked to report their findings to the provincial Cabinet by March 8, 1989, International Women's Day.

The result of this process will be a plan of action covering the next three years. It will be a blueprint for the improvements in the coordination and delivery of women's programs and services.

The women's initiative I have announced today speaks to the kind of open and accountable Government we promised in our Throne Speech. It underscores this Government's commitment to work in consultation with the people of this province, and in this case the women of the province, to provide them with the kinds of programs and services that they want and need.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba women have always been in the forefront of equality issues in Canada and tonight Manitoba women will gather to celebrate Person's Day. It will be a celebration of past victories, a marking of milestones, but also a celebration of a future full of promise. I am proud to say that the women's initiative I have announced today will play a very important role in that future. Thank you.

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): As much as I welcome this statement today, it indeed, as well, makes me very angry, because just today we sat in committee where Members of this Conservative Government stood up and said they would not want to be recognized as a chairperson. We have heard that from Members, we have heard it from Ministers, we have had a memo circulated by the Minister of Cultural Affairs and Heritage (Mrs. Mitchelson).

The idea of making and having women recognized by this Person's Day is the idea that women should be as equal as anyone else in this society. We are people as women and we should be acknowledged as people—not as pseudo men or ersatz men but as people. We have to recognize that "chairperson" is a term not easily taken by any one of us. I myself will often slip up and say chairman, but it is an indication because the words that we use are an indication of how we feel. We have to acknowledge that people are people whether they are of the sex of female or the sex of male. The terminology this Government uses indicates how much it really supports the equality of women.

We have had to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) here in this House, when he could not find any women actively involved in the farm, why he would not put women on boards. We have had to push to find women as chairpeople in the boards that this Government has set up.

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I do really support the acknowledgement and acknowledge this statement the Minister makes today, but I think this Government has to look at the two-faced show it is putting on in supporting women and that it says one thing and does another. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (St. Johns): I am pleased to rise today on the occasion of the 63rd Anniversary of the person's case and pay tribute to our grandmothers and mothers who have gone before us to fight for the vote, to fight for women being called persons, and to pay tribute to our sisters today in Manitoba's society who continue to fight for equal opportunities and equal protection before the law.

It is its day of sadness and a day for anger not only on the part of women in this Chamber but on the part of women right across this province. We have to ask ourselves the question: is this announcement made today by this Government on this very important historic occasion of Person's Day in keeping with the meaning and the traditions of that day, in keeping with the movement of Prairie women in fighting for true equality? The announcement we have seen today says it is not. We have received nothing more than platitudes and study and consultation, following on the heels of a record of inaction, of cutbacks in every area of significance for women in this province.

* (1340)

Mr. Speaker, Members on that side of the House know full well because they said it so on the same day, on this occasion of Person's Day one year ago, that women have been studied to death and there is now time for action, time to fight meaningfully and substantively towards equality. The Minister has just received a few months ago the report of her own directorate on recommendations that need to be met by this Government to live up to the United Nations. She has just received the study of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, listing recommendation after recommendation after recommendation for action. Why now is the Minister prepared to present to us another study, another example of inaction?

Let me conclude by saying that we have seen cutbacks on all meaningful areas when it comes to pay equity, affirmative action and day care. We have seen silence when it comes to the White Paper on Family Law. We have seen silence on the trade deal when it comes to equality for women. We have seen right-wing rhetoric that smacks of Neanderthal days, dinosaur days, that we thought were long dead and gone in this Chamber.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, was a very sad day for the women of this province. Members on that side of the House stood up in Estimates and suggested once again, as we heard from the federal Liberal Government of some 10 years ago, that women are working for profit, that women are working for pin money. Let me quote from the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson). She says, "It is for the extra things that women are working." That is a slap in the face to all women in this province.

I would implore this Government, on Person's Day, 1988, to scrap the studies and the consultations and

to come forward with real substantive action on issues that will mean real equality between men and women of this province.

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if I could have the indulgence of Honourable Members and revert back to Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees. (Agreed)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Mark Minenko (Chairman of the Committee of Supply): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), that the report of committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct the attention of Honourable Members to the Speaker's gallery where we have with us today His Excellency Najmuddin Shaikh, who is the Ambassador of Pakistan. On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Unemployed Help Centre Dismantling Costs

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Employment Services and Economic Security (Mrs. Oleson). Since 1985, 11,000 unemployed people in need turned to the Unemployed Community Help Centre. The centre not only provided vital services to these individuals in helping them cut through the jungle of red tape, it represented a number of them at appeal hearings.

Over this period, the centre assisted in the recovery of over \$800,000 of Unemployment Insurance benefits. Had it not been for the centre, many would have turned to the provincial Government for social assistance. There is no question that the federal Government should fund such an agency and it has been recommended to them by their own Unemployment Insurance Commission study, but they have refused to do so.

* (1345)

My question is to the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson). How much will the dismantling of this centre, because it will require some dismantling if it does not receive provincial funding, how much will this cost the province in social assistance payments?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): I would like to point out to the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) that unemployment

insurance is a federal program, that it is the responsibility of the federal Government to look after that program. My staff has been in discussion with the senior staff of Unemployment Insurance and they assure me that they have put three people in the office in Winnipeg to deal with any eventuality of people needing help. They have put one extra person in the office in Brandon for the same reason. The federal Government is cooperating. It shows what you can do when Governments cooperate to provide service.

The figures that the Member has quoted may very well—many of them may very well have been attained by the people as unemployment insurance benefits anyway without the work of this agency. I recognize that the agency has done some good work, but we cannot afford in this province to duplicate services. We are interested in having jobs, not people unemployed.

Mrs. Carstairs: As someone who has been a chairman of the board of referees of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, I can tell her that there is very much a necessity of this particular—Mr. Speaker, it was 10 years ago before “chairperson” was used. Thank you, Mr. Speaker—(Interjection)—Yes, it was us.

From personal experience I can tell the Minister, because she has not obviously experienced it herself, that these people will not receive their unemployment insurance benefits without help. The directors of the centre have been asking since June to meet with the Minister. Why has she still not met with them?

Mrs. Oleson: I have met with many, many delegations, many people in my office and I do have trouble scheduling meetings. I cannot meet with everyone as soon as they call. I have invited that particular group to send me a letter outlining any concerns they have and any information that perhaps I may not be aware of. I cannot schedule more meetings than the time will allow is what I am trying to say.

Mrs. Carstairs: How can she not meet with people, 11,000 of them, who have been unemployed, these are the representatives? Why can she not schedule a simple meeting? She has agreed to meet with the Brandon group. Why will she not meet with the Winnipeg group?

Mrs. Oleson: I can just tell the Member that she is asking me to meet with 11,000 people—some days it feels as if 11,000 people have gone through my office. I have attempted to meet with as many groups as possible.

Meeting with Minister

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Well, obviously, it is her priorities that are at fault. The staff at the centre—in a new question this time to the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae)—have acted as the counsel for the unemployed on informal and formal appeal hearings on at least 865 occasions in the last three years. Had it not been for the centre, the people would have turned to Legal Aid at an average cost of \$400 per case or \$346,000.00.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this amounts to 5.7 years of funding to this particular agency. My question to the

Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) is how much will the dismantling of this centre's services cost this province in Legal Aid costs?

* (1350)

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): In light of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's (Mrs. Carstairs) questions last Friday, I would be very remiss if I did not check out the Honourable Leader's contentions in her question. It is also a dangerous thing to do to engage in answering hypothetical questions such as the one the Leader has just asked.

Dismantling Costs

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Perhaps he can answer this very practical question: has the Attorney-General met with Legal Aid representatives to discuss with them the ramifications of this centre being able, in the future, to serve the same numbers of people whom they have served in the past because of the cutbacks of funding?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): The decision to make these changes that have been made was made not lightly, it was made with a due consideration. The other thing the Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) seems to forget is that when she is talking about saving money, she is talking about the taxpayers of this province, of this city, of the various municipalities in our province, as well as national taxpayers. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition has already, as I have already said, Mr. Speaker, suggested spending something more than \$700 million more than this Government has already budgeted. I really wonder about the responsibility of the Leader of the Opposition with her questions today.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Impact Legal Aid

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a final supplementary to the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), I am simply asking a question of spending smarter. If you save \$180,000, but it costs you \$346,000, you have not saved money, you have lost money. Did the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) consult with the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) before this cut was made? Did he then consult with Legal Aid about the costs in appeal process that this would generate as a result of the cut to this agency?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): The Honourable Minister of Community Services definitely did consult me on this matter as one of the centres is located in the City of Brandon. We talked about exactly what the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is suggesting, spend smarter. I suggest the average person in this province would be shocked if the average person in this province knew the kind of spending the Leader of the Opposition would embark a Government led by her on in this province. Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, there was discussion between myself and the Minister of

Community Services (Mrs. Oleson), considerable discussion. The matter of spending smarter was central to the discussion. The Minister of Community Services assured me, because it was a matter of some concern on my part, has been for a long time with respect to these centres, about duplication. We talked about duplication and we also talked—the Minister assured me that more resources were made available through the federal authority, both in Winnipeg and in Brandon, so that these are the people who understand the UIC the best and these are the people who should be providing the service. That service is being provided. I was satisfied of that before I could lend my support to this.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Indeed I was shocked and surprised to find out that after all the lectures we received on patronage—

Mrs. Carstairs: It is in my autobiography.

Mr. Doer: That is good to know. It saves us a lot of digging in terms of all the comments we have received on patronage appointments.

Unemployment Figures Rural Manitoba

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). We have been raising in this House a very serious matter that has been treated in a rather offhanded way, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the higher unemployment rate in this province. There are 7,000 more people unemployed—cannot change any of those numbers—with this Government this year, this month, than it was a year ago. There is rising unemployment in western Manitoba with all the Tory Cabinet Ministers and the Members who are allegedly representing the province in that area of the province, the unemployment rate had jumped 2 percent under their Government and the former Government. My question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon): given the fact that the Carberry feedlot is going to be closed down and eight jobs will be lost, what is this Minister going to do about it in terms of those jobs in rural Manitoba?

* (1355)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): During the regime of the NDP now led by the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), the NDP did absolutely nothing for the farmers of Manitoba. We have dramatically increased the funding in agriculture in this year's Budget, a dramatic increase. We have removed a portion of the education tax on farmland to increase the viability of farmers in this province. We have indeed done many things for the farmers—\$18.3 million in drought relief in this year's Budget. We have made our commitment to the farmers of this province. We have extended the Feedlot Beef Commission Stabilization to feedlot operators in this province. All of these things have been done in recognition of the needs of the farmers of Manitoba.

All of these things have been done because we are committed to maintain the viability of our family farms, far more than the NDP ever dreamed of.

That is why the farmers of Manitoba have supported very strongly the Progressive Conservative Party and will never support the ND Party. Never.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: That is cold comfort to the eight jobs that are lost in rural Manitoba. That is cold comfort to the 7,000 more people that are unemployed under your Government and your administration, the thousands more that are unemployed in western Manitoba, the 10 percent predicted unemployment rate in Dauphin in this winter. That is cold comfort to those people.

Job Funding Initiatives

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question, do not give us the rhetoric, tell us what you are going to do to stop this operation from closing, for stopping other people from going unemployed, and for stopping advisors working for his federal Government, Mr. Mulroney, for telling other people to go to other provinces to get jobs. What is he going to do about it?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): We are already working very actively toward a tripartite stabilization plan for beef so that our beef producers will be on a level playing field with all the beef producers in this country, unlike the NDP who are philosophically opposed to working cooperatively with the national Government, decided they would go their own way, were philosophically opposed to stabilization for feedlot operators, and destroyed the feedlot industry in this province. We are bringing in feedlot stabilization so that our feedlot operators will once again be able to compete with other jurisdictions.

They destroyed the packing house industry—500 jobs at Canada Packers; 500 jobs, not eight jobs in one feedlot. Five hundred jobs in the packing industry in Manitoba, in one fell swoop they destroyed, because of their philosophies, their priorities and their commitments to Manitoba.

Mr. Doer: The Member well knows that the packing industry right across this country has closed plants, whether it was Swift's under Sterling Lyon, or Canada Packers under George Richardson and some other members of the board of directors, some Liberal contributors, I believe.

Restoration

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) is, given the \$600,000 that this Government cut from their Budget, will they look at reinstating that Feedlot Stabilization Program?

Secondly, given the fact that there are many more people in this province totally unemployed, and given

they have cut all the job creation programs, will he restore the Unemployed Help Centres in western Manitoba and Brandon and indeed, in Winnipeg? They have less services and more people unemployed under this Tory regime.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Under the NDP, we never had a Feedlot Stabilization Program in this province. He talks about reinstating something that never existed in Manitoba. That is the kind of hypocrisy we are dealing with. That is the kind of stupidity we are dealing with from this discredited failed Leader of the ND Party. And then, Mr. Speaker, when he is on his back he takes a cheap shot at one of the leading business people in this province and that is why we had all of these losses of jobs and industries in Manitoba because of the attitude they had to anybody who invested, created jobs and opportunities for Manitoba. They destroyed the initiative. They destroyed the opportunities for the people of Manitoba because they took cheap shots at anybody who invested in Manitoba.

* (1400)

Mr. Doer: I will not be afraid to criticize anybody that closed down Canada Packers. I am surprised the First Minister would defend that decision.

My final question is there is rising unemployment under this Tory Government all across this province. He cannot deny that. He cannot baffle his way around it. He cannot use the rhetoric and the Pollyanna speeches. It just will not work. Will this First Minister instruct his Minister of Community Services and Employment and Economic Security (Mrs. Oleson) to reinstate those valuable resources that work with the voluntary sector, with the United Way and others resources, the Unemployed Help Centres, restore those agencies instead of their callous, capricious cutbacks of those programs in this province?

Mr. Filmon: If he is not afraid to criticize those people who were responsible for closing down industries in this province, he better start with his NDP colleagues in Government. It was their policy, their lack of support for the feedlot industry, their lack of support for a tripartite program in the beef industry that killed the packing industry in Manitoba. That is where he can begin with his criticism.

Secondly, he can begin by looking at the payroll tax, a direct tax on jobs that destroyed initiative, that destroyed the desire to invest in Manitoba and destroy jobs all the way through our economy. He can look at the high debt load, the second highest per capita debt in this entire country created by the NDP administration. That is what destroyed jobs. That is what destroyed investment. That is what destroyed opportunity over six-and-a-half years. We are setting things on a new and better track. We are going to, by our policies, by reducing the deficit, by encouraging people to invest here, create job opportunities, create investment and opportunities for the future of Manitoba. We will overcome that six-and-a-half years of neglect of his administration.

AIDS Education Program Funding

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): My question is for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). As the Minister may be aware, this is National AIDS Awareness Week. Canada has the second highest level of infection per capita. We spend the least amount of dollars on education and research.

On September 16, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) indicated in this House that his department was, "focusing substantial resource and program approach." My question for the Minister is would the Minister tell this House today what specific programs his department has undertaken, given his September 16 commitment and given that we are in the second day of National AIDS Awareness Week?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I thank my honourable friend for such a timely question, given that this AIDS Awareness Week and all Canadians certainly want to join nationally in making all people of this country aware of the problem that the disease of AIDS can present individually and collectively to society. We certainly join in participation in the AIDS Awareness Week.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken within the Department of Health this year in this year's Budget in order to attack AIDS from what is considered to be the most productive method of spending and method of support by Government, and that being through Education and promotion of awareness of the dangers of AIDS and how individuals can indeed protect themselves from infection from that very often fatal and very deadly disease. Those initiatives are all part of the enhanced AIDS Support Funding that was announced in the Throne Speech debate.

Ms. Gray: I must commend the Minister of Health for doing an excellent job of not answering my question. I will answer the question for the Minister. In fact, we have been in contact with his department today and they have indicated to us that there are no special thrusts, there are no information kits available and there are still no pamphlets.

Policy

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): My question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is will this Minister get on board, albeit somewhat late, provide some leadership in his department, rather than spouting rhetoric and ensure that a comprehensive approach to education and information is developed and is developed now. It is a little late for this year this week, but will the Minister immediately undertake to ensure that there are programs in the community in AIDS education and quit spouting rhetoric?

Hon. Don Orchard (Minister of Health): I, naturally, always take very seriously the suggestions by my honourable friend, the MLA for Ellice, who has some substantial experience and, no doubt, contact and knowledge within the Department of Health, given that she worked in the Regional Services delivery operation.

I can simply indicate to my honourable friend that an AIDS pamphlet is in the process of being prepared and readying for print and distribution. I can also indicate to my honourable friend that an education, multi-media campaign is in the formulation stages for presentation to the people of Manitoba in this fiscal year. My honourable friend is offered the caution of getting on board in terms of community education and I am surprised, given her extensive contacts within Regional Services, that she did not make herself aware or was not told that we have increased the staffing in the regions of this province for regional delivery of program by six staff people this year, to enable within the regions a greater degree of education awareness, support of the school system in providing students, teachers, parent groups, greater educational opportunities in AIDS through the provision of six additional staff years in Regional Services.

An Honourable Member: She did not know that.

Manitoba Education Council AIDS Report

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Since there have been no special thrusts for AIDS Awareness Week in the Province of Manitoba, my final supplementary is for the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach).

The Manitoba Education Council on AIDS has not met for five months. A meeting was scheduled for September 20 but was cancelled because the Minister of Education indicated he was too busy. My question to the Minister of education is why has the Minister not initiated a meeting with the Manitoba Education Council on AIDS since their mandate has not been completed, and when will the Minister of Education, since the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is doing nothing, at least give priority to AIDS education, to this very serious issue?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): It is true that unfortunately I had to cancel a meeting that was scheduled with the Manitoba Council on AIDS Education, and it was because of the fact that we do have responsibilities here in the House, and the Member knows full well where the priorities are. However, that meeting will be rescheduled at such a time that we can reschedule it and we will meet with the council at that time.

I would also like to say to the Member opposite that in fact we are awaiting, from the post-secondary committee on AIDS, the report on how AIDS situations should be handled in the post-secondary areas. Once this information is received, it will be dealt with by the Manitoba Council on AIDS who will then submit this report to interested groups, and also to school divisions, colleges and universities for their response, after which time this will be come back to me, as Minister, for recommendation.

Group Homes Fe Eborá Case

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): During the Question Period on Friday, we heard the Honourable Leader of the Third Party (Mr. Doer) speak out on the Fe Eborá case in Tuxedo where she lost her licence for a care home. Unfortunately, the Honourable Leader of the NDP once more used rhetoric more than logic. I had expected more from this Honourable Member as he used to be the previous Minister of Urban Affairs. Unfortunately, he condemned the city by-law for the problem. This by-law is absolutely right, and I would expect that even as the ex-Minister that he would have known more than what I have experienced with the Gang of 19. He should take a lesson from them, and I was not a member, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, to continue my question to the Minister of Community Services and Employment and Economic Security (Mrs. Oleson), as I said before, the Leader of the third Party (Mr. Doer) condemned the city by-law for the problem.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) was just about to put his question.

* (1410)

Mr. Rose: I might state that this problem lies in the interpretation of the flawed NDP provincial regulations for residential care facilities. Actually, this lady lost her licence when the NDP were in power.

My question to the Minister is this. Has the Minister examined this particular case with a view to the reinstatement of the Letter of Approval so that these three people can stay in a home where they get love, care that they need and, as admitted by the Minister's department, that is superior and less costly than any alternatives?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the problem and have instructed staff to give me a full report on it so we can see what steps can be taken.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister if, due to the fact that the Honourable Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer) has confused the issue rather than helping to maintain this much needed care home which we are always complaining we do not have enough of, she will reinstate this home immediately.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Concordia, on a point of order.

Mr. Doer: I believe the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) is out of order in his comments. I would remind the

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Member for St. Vital of this very important legislative procedural fact that I quote: "Each of us in large homes and many of us who have maid's quarters," said the Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), who lives on nearby Wellington Crescent, does not want any residents of a multiple nature in their residences. I would ask the Party to be consistent and stop taking cheap shots on this issue.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, on a point of order.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, I know very well that the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) would not want a quote taken completely out of context left on their record, and let me assure this House that there is indeed a group home behind my house and one in which I take great pride.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. Honourable Members did not have a point of order.

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Speaker, I had said in my previous answer that I had undertaken to get a report on this issue, and I will.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rose: There is a meeting of the Gang of 19 tonight. I think you should take it in and maybe you might learn something. I am certainly interested not only in this case but how many have fallen by the wayside, these much needed cases.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister, in view of the circumstances surrounding this case and the need of these people for continuing care, if the Minister would be kind enough to contact the city to have them cease the order to have the two residents of the home thrown out on the streets as the NDP would have it. Thank you.

Mrs. Oleson: As I indicated to the Member before, I will undertake to look into the matter and see what steps need to be taken.

Manitoba Education Council AIDS Meeting Cancellation

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): As the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) indicated, Mr. Speaker, this is the beginning of AIDS Awareness Week. Nearly two months ago, the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) was asked how his Government was going to deal with the need for full factual and up-to-date information on AIDS. At that time and later on, about a month ago, he referenced that there would be a meeting of the Manitoba

Education Council on AIDS, which was then cancelled on short notice.

This afternoon, we heard the Minister indicate that meeting was cancelled on short notice because of the responsibilities that he has to perform here in the Legislature. I would ask if the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) or perhaps the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) can indicate when it is the Legislature started meeting at 8:30 in the morning, because that is when that meeting was scheduled.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Attorney-General, on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): On a point of order, the Honourable Member knows that questions relating to the operations of this House are better put to you, Mr. Speaker, on a private basis. You do not ask questions like that in the House.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), on the same point of order.

Mr. Cowan: I would hope that after his many years in the Legislature that the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) would realize that it is not possible, as a matter of fact, it is impossible and frowned upon to ask questions of the Speaker. Therefore, one could not ask a question of you, Mr. Speaker, but must address all those questions through the Government House Leader, notwithstanding the fact that he does not know what he is talking about or how this House operates.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Member for Churchill. It is a point very well taken.

The Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) did not have a point of order. The Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) made a fact that is quite relevant to all Honourable Members that you would adhere to. We do not ask the Speaker a question. If Honourable Members would like to ask the Speaker a question, my Chambers are always open.

The Honourable Attorney-General, on a new point of order.

Mr. McCrae: If you would be so kind as to check the record of today's proceedings, I did I believe say the proper way to handle questions relating to the House. I do not suggest that the Honourable Member's question is not anything more than a silly question. But I did say, Mr. Speaker, that questions like that are better raised privately with the Speaker, not in the House.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank both Honourable Members.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): The Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) is, in his question, insinuating that perhaps there was no intention of my willingness to meet with the Manitoba Education Council on AIDS. Mr. Speaker, that is the furthest thing from the truth.

The Member for Churchill knows that when matters come up in the House, there are times when we have

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to reschedule our set schedules in order to be able to accommodate business that has to be dealt with in the House on that particular day or following. It is for that reason we do have to sometimes shuffle our schedules. He knows that very well, being a Member of a former Government.

However, I would like to indicate to him and to the House, that I do want to meet with the Manitoba Council on AIDS. We have met with many groups. We have implemented a program for public schools to deal with the situation of AIDS occurring in the public school system. We are looking forward to the report from the Post-Secondary Committee on AIDS. Once that comes down, Mr. Speaker, that will be forwarded to the MECA group. Also, there are some students who were members of the MECA group who are not members in those educational institutions at this time. Those students will be replaced by other students from educational institutions. So, therefore, if the Member is suggesting in some way that we are avoiding this important body, he is dead wrong.

AIDS Education Post Secondary Institutions

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): I find it interesting that the Minister is now so keenly awaiting the report of the Post-Secondary Committee on AIDS. Can he indicate why it is that the Post-Secondary Committee on AIDS has not met since the election, and why it has not been given any direction by his Government to come forward with the recommendations that it was supposed to follow through on in order to ensure that there was appropriate information available to those students in the post-secondary educational sector?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): Once again, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) is dead wrong. As a matter of fact, my information is that the post-secondary group has worked and is continuing to work on the recommendations for post-secondary institutions. I do not have a copy of their timetable when they meet but, when that report is ready, it will be forwarded to MECA group and subsequently to myself.

Mr. Cowan: If the Minister was listening to my question, he would have heard me say that it had not met and indeed my information is that it has not met. Mr. Speaker, most Manitobans are growing angry about the Government trying to mask their inaction and their unwillingness to move on this issue because they lack the political will to do so by constantly mouthing fine sounding but meaningless platitudes in this House and elsewhere.

Policy

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): My question to the Minister, because I believe this has become an apparent concern as a result of their inaction and his words in this House, can the Minister assure this House that his own personal biases about AIDS and those most affected by AIDS, which he strongly enunciated during the debate on The Human Rights Act in this Legislature—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): Mr. Speaker, several times during this Session, the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) has got himself into a spot where he has gone a little too far. He is sometimes a little overzealous. He has clearly, by his question, spoken about a personal bias on the part of the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) which is clearly, clearly, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, against any possible interpretation of the Rules of this House.

I suggest that the Honourable Member search his soul on this one and reconsider his words and, in the spirit of parliamentary behaviour that he, himself, likes to espouse and encourage on other Honourable Members, he do the honourable thing and withdraw those words and apologize to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) for the imputation of motive contained in this question.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Member. I would like to remind the Honourable Member for Churchill of Beauchesne 316(f), which says quite clearly that we may not "make a personal charge against a Member." I would, therefore, ask the Honourable Member for Churchill to kindly rephrase his question.

Mr. McCrae: Or withdraw.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase my question. Can the Minister—

Some Honourable Members: Withdraw!

Mr. Cowan: It seems that there is more than one Speaker, or more than one person who would aspire to be Speaker in this House. I accept your direction to rephrase the question. My question to the - (Interjection)- I am afraid there are people who are reflecting upon your ruling, Mr. Speaker. It makes it difficult to continue on with my question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have recognized the Honourable Member for Churchill.

Mr. Cowan: Can the Minister indicate or assure the House and indeed Manitobans that the approach which he enunciated during the debate on The Human Rights Act last year in this Legislature will not stand in the way of his Government bringing forward a comprehensive and a rational approach to ensure that full and factual information is available to students across this province when it comes to the very serious issue of AIDS and how to prevent its spread?

* (1420)

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): First of all, I am somewhat appalled at the kind of rhetoric

and questioning we are having this afternoon from the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan). I do want to make it clear for the record that any time that I or Members of this side of the House spoke on the issue of AIDS, we always spoke in favour of making sure that Manitobans had full and complete information about this dreadful disease. And that is our position now and will continue to be.

With regard to the AIDS program in the schools at the present time, we are presently in-servicing. In-services have been set for teachers on how to deal with this dreadful disease and how to give this information in an appropriate way to students in Manitoba schools.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there are people who are working on looking at whether there is new information which should be added to what we are providing to schools at this time as well. I also want to indicate to you that we have implemented the guidelines for dealing with AIDS in the public school system. I indicated in my two answers previously that we are going to be implementing or we are looking forward to the information coming from the Post-Secondary Committee on how to deal with AIDS in the post-secondary institutions.- (Interjection)- Yes, take a look at it and read it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

MPIC Rate Review

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): My question is for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (Mr. Cummings). When this Minister was in Opposition, only several months ago in February and March of 1988, he accused the former Government of political manipulation in setting rates for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. We talked this morning in committee to the Minister about the substance of those allegations and it comes down to a very simple fact. That former Government had appointed the chairman of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation from a Member of its own Cabinet.

This Minister and this Government has chosen to appoint a Member of its caucus to the board of MPIC. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) is shaking his head, but it is a fact. Now we hear this morning that there will not be rate setting by the Public Utilities Board but rather that Cabinet will maintain the final say. Mr. Speaker, what has changed?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): I can repeat for the Member's benefit what I said to him in committee this morning. The review of the MPIC rates will be done before the PUB for the 1989 year. There will be a review of the rates. The corporation is in the middle of rate making at this particular time. They have just about reached the end of their fiscal year, and they are starting to work for 1989. They have to have those rates in place by the middle of December so that they can begin the printing process for January 1. The review will be done by PUB for 1989.

Political Manipulation

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): With a supplementary question to the same Minister, the Minister told us this morning that the problem with the old ways was that there was a Member of Cabinet who was chairing MPIC. Now we have a Member of the Tory caucus on the board of MPIC. The Minister has told us that the problem was that rates were not set by the Public Utilities Board. But now Cabinet is going to review those rates and send a recommendation on retroactively. I ask the Minister, does he not think that he now is vulnerable to the accusation of political manipulation.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): Legislation will be introduced to make sure that the PUB has an opportunity to review the rates of this corporation. I can assure the Member and assure anyone who understands how the mind of the public works, if they think that any Minister would put himself in a position where he tinkered with the rates and had that revealed in front of the Public Utilities Board, he would be gone tomorrow. The onus is there for the Government to accept reasonable recommendations from the corporation.

Caucus Appointment

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge will have time for one final short question.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): A very short, tiny, weeny-teeny supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the same Minister, would the Minister put it on the record and tell this House today, does he think it appropriate that a Member of the Government caucus sit on the board of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. McCrae: On a point of order, the Honourable Member's question seeks an opinion from the Minister. We have dealt with that a number of times in this House, too. Honourable Members opposite, especially of the calibre of the Honourable Member, a Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Carr), should not put questions like this.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae). Would the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) kindly rephrase his question? It did seek an opinion.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Is it Government policy that it is in the best interests of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation to appoint a member of its own caucus to the board of MPIC?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): We deliberately went out and chose a chairman who has a strong insurance background, a man of impeccable integrity who is not associated politically with any of us in this room. That is the first demonstration of de-politicizing this corporation. The second demonstration is that I am not Chairman of the Board. You do not have a direct link into Executive Council through a Member of caucus.

Mr. Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to the end of the day, I would like to draw Honourable Members' attention to the loge to my right where we have with us today Mr. Morris McGregor, the former Member for Virден. On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave of the House to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Minister have leave? (Agreed)

Mrs. Oleson: I thank the Members of the House for their indulgence. At noon hour I signed a proclamation declaring the week of October 16 to 22 Foster Parents' Week in Manitoba, and in that way recognized the foster parents and the Foster Parent's Association of Manitoba for their valuable assistance to the children of Manitoba who for one reason or another cannot remain with their families.

Today at a reception to honour foster parents, I presented an award to Clara Aneechin and Harvey Chartrand and their family, and declared them as Foster Parents of the Year.

They have fostered over 30 children in their career as foster parents and are most deserving recipients of this award. Clara has seven children of her own and, as I understand, they have fostered over 30 children. I think that is a very commendable and a valuable service to Manitoba. I would like to pay tribute today, as I am sure all Members of the House would, to the foster parents who open their homes and their hearts to children of Manitoba who need care. We appreciate their care and dedication every week. This week we are honouring them.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Ellice have leave? (Agreed)

Ms. Gray: We, too, this afternoon would like to join with the Government in saying congratulations and in

recognition of the Foster Parents of Manitoba and in recognition of the Foster Parents' Week. I believe that words cannot really express the sincere dedication and commitment that foster parents throughout Manitoba have in the provision of care to children.

It is very, very difficult to put into words and to express the feelings and emotions when you visit foster parents, when you speak to foster parents, and when you see the commitment and the caring that foster parents have. We certainly, on this side of the House, also commend the individuals who have received awards today.

We trust and we hope that the foster parents in Manitoba will be alive and well in the years to come. We sincerely hope that the foster parents will continue to provide care to the children throughout the province in Manitoba. Again, Mr. Speaker, I think really, words are inadequate to express our sincere appreciation for the commitment and the caring that foster parents do provide.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, could I have leave as well to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for St. Johns have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I am pleased to join with my colleagues and counterparts from both other political Parties in a united gesture of support for foster parents in commemoration of Foster Parents' Week and also to pay tribute to the foster parents who have been recognized as symbols of the kind of nurturing care that is provided by foster parent families.

* (1430)

I think it is only fitting that after several weeks and months of working together to recognize the role of foster parents, that we join together as well today in this very special week as marked by the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) and pay tribute to those families and volunteers and activists in our communities who have given of their time, their energy, their homes, their own family lives to nurture and care for children who are without that kind of home life and that kind of nurturing environment.

I am only too pleased to add my comments on behalf of all of my colleagues in the NDP caucus in recognition of the incredible work and contribution made by foster parents in the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, may I ask leave of the House to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, this evening, in the City of Winnipeg, one of our colleagues, the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minken), will be

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decorated with the Canada Decoration for 12 years of service with the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Praznik: This is certainly an achievement of which I am sure the Honourable Member and his family are deservedly proud. We, as a nation, through the presentation of this decoration, recognize and pay tribute to those Canadians who sacrificed their time and energy in the service of our country, whether it be on active service or with the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves.

I would ask all Honourable Members to join with me in extending congratulations to our colleague, the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks, on this very noteworthy occasion in his life.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), 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.

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 Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the Chair for the Department of Community Services; and the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) in the Chair for the Department of Agriculture.

* (1450)

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr. Chairman, Harold Gilleshammer: I would like to call this Committee on Community Services to order on item 4. Child and Family Services, section (f) Children's Special Services: (1) Salaries, \$205,400.00. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Chairperson, just before I continue on with a few more questions in this area, I had asked our last day in Estimates if the Minister could get information for me on the number of day program spaces that were provided in the last few fiscal years. Does the Minister have that information today?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): That information is being compiled for the Member and we do not have it available today.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Chairperson, in regard to Children's Special Services, under the activity identification, it refers to supplies. Could the Minister explain what is the nature of supplies? Do we provide supplies to families or children and what would these supplies be?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Chairman, there are supplied on occasion to older children, like 6- or 7-year-olds who

are not toilet trained diapers, a supply of formula for babies, toilet seats, and some bathroom devices for the use of children who need them. For instance, lifts into the bath tub, that sort of thing.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister tell us what the criteria is in order for children or families of these children to receive such supplies?

Mrs. Oleson: The eligibility criteria. Any child with a disabling condition or the child's family is eligible for the service provided that:

- (1) the service is in response to one or more of the objectives, the service is based and is part of an individualized plan which is reviewed at regular intervals, and the child's special needs are such that additional supports and resources are needed.

I will need to read the program objectives because it referred to them in that:

- (1) to prevent the need for separating children from their families and to facilitate return home when possible;
- (2) to provide supplementary resources to the care being provided to children in their own homes;
- (3) to maximum a child's individual development in the least restrictive manner and to increase the competencies of primary care givers;
- (4) to reduce stress on the parents or other care provider;
- (5) to encourage early and ongoing integration of children with special needs;
- (6) to ensure available services in the community are used to the greatest practical extent;
- (7) to facilitate ongoing care for a child in the least restrictive manner and to create where possible opportunities for support regardless of the geographic location in which the family resides;
- (8) to provide a balance of resources between care in a family home and institutional care;
- (9) to alleviate "extraordinary" financial burdens on families which result directly from the child's condition.

Then as I have given before, the eligibility criteria that refers to that.

* (1500)

Ms. Gray: The Minister has mentioned an individual plan for these children. Could the Minister then tell us, does this imply that in order for the families of these children to receive the services, there must be an identified case worker who would work with these families?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes.

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Ms. Gray: The criteria which the Minister has outlined and the objectives of the program in regard to these particular services, are these decisions on individual cases made by Children's Special Services staff or is that something that is delegated to the regions?

Mrs. Oleson: Delegated to the regions.

Ms. Gray: Again for clarification then, so when a family is requesting supplies such as diapers, that total decision is made at the regional level?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes, that is the case.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister tell us, is there a particular dollar amount for supplies per child that the staff and families are aware of in regard to how many or how much supplies they could receive in a given year?

Mrs. Oleson: We discussed that last night I believe. It cannot exceed \$3,000 unless there are extenuating circumstances. It is a combination of respite and supplies.

Ms. Gray: The Minister has clarified that the \$3,000 amount is a combination of respite and supplies. Could the Minister indicate, is there any division within that as to how many dollars could be supplies, how much could be respite, and could in fact the entire \$3,000 be for supplies?

Mrs. Oleson: It depends on the individual plan, but it is possible that the \$3,000 could be used for supplies.

Ms. Gray: Again in this area, there is an indication that there is a coordination of the Mobile Therapy Services. Is this a new program and could the Minister perhaps tell us how this program came to be and what need this program meets?

Mrs. Oleson: The Mobile Therapy Service provides pediatric occupational and physiotherapy to children in communities where no service is available. Services are provided in day care, in the family home or in the school setting. I could give the Member information to do with numbers served. In 1986-87, it was a demonstration project at that time, 24 days scheduled in one region to 17 families. In 1987-88, 209 days scheduled in three regions to 74 families for a total of \$150,000.00. In 1988-89 there were 210 days scheduled in three regions to 74 families, and the cost is \$160,000.00.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate for us, is this occupational and physiotherapy services that are provided, and who are the staff people? Who pays the staff that provide these services?

Mrs. Oleson: With regard to the first part of the question, it is occupational and physiotherapy. It is provided by therapists on contract with the Association of Community Living. It is a service that is provided in communities to children who would otherwise get that service if they were in an institution, but because they are not in an institution and not getting it, it is provided for that reason.

Ms. Gray: The Minister is indicating that these therapists are on contract with the Association of Community Living? Am I hearing her correctly?

Mrs. Oleson: An equivalent of 10 staff. They are with ACL and it is 10 people.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister tell us who is paying for the salaries of this staff?

Mrs. Oleson: The funds are supplied to ACL. ACL subcontracts and pays the staff for the service.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister tell us, are the funds that are supplied to ACL in this appropriation in the budget?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate to us, when this program was developed, were there any thoughts or discussions with Community Therapy Services to contract with them since they do have occupational and physiotherapists as opposed to going to another agency?

Mrs. Oleson: In the first year, it is coordinated by ACL, but they were an ACL person, an SMD person and a Community Therapy Services person involved with the mobile therapy unit.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate, who actually did the staff report to in the line relationship?

Mrs. Oleson: They report to ACL, but I would mention to the Member that Community Therapy Services does not provide pediatric therapy anymore.

Ms. Gray: Have Community Therapy Services ever presented the idea that they would like to provide those types of services if they were given the resources or do they appear to be glad to get out of that type of service?

Mrs. Oleson: It was their decision to get out of pediatric therapy.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister tell us, with the staff that are on contract, is the need appearing to be met in the rural and northern areas or are there still waiting lists for families to be served by these therapists?

Mrs. Oleson: There are others that are not receiving the service. We cannot really identify right now how many may need it, but the people who are receiving service are getting the service they need.

Ms. Gray: For clarification then, to the Minister's knowledge, there are no waiting lists that have been established for people who would like to receive services through this mobile therapy services?

Mrs. Oleson: There is a waiting list, but we are hopeful that they will be able to be accommodated as the year progresses.

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Ms. Gray: Could the Minister just tell us what the waiting list is, the number?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Chairman, yes, the list changes. We have not got that information readily available right now, but it does change with people coming into day care and for various other reasons the waiting list changes from time to time.

Ms. Gray: Getting back to the respite care, if memory serves me correctly, the Minister had indicated—it may have been in the House, not in Estimates—that there was a waiting list for respite care. Could the Minister clarify, is there a waiting list for families wishing to receive respite care?

Mrs. Oleson: There was a waiting list which of course was for seasonal reason, but the direction was to provide care for everyone and there is not a waiting list at the moment.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister clarify what she means by seasonal waiting list and how many people were on that list?

Mrs. Oleson: Summer is the peak period for respite care, for obvious reasons, and that was when there were people on the list, but the people were accommodated, as I understand.

Ms. Gray: Is this a change of policy? Never before have there been waiting lists for respite care in the summer. All people have been accommodated. Is this something new that we have had to develop waiting lists since the idea of respite care is that people call or phone up and they may need someone for that weekend to provide some care, or they are going on holidays in two weeks, so to put them on a waiting list is relatively ineffective since the families need to plan. Is this then a change in policy?

Mrs. Oleson: For the last two years at peak periods there have been waiting lists, but this year all the needs were met and those most urgent cases were certainly dealt with as soon as possible.

Ms. Gray: I guess we will agree to disagree because my understanding from people in the regions, or even in my experience in working in the regions, is that there never have been established waiting lists.

Just a couple of other questions in this area. The Children's Special Services, the manager of this program, who does he report to?

Mrs. Oleson: He reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister tell us what role Children's Special Services has in regard to the regional operations, i.e., the Mental Retardation Program, field staff who would be providing service to a number of these children and families?

Mrs. Oleson: It provides program direction to regional staff, which we discussed yesterday.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister tell us, do Children's Special Services actually get involved in planning with regional staff in regard to Children's Special Services?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes, on a consultation basis, as required.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate to us, this is a relatively new program area in comparison to a lot of the other program areas, has there ever been a review of the Children's Special Services, or have there been any identified concerns or needs for changes and modification as this new program has come on stream and has grown?

* (1510)

Mrs. Oleson: With regard to research, the Child and Family Services research group at the School of Social Work and the University of Manitoba have completed two studies, one in 1986, a successful family study in consumer response, and in '87, a cross sectional family study in consumer response. The outcome: (1) planning and networking to help families deal with stress; (2) training and seminars for staff; and (3) flexibility and respite guidelines. No. 2 is to deal with medically complex children. Children's Special Services has supported these children in their families and in their communities. Each of these children are unique and challenging. Leadership is being provided to coordinate with other Government departments, Health, Education and in Economic Security.

Ms. Gray: Was this a review of Children's Special Services that the university conducted?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes, with the families on their level of satisfaction with the program. We discussed this yesterday as I recall.

Ms. Gray: What the Minister discussed was the consumer feedback in relation to respite care. What I was asking, was this a review of the entire Children's Special Services, in terms of the objectives that are laid out by Children's Special Services, the expected outcomes of the service, the evaluation mechanisms? Was there feedback that was garnered from other agencies and regional staff, as well as consumers, in regard to the functioning of the Children's Special Services?

Mrs. Oleson: No. This has only been in place for two years I understand. But the study that I referred to by the School of Social Work was with the families in consultation to gauge their level of satisfaction with the program.

Ms. Gray: Again, that is why I was asking the further questions because the Minister seemed to be wondering why I kept asking questions about a review. But as she has now just said, it was in relation to consumer feedback and to respite care.

The Minister had indicated before that with the Community Respite Incorporated and the respite care provided through regional operations, that there was

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a mechanism to ensure that there was no overlap, or that the tracking of respite care of those families was such that it would be an exception if a family was receiving respite care from both sources and either agency or source was not aware. Am I correct in interpreting her statements?

Mrs. Oleson: It is possible that the family might be getting respite care from both areas. A regional worker would make that decision.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate to us what mechanism is in place to ensure that those details are picked up, and that it would be the exception that either agency was not aware of another agency providing respite?

Mrs. Oleson: This is paid through the regional offices. It would be their responsibility to coordinate it.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate then, with respite care received through regional operations, that invoicing would be done through regional operations? Is the invoicing of the Community Respite Incorporated also carried on through regional operations?

Mrs. Oleson: It is as of April 1.

Ms. Gray: What is the process that is in place for Community Respite Incorporated to be paid through regional operations?

Mrs. Oleson: It is invoiced at the rate of \$8 per hour. It is built on a rate of per children and for adults on a monthly invoice.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister tell us who approves the invoice or who approves the fact that the Community Respite Incorporated has actually provided respite service to a particular family?

Mrs. Oleson: The regional worker and coordinator. So there are two checks on it.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate to us, with the Community Respite Program, I would assume that for anyone who would want to contact Community Respite Incorporated directly, once they made that contact, that they would then have to ensure that in fact the caseworker would be assigned to them so that the proper checking procedures could occur through the region?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes, if it is paid for by the region.

Ms. Gray: What does the Minister mean "if it is paid for by the region"? She just indicated to me that it was paid for by the region.

Mrs. Oleson: Sorry, it is paid for by the region. The family could buy it themselves if they wanted to pay for it—that is what I was thinking of—but it is billed through the method that I had stated.

Ms. Gray: The people who would receive respite care then through Regional Operations, I would assume that

the guidelines for service for respite care would be identical to those with which Community Respite Incorporated would operate?

Mrs. Oleson: They are as of April 1.

Ms. Gray: This double-checking system at the regional level, is this one of the pieces of the program that has been computerized?

Mrs. Oleson: No.

Ms. Gray: Just to clarify—I think I had asked the question before—when someone is getting Community Respite Incorporated, does that mean that they must be assigned a caseworker at the regional level?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Item (f)(2) Other Expenditures \$89,900—pass. Item (f)(3) Financial Assistance and External Agencies \$14,163,000—shall the item pass? The Member for St. Johns.

* (1520)

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I have a question pertaining to an external agency that does not necessarily belong here, but there is not really any other place to raise it and that is because funding for the organization comes out of Lotteries revenue. That is the Big Brothers and Big Sisters Association. They have expressed concern to me, and I am sure that the Minister is aware of this concern, about being able to meet the ongoing demands for providing the service for meeting the growing request for Big Brother/Big Sister arrangements and feel that their current funding level is not reflective of those increased demands and needs.

I have two questions: (1) Is the Minister prepared to meet personally with this organization? My understanding is that they have not been able to arrange a meeting to date. (2) Is the Minister prepared to look at some increased funding for this organization? I realize it is a historical problem in that they have not received increased funding over a period of time, but I am wondering, since it has been fairly recent that the funding was transferred from General Revenue to Lotteries, if the Minister is giving some serious thought to an increase for Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Manitoba?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes, I have met with the group and I have been made aware of their problems. We are looking at ways in which we could help them in different funding arrangements. We certainly recognize the work that they do. Both organizations, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, are a valuable help to children in the community. I am aware of the problems, I have met with them, and—as I will repeat—I am looking at how we can assist them.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: A quick follow-up, they expressed to me concern about not being able to meet directly

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with the Minister. If that is the case and they have met with staff, is she prepared to meet directly and personally with representatives of Big Brothers and Big Sisters?

Mrs. Oleson: If I have not already met with them, I will be happy to meet with them. I know they have met with staff. I have trouble recalling exactly who I have met with. I certainly am not adverse to meeting with them.

Mr. Chairman: Item 4.(f)(3) Financial Assistance and External Agencies \$14,163,000—pass.

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$124,378,900 for Community Services, Child and Family Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1989—pass.

Returning then to item 1. Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary, \$10,300—shall the item pass?

Ms. Gray: I have a few questions given that we are in this particular area. The Minister had indicated to me earlier today that she did not have, as of yet, the number of day program spaces for adult day programs that had been allocated in the past few fiscal years. Could the Minister indicate to us when that information will be available?

Mrs. Oleson: It is being researched right now. It should be available fairly soon—within the next week, I am sure.

Ms. Gray: Would the Minister be prepared to table that information in the House when she receives it?

Mrs. Oleson: I could send it directly to the Member. That is the usual custom.

Ms. Gray: Not in this fiscal year but the past fiscal year, was it indicated in these Estimates exactly how many individuals were moved from institutions into the community?

Mrs. Oleson: Is the Member talking about this fiscal year?

Ms. Gray: No, the last fiscal year.

Mrs. Oleson: We would have to check back. I am sure I gave that information. If you check back with Hansard, I am sure you have got it.

Ms. Gray: We may have been given that information. I certainly do recall that in fact it was a fair number of individuals in the last fiscal year who were moved from institutions. Obviously, one of the conditions of moving from an institution is not only a residential placement but a day program placement. So it would appear fairly obvious to me that in fact there were more day program spaces allocated last year than the 15 that have been allocated this year.

The Minister, in the House, had expressed concerns about my comments when I said we were reducing the

number of day program spaces. Is the Minister indicating—and I will wait for her information—that there were less than 15 new day program spaces that have been allocated in the past two to three fiscal years?

Mrs. Oleson: We are undertaking that research for the Member, but the way the Member asked the question and the way she infers today that we were reducing them, we are adding 15. We may not be adding as many as were added in some years, but we certainly have not reduced the number.

Ms. Gray: What I had said in the House was in fact that which I had indicated, that the 15 new spaces were a reduction in services in comparison to the last few years. Is the Minister indicating that in fact her comments in the House perhaps were not quite accurate when she said that my comments were not accurate?

Mrs. Oleson: What I was responding to in the House was the remark that services had been cut, and I certainly was—

Ms. Gray: You did not say that.

Mrs. Oleson: —indicating that they had not been cut.

Ms. Gray: The record will show that in fact I never used the words “that services were cut.”

A couple of questions with The Social Services Administration Act, in light of the questions that the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) brought up in the House this afternoon. One of the issues with The Social Services Administration Act would appear to be that one of the reasons for the licence or Letter of Approval not being given was the fact that there was not 24-hour supervision provided for the clients in the care of Mrs. Ehora.

Could the Minister indicate to us, does The Social Services Administration Act clearly outline that, in fact, supervision must be of a 24-hour nature?

Mrs. Oleson: The Act says “adequate supervision.” I should add that what is adequate would depend on the needs of the client.

Ms. Gray: Is the Minister then suggesting that the interpretation of The Social Services Administration Act and the regulations is not that supervision means necessarily 24-hour supervision?

Mrs. Oleson: It would depend on the needs of the clients, as I said before.

Ms. Gray: Therefore, again, the Minister is indicating that for all facilities that are licensed under The Social Services Administration Act, or who are given a Letter of Approval, that one of the conditions to be met is not that 24-hour supervision be provided; is that correct?

Mrs. Oleson: It says “adequate supervision.”

Ms. Gray: Is the interpretation that “adequate supervision” be 24-hour supervision?

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Mrs. Oleson: I said before, it would depend upon the case.

Ms. Gray: Is the Minister then indicating that staff in Residential Care and Licensing Branch and staff throughout the regions and in fact all residential care facilities have the same understanding of the Minister that 24-hour supervision is not necessarily required for a letter of approval, or a licence, but it depends upon the individual needs of the client?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes.

Ms. Gray: I am sure the residential care providers will find that very enlightening because I think a lot of them have been under the impression that the supervision and constant supervision is deemed to be 24-hour supervision, and that there must be a staff present when individuals are in the home.

* (1530)

Mrs. Oleson: There was no question there. It was a statement.

Mr. Chairman: Just a question of procedure here at this time, the Minister's staff must withdraw from the table.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

Ms. Gray: No. In the information that was given out the other day about The Freedom of Information Act, there was an indication that staff were given recording procedural workshops as part of the Freedom of Information training for staff. I am wondering if the Minister could indicate to us, although there were workshops on recording practices, my understanding—and the Minister can correct me if I am wrong—is that there have not been any regional policies or procedures developed around what the recording procedures should be in light of the fact that given that we have a Freedom of Information Act, any files or information since the Act has been proclaimed will be subject to a greater scrutiny, shall we say, than files that have been handled before the Act was proclaimed.

I am wondering if the Minister could indicate to me, have regions or particular programs such as the Programs Branch taken it upon themselves to ensure that there are recording practices and procedures that have been established in the regions so that staff will do a credible and a very excellent job of recording in light of the new guidelines in The Freedom of Information Act.

Mrs. Oleson: It is my understanding that staff have been briefed on all the procedures. I can certainly check into it for the Member and find out just exactly what levels of staff were involved, but it is my understanding that previous to the proclamation, the actual proclamation date, that all the department had meetings and briefings on the implementation and the activities that need to take place with The Freedom of Information Act being proclaimed. I can certainly check and see exactly what levels they went to.

Ms. Gray: I am wondering if, you will have to correct me on procedure here with some of the questions that I have—the type of information I would not necessarily expect to be at the fingertips of the Minister—she is able to confer with her senior staff in regard to some of these answers?

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Chairman: On a point of order, the Member for Churchill.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Second Opposition House Leader): That is the difficulty with the rules and the way they are written for a ministerial salary, and that is that it is an area where actually detailed questions are not usually expected to be answered although they are put on the record and responses are forthcoming. That is why the administrative staff are not present at that time of the debate.

So I would suggest that there are some questions that notes could flow relatively quickly on, and we have no objection to that. Staff are in the room, available to provide that sort of detailed response, and there are other questions that will just have to come back through the Question Period or through direct communication and that is the standard procedure historically with this particular section of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Honourable Member for the information.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Could the Minister tell us, given that The Freedom of Information Act has been proclaimed as of September 30, is she quite satisfied and confident that procedures are in place and that staff within her department are able and set to go in regard to assisting consumers in dealing with this new Act?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): I have been assured that briefings have taken place. As I indicated before, information has been given to staff. I guess with the implementation of any new thing, it will have to withstand the test of use.

Ms. Gray: Throughout the Estimates there have been discussions in the area of another program which spans a number of departments and that is the Affirmative Action Program. There had been some discussion previously about particular systemic barriers that have been identified within the Department of Community Services. In reading through the Hansard, I did not really get a sense from the Minister as to what some of these systemic barriers were, particularly within her Department of Community Services. I am wondering if the Minister would elaborate for us as to what are the systemic barriers that have been identified by her staff in her department. Given her answer as far as what these systemic barriers are, have there been any implementation plans to address these particular barriers?

Mrs. Oleson: The Affirmative Action plan is going on as it was before. I have not got the list in front of me

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that the staff would have supplied on system barriers. One does not need to dredge very far in their mind to come up with the barriers that have been in place for women and for handicapped people in attaining jobs over the years.

Ms. Gray: I am pleased to hear that we do not have to dredge very far in our minds to come up those systemic barriers. Perhaps then the Minister could share with us her thoughts on what she sees as the systemic barriers within her department.

Mrs. Oleson: I do not suppose my department differs very much from any other department. For instance, women have had a long struggle to get to higher managerial positions. Disabled people have had trouble over the years convincing all employers in any walk of life that they are certainly capable of performing the duties that are assigned to them in many fields. Those are just two of the things that come readily to mind.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate what are actually some of the systemic barriers that have prevented, and she has used an example of women moving into management positions?

Mrs. Oleson: Attitudes have always played a large part in that. Also women sometimes have not had the career opportunities because they have left the work force for periods of time, back and forth. That has been one of their problems in attaining managerial positions. Education has sometimes played a role. They have not had the opportunity to become educated in the particular field that they are interested in. There are many things that have occurred and that are gradually being worked out of the system. I know it is too gradual for most of us. We would like things to happen sooner.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister clarify or elaborate on, she mentioned women leaving the work force and coming back, how is that identified as a systemic barrier?

Mrs. Oleson: That has been a hold up for women in the work force over the years, because of leaving to raise families and other responsibilities and then coming back into the work force. They do not attain the same number of years of service, for instance, which would qualify them. It qualifies men easier to get into these positions.

* (1540)

Ms. Gray: To perhaps further answer the question for the Minister in regard to women leaving the work force, one of the issues that has been identified within the Department of Health, and I am sure within the Department of Community Services, is that as people apply for jobs, there has been a certain weighting that has been given to applicants who are applying for their experience that they have had, and if that experience goes beyond a certain number of years, such as five, they do not necessarily consider it recent experience. So that to answer the Minister's question, what we have is, as she has indicated, women who have left

the work force to raise families, then request or want to re-enter the work force which may be 7, 10 or 12 years, and their previous experience is not considered because it is not considered recent enough. So it is a systemic barrier for women.

Could the Minister indicate to us, is she aware if certain weighting for previous experience still exists within her Human Resources Department? Have there been any moves to change that type of system so that those systemic barriers are removed?

Mrs. Oleson: I would hope they are, but I would have to check with the Personnel Department to make sure.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Chairperson, I have a couple of questions with respect to the losses inquiry, which was discussed briefly outside of the House following the comments by a judge in northern Manitoba, and a call for an inquiry into the Awasis Agency.

I would like to start off my comments by indicating I was in Lac Brochet within the last couple of weeks. At that time, the community residents there were concerned that the image of their community, a very fine community, was being tarnished specifically, and that the image of Native people generally, and the image of the Awasis Agency as well were being tarnished by some of the publicity. They asked me specifically to put on the record the fact that they do have a community like all communities across the province, where there are a lot of good things happening, and where there are some things happening that are not so pleasant or are not so good, but that they feel that the good things that happen in their community should not be lost because of the publicity that has revolved around this one particular case.

I remember when I first went into that community about 10 years ago, a little over 10 years ago. At that time, it was just a series of log cabins on a bluff, on a sand bluff overlooking the lake. The log cabins were not much bigger than four of these tables. When I say these tables, I mean these individual tables put together. In some cases, they were not any bigger than perhaps six by eight feet. Families lived in those log cabins. They were not any taller than six feet at the peak. It was not a very pleasant lifestyle by comparison with what we think to be a pleasant lifestyle, but the people had chosen it because they wanted very badly to set up their own community where they could live out their lives according to their tradition, according to their culture and peace, harmony and productively. It was the highest of motivations that caused them to travel across a fair portion of the North to relocate under some very adverse conditions, and to live for a large number of years under some adverse conditions. But the motivation was sincere, the motivation was sound. I believe the motivation was extremely important to the long-standing health, and I am not speaking in the physical sense, I am speaking of the social and the economic, in the physical sense of the community and its residents. They accomplished a great deal in those 10 to 12 years that they have undertaken that task.

I was in there last month, two weeks ago. There were probably 80 frame houses, maybe 90 frame houses

that have been constructed mostly by local labour. There was a school in place, although they do need another school and they have been trying to get a better school facility for a number of years and hopefully will do so in the near future.

There was a restaurant that was being built in the community that is probably going to be the best restaurant in any of the reserves in Manitoba, at least in northern Manitoba. I say that knowing that I may insult some of the restaurant owners on some of the other reserves in my own constituency. But by far and large, it will at least be the newest and I think it will probably be one of the best restaurants in the North.

There was a new nursing station that had been built there, mostly with local labour again. There has been a tremendous amount of steel development in the construction industry and other related fields over the past number of years. There was an economy that was starting to flourish at the local level. There were residents that had put a large part of their life into making that community work, and that goes unreported.

I understand why it goes unreported and I believe they understand why it goes unreported, although from time to time one would wish that there would be the same news presence given to those sorts of ongoing long-standing activities that are given to problems in remote communities. They are not unlike a lot of other reserve communities and Metis communities in the North with respect to that, which they have been able to accomplish on behalf of their community residents and by their own hard work, commitment and dedication to their goals as a community.

I want the record very clearly to show that—and I think I speak on behalf of everyone here notwithstanding the political stripe of the participants—we respect why they moved to Lac Brochet and we respect and congratulate them on what they have been able to accomplish generally with that move, to build a better community for their residents.

Having said that, there is one case that has captured a great deal of media attention lately with respect to the difficulties that one of the children in that community has suffered as a result of being relocated to the community and the problems that came about after that relocation. I want to rephrase that. I do not think the problems were as a result of the relocation as much as a consequence of the relocation. What happened there could have happened in any community and it would have been I think as bad in any community as it was in Lac Brochet. No one in that community—nor am I, nor is anyone here—suggesting that what happened there was right. It was not right. It was wrong. At the same time, they do not want to see that act overshadow that which they have been able to accomplish.

The difficulty, of course, arises when, again, this is elevated in the media because of the call for a judicial enquiry. I met with some of the representatives of the organizations involved and representatives of the community. They have informed me that they feel there is no need for a full public judicial inquiry. I share that belief with them. They say that there have been

investigations previously of the workings of the Awasis Agency. They have pointed out some strengths of the Awasis Agency and they have pointed out some weaknesses that have to be addressed in the Awasis Agency. There have been actions taken as a result of those reviews and investigations by the department itself in order to deal with the weaknesses and in order to build upon the strengths that were identified.

There certainly is—and this is the position of our caucus—not a need for an investigative approach that would flow with a full public judicial enquiry. What is needed, however, is a review that takes a look at how Awasis as an agency is fulfilling its mandate. That review should not be biased from a negative perspective as would happen under a full judicial inquiry revolving around this one particular case, but I believe that review should be biased toward positive action in the future.

* (1550)

What could be done is a review of where the agency is now after five or six years of operation and there is plenty of background material available and where that agency should be in five years, 10 years, in 20 years, and how do we work together. When I say “we,” I mean the three bodies that are involved in the tripartite fashion in this issue; that is the federal Government, the Awasis Agency and the Indian organizations it represents in the province. How we work together to provide the necessary support, assistance, encouragement, constructive criticism when required in funding to ensure that there is a plan in place that is workable and productive.

The agency itself, I think, would be amenable to that sort of approach. As a matter of fact, I think they have been asking and have been negotiating for quite some time with the federal Government for funding that would allow them to undertake that sort of a review. They cannot do it within their existing funding because in order to find the funding that would be required to undertake that task would pull money away from the service that they are trying to provide. They believe, and I think they have substantiated it and it has been substantiated that they have been seriously underfunded by the federal Government for at least the first five years of their existence and that it is very difficult for them to make up that loss of opportunity as a result of them being funded less than other agencies were funded of a similar nature because of some jurisdictional problems in the beginning and during the establishment of the agency.

So what they would like to see happen now is a tripartite review, I believe, which would look at the strengths and weaknesses, focus in on how to deal within known weaknesses, build upon the strengths and set out a five-year plan that will enable them to provide the best service possible to their clientele which are Native children in the province.

I believe that is extremely important because what happens with the Awasis Agency will go far beyond the Awasis Agency itself. It will in fact impact upon the care of Indian and Metis children across this province for years and years to come. It is not just an isolated

experiment; it is a very serious endeavour for aboriginal people to take some control over their child welfare system and it is a model that is successful. It can be expanded and extended into many other areas and I believe will result in positive benefits.

So having made those general statements, my question to the Minister directly is can she clarify the position of the Government with respect to the call for a full public judicial inquiry which appeared to some to be accepted by the Premier (Mr. Filmon)? Can she provide us any further information as to how the Government under the direction of her department would want to proceed in response to that call by the northern judge for that inquiry?

Mrs. Oleson: Yes, I appreciate the Member's remarks on his perception of the town and his feelings about this whole business. I met this morning with some people from Awasis Agency and had expressed to me some of the very things that the Member is telling the committee about their conditions in that particular area. Some of their concerns were that the good news are very seldom told. They assured me that there are good things happening with the agency and that they of course share the disappointment with everyone that sometimes we only hear bad news—maybe I should not use the word "sometimes." It is most often that bad news seem to be uppermost in people's mind. They shared with me the feelings that they did not want a judicial inquiry. In discussion with them, we discussed what sort of inquiry or review might be undertaken. We discussed the things that they feel they have achieved and the recommendations that they have put into place since the internal review was done of that particular case to which the Member refers.

So it gave me a lot more insight into the whole thing this morning in sitting and talking with them about it. They have undertaken to provide officials of my department with some information concerning the progress they have made. Of course, the officials already have some information, but they undertook to provide me with some more, and some more suggestions. So the staff will be getting together to discuss this with them.

Staff have also been in contact today, since the meeting, with officials from the federal Government. The Member reminds me that it is a tripartite arrangement and I am aware of that. I think officials from the three areas need to sit down and discuss this matter.

I suggested to the agency this morning that I would need information in order to take to my colleagues and make a decision on whether or not there is any review and what sort of form it might take if there was one. So no decision has been made by this Government on whether or not there will be any inquiry or review or what form it might take.

I promised them that I would not take any unilateral decisions, that I would sit down with them and discuss with them because, as we agreed, the care and protection of children is a partnership responsibility for all of us. It is not just their responsibility, not just mine—

there is a tripartite arrangement—but it is the responsibility of all of us to make sure the children are protected and that, of course, is the main goal.

As I say, I have undertaken to discuss this further with them and to discuss it with my colleagues.

Mr. Cowan: I take it from the Minister's comments, and I thank her for that overview, that the department is not really considering a full judicial public inquiry in this regard, but is prepared to work with the federal Government and the Awasis Agency and other affected Indian organizations to develop a review as to how we can build upon the strengths of the agency, deal with any of the weaknesses that may exist and within the context of a 5- and 10-year plan so that they can more adequately be resourced in order to serve their clientele. Would that be a fair interpretation of what was just said?

Mrs. Oleson: It is reasonable. I should remark also—and I should have mentioned in my other remarks—that I have not seen the judge's remarks in print. I do not know in what context they were made exactly. So that will have to be looked at before any decision is made, too.

Mr. Cowan: When would the Minister anticipate that decision being finalized? I appreciate the fact that there appears to be a desire on the part of the Minister, and hopefully the Government, to more positively focus this task on developing an overall plan. Can she indicate when it is she believes there will be able to be a firming up in an announcement of that position?

Mrs. Oleson: Since I just met with them this morning and they have undertaken to give me some more information, or give my staff some more information, I cannot really give the Member a time frame under which a decision could be made.

Mr. Cowan: A couple of comments then, and this matter is before the courts in all sorts of different ways, so I do not want to get into a great deal of detail on it, but I do want to thank the Minister for what I take to be a progressive approach with respect to this issue, and I hope that the Government is able to follow through with a review rather than a full public judicial inquiry.

We, in the NDP, were quite concerned when we heard that that was a likelihood, or at least we perceived what we heard at the time to say that would be a likelihood, and those were statements by the Premier. We are concerned about some of the support in those statements that the Premier was getting from other quarters, but are pleased to hear that as this matter unfolds and as the dialogue takes place around it, there seems to be a more reasoned approach developing and we would support that approach which would focus in on the long-term needs of the agency in ways to make it an even better agency on behalf of the Native children.

* (1600)

Two other quick points on this issue and then I have one other very quick issue I would like to address. The

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one thing that people seem to forget about this particular case, and again I do not want to get into a lot of detail, but people are focusing in on what happened since the time that this girl was returned to the reserve. I think if there is any review, it also has to take a look at how this girl was first taken from the reserve a long time ago. For the past at least eight years, the parents of that young woman have approached myself as their MLA, and I know the M.P. for the area, trying very desperately to get their child back, who was taken away at a very early age—removed from the community for medical reasons. The child was never under apprehension, was never in any sort of trouble, but had been removed to go to Lynn Lake for medical reasons and from there never came back to her parents or to her community, and that was a loss to that community and I think that was a loss to that young woman as well. I think it was as a result of a less enlightened approach in those days and hopefully we have a much more enlightened approach generally.

I just want to reinforce the fact that again when we have opportunities as legislators, we have some responsibility also to talk about the positive aspects of that community and to talk about the positive aspects of the Awasis Agency because I think they are accomplishing good things and doing a good job, notwithstanding the fact that they—they being the community and Awasis—from time to time have problems with which they have to deal as do we all, whether we are individuals or organizations. So I do not want that to be lost sight of, and I think it is important that the Minister use her office when addressing this issue to make that point as well. These are good people who are trying very hard to build good communities that represent their lifestyle and their culture.

My other question to the Minister is has she had time to consult with her colleagues with respect to northern representation on the task force on child care?

Mrs. Oleson: His preliminary discussion, I will have to be getting back to the Member about that later. I am sorry I do not have a definite answer for him right now.

Mr. Cowan: Perhaps a hint—are the preliminary discussions positive or looking positive?

Mrs. Oleson: I hope so.

Mr. Cowan: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

Ms. Gray: I have some questions in a few more areas. Going back to the vital statistics area when the Minister had announced that there would be fee increases, could the Minister indicate what was the rationale behind deciding to increase the fees in this particular branch?

Mrs. Oleson: Mostly for cost recovery. Actually, we are not too much out of line with other provinces, but I do not have the information right in front of me on each fee that was charged, or the increases, but it has

usually been the function of that branch to—I was going to say to be self-sufficient but that is not quite right because Government Services pays the building costs and so forth, but we want to make it as efficient as possible and not be out of line with what other jurisdictions are charging for similar services.

Ms. Gray: Is the Minister then indicating that the Vital Statistics Branch usually operates in a deficit position?

Mrs. Oleson: No, not according to this department, but then there are other expenses incurred with the facility they are housed in. I do not know whether the Member has ever visited the facility they are housed in, but I had an opportunity, took the opportunity not long after I was appointed to visit there. I was very impressed with the restoration that has taken place in that building. But that is, of course, beside the point of this discussion. For as much as possible, that branch tries to recover the costs of operation.

Ms. Gray: As a matter of fact, I have talked to the director of Vital Statistics and told her that I was very interested in coming to look at the operations, but I specifically indicated that I would leave that visit until after Estimates were completed, so that it certainly would not be perceived that in fact I was attempting to garner information for use in Estimates. I specifically indicated that I will visit, but have deliberately chosen to do that after the Estimates are over.

The Minister has indicated that they have increased the fees for cost recovery but there has been a deficit in this branch. Does this branch actually produce revenue with the fee charges that they were charging before the increase?

Mrs. Oleson: I would have to get back to the Member with the specifics of year by year what revenue was produced.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister indicate to us—the rationale she has indicated is that this Government wanted fees to be more in line with other jurisdictions. Is that oftentimes a reason that is used for making changes or for increasing a fee, so that one would be more in line with other areas of the country?

Mrs. Oleson: It certainly would not be the major criteria, but it is one thing that we do look at.

Ms. Gray: Could the Minister tell us what some of the other rationale was or criteria around this decision to have fee increases for marriage licences and the change of name application, as well as to receive certified copies of the change of name certificates?

Mrs. Oleson: There are some I could not be definitive of exactly at the moment, but there was one particular fee—now that one escapes me at the moment because I have not got this in front of me. But there was one particular fee that was increased when people want information in a hurry and staff have to set aside everything else and search that information immediately. It was felt that the fee for that should be raised, because

it does cause disruption and time with the staff to prepare that information in a hurry.

Ms. Gray: I thank the Minister for that information.

A few other points I wanted to mention, as we have gone through the Estimates process, certainly what I have attempted to do and what I feel that we have accomplished is an attempt to garner information about the operations of the Department of Community Services and in regard to the policies and direction that this department has taken.

With the Premier (Mr. Filmon) having made the decision for the House to sit on July 21 and with the Estimates coming soon after, one certainly recognizes that in fact the activity identification and the objectives within each appropriation of the department really have not changed at all in regard to the wording as one sees in the supplements. Obviously this is, I would assume, partially due to the lack of time involved in preparing for the Estimates. So I would say that many of our questions or many of my questions have been attempting to get a sense from this Minister and from her Government as to what the policy direction is for Community Services, if there are any changes in policy from what we have seen with the previous administration.

I think, as one has gone through the Estimates process and certainly there have been many, many comments made from the Opposite side of the House about the dragging on, if I can use that cliché, of Estimates by the Opposition. I really must put on the record, Mr. Chairperson, that as I have had the opportunity to review the Hansard throughout our Estimates for this department that in fact I think some of the responsibility for the length of time of Estimates certainly must lie with the Government. We have seen time and time again—and I am not putting the blame on anyone. I want to state this really as a fact, because we do have a Minister who is new to her department and, in all fairness, we also have some senior staff who have possibly switched roles and are also new to their areas. So in fact the information may not be as forthcoming because of newness by the Minister and by the staff. But I do want to indicate that there have been many contradictions in answers as we have gone through Estimates, and so some of the length and time for Estimates has been spent on clarification of these contradictions and trying to determine exactly what the correct information was and what the real facts were.

We have attempted, and again we are all new to or at least myself and the Minister are new to the Estimates process in terms of our respective roles, and what we have attempted to do is to get as comprehensive answers as possible, hopefully, within the first one or two questions. This has not always occurred, but we have kept on trying so that again we have a better appreciation of the Department of Community Services and the Minister's thoughts and feelings and where she sees the department going in regard to policy direction.

I have been unable to still get a sense from the Minister in regard to the services to the mentally handicapped, if in fact there is a policy or direction in

regard to these services. There seems to be an indication that in fact there is a rejection of the previous administration's policy in regard to services to the mentally handicapped, but I do not yet have a sense as to what the policy direction is of this particular Government. I hope at some point that will be forthcoming. I do find it somewhat perplexing, however, how a department can come forth with a budget in a vacuum. By that, I mean how does one develop a budget unless there is a policy framework, a purpose, a scope, a direction in mind as to where the department or the Government sees those services going.

* (1610)

When we look at the area of Child and Family Services again, it is a little difficult to get a handle on what the Government sees in regard to the decentralization of Child and Family Services, how they view the community-based model. Again, we have attempted to get information from the Minister and also have attempted to get information through the Premier (Mr. Filmon), who has made some comments at public events in regard to social programs and community-based agencies. I still do not have a sense as to whether there is a strong belief by this Government that community-based agencies are the direction the Government should be taking, or should there be a move back towards centralization of a number of services.

Again, Mr. Chairman, in regard to the day care policy, I suppose this is the one area in terms of my concerns about lack of policy direction, I must say at least that the Government has had a bit more idea and had been willing to put on paper what their policy direction is. Again, there are certainly concerns from the Liberal caucus as to the possible erosion of the public non-profit day care system with the new spaces that have been allocated to the private day care centres. We have some questions and concerns which have not been answered in the Estimates as to the monitoring function. Again there seems to be confusion about whether the subsidy go to the centre or whether the subsidy travels with the child. The task force that the Minister has referred to again was an initiative that was presented by this Government where there would be two advisory groups as well. Yet, it seemed to be an idea without a framework or concept behind it because the establishment of the advisory groups, their mandate, their role and their function, their veto power, their influence over the task force seems to be entirely left up to the task force, so one does wonder how much thought was put into the initial task force and the advisory groups that were established.

With a few other comments, Mr. Chairperson, again one of the concerns or one of the themes that we have seen through the Estimates process within the Department of Community Services is the lack of consultation that this department has had with the various agencies. I do not need to reiterate the details of some of the examples of where there have been a number of problems with the Foster Parents' Association, which finally, at the 11th hour did reach a conclusion, which was certainly acceptable to the foster parents. But they went through a lot of pain and turmoil. A lot of staff time was spent as well to get to that point.

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We have situations where the Minister has certainly indicated that the agencies who are responsible for adult day programs in community residences are certainly being consulted on a regular basis. Yet, when I speak with the agencies they do not seem to have the same view. I would certainly say that the Minister, I would hope, would see it as a priority with her department to ensure that consultation and clear communication does occur with the various community groups, because of course the Department of Community Services deals almost exclusively with social agencies and community groups, so it is very, very important that the department has an ongoing open consultative relationship with community groups and agencies.

I know the Minister is the head of a department that has many, many facets to it. Certainly there have been a number of problems that had been identified in the past. Again, as we have gone through the Estimates, the Minister has indicated that there have been some changes made. Where there have been changes made that are positive, I certainly have made a point of saying so. I do commend some of the changes that are certainly being undertaken in the Programs Branch area. We have a new acting Assistant Deputy Minister. We have some staff, although who have been in the department, are back into new roles and I think that speaks highly for the Minister and that part of the department where there certainly has been a recognition of the many, many problems in that area.

There certainly has been some move toward making positive changes in the area of services to the mentally handicapped. I do commend again the Minister for that and I hope that we will see more positive changes in this area. I hope that again with these Estimates, we certainly recognize that we will agree to disagree on a number of issues. I would hope that the Minister would see these Estimates as our perspective in terms of identifying the problems as we perceive them in the department, and as have been identified to us through various community agencies, so that again there is just another perspective on some of the difficulties. Hopefully the Minister will have the opportunity to sit down and again go through the problems that have been identified. I am sure she is certainly aware of some of them and be able to look at her department and prioritize which areas of service where it will be looked at and what are the priorities for the goals and objectives that she would see her department in the remaining fiscal year and in the new fiscal year.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I have some comments and some questions interspersed throughout my comments. Let me start off by saying, since we are on the last line of Community Services Estimates and we are on the Minister's Salary, that I, on behalf of my caucus, will not be engaging in what I would call a Conservative tactic of moving to reduce the Minister's Salary to a specific amount, traditionally, in the amount of \$1.00.- (Interjection)-

I said "Tory tactic" and I say that with a great deal of conviction but I also remind members around this table, a tactic that has been supported by Liberals in the past and most particularly the Leader of the Liberal

Opposition, the current Leader, who joined with Members of the Conservative Party, I guess it was two years ago now, to reduce the salary to \$1.00.

Mr. Chairman: On a point of order, the Member for Ellice.

Ms. Gray: On a point of order, the Member for St. Johns is implying that the Liberal Party, in fact, usually agrees with the Tories in the tactics of reducing Ministers' salary to \$1.00. I would like to put the record straight that in fact the Leader of the Opposition has one time decided to vote to reduce the Minister's Salary, in that case of the Honourable Muriel Smith to \$1.00, based on the total lack of ability or refusal of the Minister to deal with the issues in her department and to give or provide any answers to the Legislature. This is certainly not a decision which the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) took lightly.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Honourable Member. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I appreciate the remarks the Member for Ellice has put on the record and in fact her remarks only reinforce what I was leading up to saying that it has been a tactic used in the case previously of a Minister of Community Services, despite the fact that that Minister of Community Services showed incredibly more of a policy analysis, of a philosophical framework of an in-depth approach to the area of social policies than has been demonstrated over these last two months of Community Services.

But that is not to say for one moment, to suggest for one moment, to reflect for one moment, sorry, Mr. Chairperson, on the abilities of this particular Minister. But it is to lead into my comments which are where I intend to show incredible concern and worry about the policy framework, about the policy analysis of this Government, as a collective whole, with respect to social policies and with respect to Community Service issues. I, at no time, intend to and I believe I have tried to stay away from this as much as possible throughout the last two months, although sometimes in the heat of the moment, things are said that may appear to reflect on an individual. I intend to keep my remarks to this Government's approach to social policy in Community Services, to talk about this Government's attitude and demonstration of its abilities collectively around this policy area, rather than to single out a particular Minister, or to suggest that the concerns I have are related to a Minister's ability or inability. My concerns are very much the—and I have many, many concerns about this area, about this Government's approach to social policy. My concerns are related to this Government's approach to social policy.

I said that there was ample reason, given the example set by both the Conservative Party, Members of the Party and the Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) to move to reduce the Minister's salary by \$1 if we go on past history and we use that as an example, because the concerns of Manitobans are much greater now than they have ever been, about where we are going with Community Services, where this province is headed on the whole matter of social programs and social policy.

Over the course of the last two months we have had numerous examples of concern that have not been dealt with, and numerous questions about what exactly is the policy framework from which this Government is operating. There have been no straightforward answers, Mr. Chairperson. There have been no clear-cut responses with respect to decisions made by this Minister or by this Government as a whole. Instead, it has left us to wonder and to speculate about the basis on which this Government is making major policy decisions. The first speculation that comes to mind, based on the performance of this Minister and her Government, in this area over the last two months is, Who is actually making the decisions? Where is the direction coming from? It would seem that we have example after example after example of intervention by Members of the Premier's Office, by staff of the Premier's Office or by the Premier himself, with respect to decisions that have been taken by this Government.

Let me refer briefly to a couple of those clear-cut examples. It would not be surprising to anyone here to begin with the foster parent care issue since that is the issue and the controversy that set off this set of Estimates some many weeks ago, some almost 46-47 hours ago when it was clear to all of us, and clear to the people of Manitoba that we were headed for a major crisis, that the Minister had been, in many people's minds, left to deal with an impossible situation by decisions of her Premier and her Cabinet, a decision that made it impossible to respond to a brewing crisis and a major problem as a result of a moratorium.

The outcome of that situation was an intervention on the part of the Premier's Office and Members of the Cabinet to, in midstream, reverse their decision about money available for foster parents and to come in and appear to salvage the situation. I regret leaving the Minister in a position of weakness, apparent position of weakness. The public and certainly most of us in the Legislature felt some sympathy for the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) by the predicament that her Premier and her colleagues put her in. We are pleased that the situation was resolved, that the moratorium was avoided, but it certainly was an indication to us of policy decisions coming not from the department, not from the Minister, but from the Premier's political staff.

The second speculation, the second area that has resulted in some speculation is where this Government is going generally with respect to social policy and whether or not it is taking us down the road to privatization, deregulation, and the devolution of state responsibility for social programs. There have been a number of examples which have caused us extreme concern—and this is probably where my comments will be primarily directed—extreme concern about Manitoba going back in time to a time when Governments did not believe in its responsibility for providing social services, and the provision of universal social programs, in the concept of integration, complete integration, of economic and social equality, and whether we are looking at the changes in the day care program, or the cuts to Child and Family Services, or the disinterest with respect to the Mulroney-Reagan trade deal we are left with the impression of a serious

move toward minimizing Government responsibility in the area of social program, and a move away from the concepts, the basic fundamental concepts, of universality and social programs available to all, no matter what income, no matter what background, no matter what position in life.

I said at the outset of these Estimates that I wanted to raise questions from the context of understanding this Government's approach to privatization and deregulation in order to determine whether or not we were into a serious downgrading and deterioration in our social programs.

I also said that I was most interested in knowing whether or not there was any moves to link together the two departments of Community Services and Economic Security because I was worried, and I am even more worried today about a tendency on the part of this Government to treat social policy in terms of social assistance and welfare. I think we had a good example of that tendency yesterday with respect to the interjections of some of the colleagues of the Minister of Community Services, and it has caused us a great deal of worry. We will come back to that as an area of questioning to understand once and for all whether or not there is a clear understanding of the differences between a universal social policy and a social assistance program directed at a particular group in our society.

Mr. Chairman: I wonder if I could ask Honourable Members to withdraw from their private conversations.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: The final area of concern that has emerged out of these Estimates has been the fact that when we were not looking at cuts to major social program we were looking at studies in other areas and silence in remaining areas.

So I have concerns, major concerns, that by Tory standards would result in a call and a motion for a reduction of the Minister's Salary to at least \$1, but we will not do that because that is, as I said, a Tory tactic, it is a personal attack, it is not a clear message to leave the people of Manitoba when, in fact, it is the decision of this Government and this Premier who must bear the responsibility for serious problems emerging in this area. Let me turn my remarks now to the more specific areas of concern.

* (1630)

I started off with mentioning the foster parent issue as a particularly critical one—certainly was pleased to see the resolution of it. I have an outstanding concern which pertains and I believe an unanswered concern, although questions were raised here in Estimates, about whether or not the Minister was in any way involved in a breach of the Child and Family Services legislation or The Child and Family Services Act as a result of the survey and the sharing of confidential records with a consulting company, a polling company. I turn specifically to a response from legislative counsel dated September 8 to me in response to my query about this issue in which the Crown counsel responding, Norm Larson, states, if a list of foster parents were prepared from information obtained under Section 8 of The Child

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and Family Services Act, it could be argued that the release of the list is a breach of the confidentiality provisions of that Act. He goes on to present both sides of the case.

The Minister's memo or the memo that I believe the Minister tabled in response to this issue takes that other side of the issue. But clearly a doubt has been left and not cleared up around this issue in terms of the Minister's legal ability to do what she did and whether or not there has been a breach of legislation and whether or not, notwithstanding the legal question, a breach of a moral issue here, an issue of sharing very confidential records with an outside firm, a consulting firm that certainly has caused some questions to be raised by foster parents themselves and is a great matter of concern for us. I do not believe that issue has been cleared up.

I would like to know from the Minister how she intends to resolve this matter and whether or not she can say with all confidence based on this legal counsel opinion that there has been absolutely no breach of the legislation, and that notwithstanding the legal question she can say with all confidence that she has not broken any standards, any codes of morality and confidentiality with respect to the situation facing foster parents and foster parent children.

Mrs. Oleson: As far as I am concerned, I do not think there needs to be further clarification of it. I certainly do not think that any laws were broken. I would not have undertaken an action that knowingly was contrary to the Act. I think the Member should be aware—well, she is, she has the document in front of her. I believe that I acted in good faith in providing what was a list of names, not a file of information.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I regret that the matter still has not been cleared up and we have not received a total clarification with respect to this whole issue, this most unusual practice of sharing of detailed information, of a client group of the department, the Foster Parents of Manitoba. I have only to point to some of the statements raised in this letter by Norm Larson who is Crown counsel for the Province of Manitoba, and to read again into the record and ask for the Minister to clarify the fact that it is possible. This is quoting, "It is possible, but it seems to me unlikely that a list of foster parents could be developed from the information that foster parents are required to provide the director under subsection 8(2) of The Child and Family Services Act. If that were the case"—and he goes on to say—"such a list would be a record under subsection 76(3)" and so on.

It is clearly not ruled out that a breach of the legislation has not been ruled out by legal counsel. There is still a shadow of a doubt, a slimmer of a doubt with respect to the Minister's actions. There is still, beyond the legal question, is the question of a moral decision on the part of this Government to share what one would normally consider to be confidential information with a public consulting firm. I am certainly not happy yet with the answers and would ask once more for the Minister to at least undertake some further pursuit of this matter, or I shall have to pursue this further in other ways.

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Chairman, I did undertake to provide for the Member a legal opinion. What she does with it further is entirely her business.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Chairperson, we will pursue that further in other ways. Let me go on to another major policy area, an area that has demonstrated in my view concern around the direction that this Minister, this Government, this department is going in with respect to social policy and it pertains to an issue touched on many times by my counterpart, the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray), pertaining to the question of living arrangements for the mentally retarded.

I do not think we had a clear answer at any point through Estimates about this Government's approach and their policy framework for dealing with the issue of institutionalization versus deinstitutionalization, and the question of meeting the needs of those who would like to move in the direction of living within their families and communities as opposed to money continually going into institutional care.

The Minister tabled some data. She did not table all of the information that was requested. It was clearly requested that the Minister provide a list or numbers and statistics pertaining to admissions in institutional care, and an explanation in terms of why the move back to institutional care was required and the role of Dr. Glenn Lowther in each of those cases. I have even more concerns today in this area as a result of the information not provided and the information about discharges and admissions as tabled by the Minister both yesterday and some weeks ago, all of the data suggesting that there has been a marked increase in admissions.

Contrary to leaving the impression as the Minister is wont to of creating a balanced approach, there is a clear indication of a move towards institutionalization, of little effort being made in the direction of community living arrangements. It certainly is a grave concern to my colleagues in the NDP caucus, since we certainly want to see initiatives that lead to a genuine balanced approach that is responsive to the needs of parents and families requesting services of this Government, of this department. Again, I refer to the stats as tabled in a more specific form yesterday by the Minister, where there has been, coincidentally with the election of the Conservatives as the Government of Manitoba, a sharp increase in admissions to MDC, sharply in contrast to the level of admissions, due admissions to MDC under the previous administration, under the NDP.

I have tried to find out from this Minister what the Government's policy is, why there has been this sharp increase in admissions and have not received any straightforward answers with respect to this change in trend, in pattern. Could the Minister please, in the final minutes of her Estimates, give us some indication of where she and her Government are coming from with respect to care for the mentally retarded, and why there has been this sharp increase in admissions to MDC, and why she is not genuinely pursuing the balanced approach that she talks about?

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Mrs. Oleson: I do not have those figures in front of me at the moment so I cannot comment on the specific numbers at this time, but from what I recall when we discussed this before and I provided the Member with a list, I do not recall anything that I would consider "a marked increase in admissions" to quote the Member. I will have to look back on that and check. I do not know what the Member considers a "marked increase" and I do not have in front of me the reasons for that particular, any increase that happened at that time.

I think the Member herself said at the outset of her remarks on this area, she said, the phrase was "meeting the needs of people." I think that is a very important phrase in the whole thing. We must try to meet the needs of people. As we have said over the course of the Estimates and we have discussed how we could be meeting those needs. I have remarked on occasion that it is very difficult to meet all the needs of people. I have undertaken, I have said that our Government agrees with a balanced approach to this whole subject of mentally handicapped and living in the community.

The most important thing is to try to meet the needs of people, some people will want to and have wanted to and are moving into the community where there are facilities. We have to evaluate just where we are and how we can best meet the needs of people. We still have the institution, we have to make sure that the people that are there, that their quality of life and their surroundings are as best as we can possibly make them, because we still do, of course, owe them some modicum of course, of quality living. We cannot ignore them because it is an institution so we still have that responsibility. There have been—as I said before, I do not have those figures so I cannot agree that it was a marked increase in admissions. I do not think the number was very high, as I recall, but I would have to look at it again.

But if we do not know the reasons for those admissions at the time, then we are left really not able to comment on whether or not they should have been there, of course. There would be various reasons why those admissions took place. So I do not feel there has been a marked move back to the institution that I am aware of but, as I said, I could check those figures again.

The Member also indicated that there was some information that has not been supplied. I will check on that and see why that information has not been supplied. It may have been that it was detailed information that is taking some time to get. But I will undertake to have the department check on that. I certainly would not want to withhold information from the Member that we could readily get for her. I think that has addressed some of the concerns raised by the Member.

I know in example of our discussions and from the experience of our discussions through Estimates and from the experience when the Member herself was Minister and we discussed things in Estimates in other forums, I do not think she and I will ever agree on many issues. I think we should respect each others rights to our opinion and to voice those opinions as forcefully as we would want to. I do not think that we will ever agree on every item.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: The Minister is quite right. We are certainly miles apart on many of these issues. But I am referring now to an issue which is not an example of differences of opinion but of a Minister who will not acknowledge the statistics and will not give an answer, give a reason for the change in policy. It is something that has recurred over and over throughout the Estimates where it has been very difficult to try to understand from what policy framework this Minister, this Government is coming from or to get a frank answer about their real agenda out of this Government.

To refresh the Minister's memory about the statistics with respect to admissions of new people and re-admissions to MDC, she will recall quite clearly statistics that indicate four times as many admissions to MDC in comparing a similar period of time under this administration and the former administration and half as many discharges. The numbers are significant enough. I believe any statistician looking at the numbers would suggest that notwithstanding the fact that there are fluctuations depending upon the situation in Manitoba generally or depending on the month of the year or depending on the economic climate or whatever, that pattern would still even out in terms of comparing chunks of time. The fact of the matter is the Minister has never dealt with this sharp increase in admissions since her Government took office. We have had no explanation.

Given that and given the failure of the Minister to provide us with information about the role of her department in the admissions or re-admissions, it leaves us no option but to conclude that there has been a change in policy. This is coupled with not only statistics on the side of admissions to institutions but concerns expressed by families and communities and community activists with respect to inadequate resources going in the area of respite care, with respect to inadequate resources for day programs, with respect to no monies available for follow-up to goods and services. All of those issues have been raised here. We have not had clear answers and no assurances that this Government will ensure that it will continue to reprioritize so that resources can go in the direction to meet that demand coming from parents and families and communities wanting to keep their family members in the community. That is the only conclusion that can be drawn from this discussion, both today and over the last couple of months. Not expecting an answer on—

Mr. Chairman: Excuse me. I believe there is a willingness here to complete this today and I wondered if Honourable Members would withdraw if they are going to have private conversations. In answer to the question, the Honourable Minister.

* (1650)

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Chairman, I would indicate to the Member who is saying that there has been change in policy and she feels that it is a significant number of people who have been admitted to MDC, there has been no change in policy. I have not directed that anyone specifically could be sent to MDC or that more people should. There has been no change in policy. When the

Member indicates that there are inadequate resources for day programs, inadequate resources for this, this did not happen on the 26th of April. This has been a long-standing problem and I think for the Member to berate me at length about this is really rather ridiculous, because a lack of planning on the part of the former Government has brought us to the stage where everyone is beating on my door telling me that they have inadequate resources.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Chairperson, I think the Minister has used that answer just one time too often. Obviously there has been no attempt to suggest that this Government try to deal with all of these problems overnight. What we have tried to do through these Estimates is to get some indication from this Minister about this Government's intentions with respect to this policy area. I am not asking her to find the money to solve all of these problems today. I am asking her for her policy as a Member of this Government, as a Member of the Conservative Party, with respect to this particular group in our society.

Just indicate to us whether or not you have a preference in terms of institutionalization or de-institutionalization. Just tell us where you are coming from with respect to dealing with this overall problem, and then we can talk about a resource's inadequacy or inadequacy of those resources. The NDP record may not be perfect in an area like this, but at least there was no question about where this Government was coming from in terms of a genuine commitment to provide that balanced approach the Minister is so wont to use. I do not expect that we are going to get that policy statement from the Minister. We have not had many policy statements at all, which brings me to another area, and that is the question of changes to the approach and policies with respect to child and family service agencies.

Mrs. Oleson: I think it is important when the Member has said there is a marked increase in admissions after, I believe she said, after the Conservatives came into office. On March 1, 1988, there were 584 people at MDC. On August 1, 1988, there were 585. One is a marked increase in population? Come on. In the meantime, excuse me, there were 18 discharges.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Since the Minister would like to get into the data provided by herself and her department, let me refresh her memory by referring her to her own numbers, which shows that between April 1st of 1988 to August 1st of 1988, we are talking about 19 admissions compared to four for the same period of 1987 and, when we are looking at discharges, we are looking at 18 discharges—if we compare similar periods—we are looking at double that amount of discharges for the same period of time for 1987. I think her own statistics speak for themselves.

Moving on, since time is running out, to Child and Family Services issues, let me summarize very quickly by saying that the decisions on the part of this Minister and this Government to make changes to the funding of prevention programs to the outreach aspect of the agencies' work has given us all grave concern about

the motives of this Government in moving towards possible centralization, towards major changes away from a community-based service that is based on the principles of community self-help and self-development and reflects the needs of that particular community.

Again, it is an issue in which the comments by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) give us all cause to question who is making decisions on the part of this Minister, where is the advice actually coming from, what is the real agenda of this Government. It certainly gives us cause to believe as well that there is a move towards greater devolution of Government responsibility in this area and we will certainly be watching very carefully for any further changes in that regard.

Similarly, all of us were concerned to see this Government's response to the child abuse issue, to see that it had decided not to proceed with monies in the budget of the previous administration for assistance to agencies in dealing with child abuse, for training of workers at the community level, at the front line of the problem, and it is absolutely shocking for us to have learned that this Government decided not to keep those monies in the budget for such an important issue and for dealing with the full range of problems with respect to child abuse.

On two other issues, I have questions. I would like to know, on the issue of the U.S.-Canada Trade Agreement, whether or not the Minister has perused Hansard, if she has any concerns about her answers with respect to (a) not believing she has ever heard anything to give her cause for concern about this agreement with respect to the provision of social programs, and (b) whether she is satisfied that with delegation of responsibility to another Minister who, to date, has not raised this issue in any way, and I wonder if she is prepared to at least acknowledge, in the final minutes of her Estimates, the serious problems raised by staff of her own department with respect to the possible infusion of American firms, of management firms, into the Manitoba economy and into the possible deterioration of our universal social program policy approach.

Mrs. Oleson: No, I have not been reading Hansard lately, but I will review what was said and undertake to review it and see if I have any concerns about what took place. The debate was quite a while ago. I do not recall exactly at this moment what was said. The Member seems to be upset that one department of this Government is studying the free trade deal. I think we discussed that at some length during the Estimates debate.

If the studies of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism reveal anything that is of concern to me in this department, I will certainly undertake to have a look at it. We have been assured by the federal Government that social services were not a part of the free trade deal.

We have our regulations, our legislation, in place in Manitoba, but if there were some concerns raised, I would certainly undertake to have a look at them.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

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Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Chairperson, finally, on the issue of a specific nature, that being child care and its general application with respect to recognizing the question of the importance of universal social programs and the question of full integration of economic and social policies, could the Minister indicate, based on some of the comments of her colleagues, if she or her Government are considering at all the introduction of a means test, a user fee concept approach, to the provision of day care; and whether or not she agrees with the reports of her own department—not this department but her Status of Women's Directorate—that a universal day care system, an affordable quality-child care system, is critical for meeting the needs of women in the paid work force, women looking for work, and women seeking education or training?

Could she indicate whether or not she has any intention of changing this general approach to the delivery of social programs like day care, and whether or not she supports the fundamental notion of complete integration of economic and social policies in order to be truly responsive and sensitive to the issues of equality for all people?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Chairman, I have indicated on many occasions our belief that people need affordable and accessible day care. I think that should go without question. We have discussed that on many occasions. The task force is looking at aspects of day care. We will be looking at their recommendations to see where we go from hereon.

The Member should be aware, when she talks about a means test, that the present people have to qualify for subsidies. If she wants to call that a means test, I think it is a matter of being able to qualify that we pay subsidies only to people who are in need of a subsidy.

Mr. Chairman: The hour approaching 5 p.m., on item 1.(a) Minister's Salary—pass.

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,498,500 for Community Services, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1989—pass.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Community Services.

The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise.

* (1440)

SUPPLY—AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairman, Mark Minenko: I call this section of the Committee of Supply to order, please.

We are continuing to consider the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture. We are presently on page 14 of the Main Estimates Book, item 5.(g) Agricultural Crown Lands Branch: (1) Salaries—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Could the Minister give us a breakdown of the professional and technical staff

and the administrative staff? I was a little surprised to see the size of the staff on Crown Lands. I would just like to get an idea as to exactly what areas of responsibility these professionals particularly fall into.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): I would like to introduce Mr. John Neabel, Director of the Crown Lands Branch.

In answer to your question, the breakdown is 14 staff years in branch administration, one secretary to the advisory committee, 3.15 field services, 9.21 to eastern districts, 12 staff years to the western districts, and three staff years to the agri-land planning management.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Moving on from there, the two areas that I would like a little clarification on, under the Other Expenditures, are the large amounts required for transportation and likewise some idea of the nature of the capital expenditures that are involved in the Crown Lands Branch.

Mr. Findlay: The transportation is the expenses of staff travelling around the province. As you can appreciate, Crown lands are spread over a fairly large area and there is a reasonable amount of travel for the staff.

Your other question with regard to capital, it is really capital parts to do with the Crown Lands Improvement Program that is under way.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I realize that the Crown lands generate some revenue. Can the Minister give us an approximation of the net cost of the Crown land operation relative to the \$2.106 million that is identified as the total expenditure?

Mr. Findlay: The revenue received is \$1.147 million, so it is a little over 50 percent of the total expenditures.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I would be interested in the Minister's rationale as to the justification for the provincial cost of approximately \$1 million for the Crown land operation. What would he identify as the major benefits to society that justify that level of expenditure from the general revenue?

Mr. Findlay: The Crown land leases involve 2,600 individuals who are Crown land lessees, and the grazing about the equivalent of 65,000 to 75,000 cows, which is about 25 percent of the cow herd in the Province of Manitoba. So the ability of them to improve the holding capacity of the Crown Lands leased land in terms of production, in terms of what the economic spinoff to the industry or to the economy of Manitoba through the maintenance of this portion of the cow herd, is a fairly significant return to the economy of the Province of Manitoba. A lot of the work goes to the management and in improving the grazing capacity of those leases.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I guess a question to carry on, on that, is with the level of capital expenditures that are involved and the level of professional and administrative involvement, is it realistic to assume the value of that land in terms of the value of it in case of leases? In

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other words, is the return on leases increasing proportionate to the capital input into that resource? I would assume that the resource is more valuable, carrying capacity is increasing and, therefore, the land should be worth more to whoever is renting it. I guess what I really am saying, is there an anticipation over time that the cost to the province would diminish as the improvement in the Crown land improves and, therefore, the rate that is charged for leasing should slowly go up?

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the money spent for the capital improvements that go into the Crown lands, there is naturally increased lease fees that come back because of increased animal unit months of that increased grazing capacity. But the degree of revenue recovery is not as high as the money spent in terms of capital improvements in the short term.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I guess I still have some difficulty visualizing the long-term objective that the department has in the operation of Crown land as opposed to getting it, where possible, into private hands. I mean, it looks to me as though it could be a situation where you could keep on pouring money into it indefinitely without getting to the point where the resource is identified as a return on investment to the province. Why would there not be a move then to try and reduce the amount of Crown land that is held and have it turned over to private operators?

Mr. Findlay: Any individual who is leasing Crown land has the option, after a minimum period of two years, to exercise an option to purchase the land if he so chooses. These sales are handled through Natural Resources.

There are some restrictions on whether land can or should be sold. Other departments of Government may lay claim to the land and they will get prior consideration for an opportunity to retain it as Crown land. If lands are flood prone, then they should not be sold, so there is the option there for producers to lease the land. There has been roughly 35 purchases per year or thereabouts. There was a considerable surge in purchases some years ago and then it dropped off considerably in more recent years. Producers appear to prefer to lease it rather than purchase it.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairperson, what is the policy in terms of acquisition in terms of Crown land? Is there more Crown land coming into Government hands? In other words, is there any move by the province to look at the acquisition of marginal land? I am one who feels that there is some land in the province that is being farmed, which, if that farmer retired or otherwise wanted to dispose of it, it might be wise to have it returned and be utilized as Crown land because of the fact that it is marginal. Maybe at the same time the Minister can indicate what the breakdown of the Crown land is in terms of land classification? I would assume the majority of it is in Class 4, 5, 6 land rather than in the more productive areas.

* (1450)

Mr. Findlay: The Member is right in terms of the classification. It is primarily the lower class, 4, 5 and

6, although there are some higher classed parcels of land along the Portage Diversion that are retained basically for public use. The primary classification is the much lower classed land.

In terms of purchasing land to add it to the Crown land base, the marginal lands in the province, there has been some discussion in that direction but there have been no active purchases. We, as the Department of Agriculture, would not be involved in being the purchasing agent anyway. It is done through Natural Resources.

Certainly, there are certain marginal lands that because of their susceptibility to erosion, flooding and that sort of thing, might be better off being as Crown land and to be managed that way. I think there is a certain amount of land that has been taken back by MACC that could be given consideration to being transferred into the Crown land category as opposed to trying to resell it back to producers. Maybe it should never have been sold to them in the first place.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Does the Crown Lands Branch identify, in its mandate, any role in soil and water conservation?

Mr. Findlay: I guess you could say that we are involved, to some degree, in trying to prevent indiscriminate clearing of land. The Crown Lands Improvement Program is where land is cleared and the department has fairly strict guidelines on what can be cleared, what should be cleared, what should not be cleared, and how the land should be handled. There certainly is an attempt to practise land conservation through those kinds of activities.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Perhaps one of the points that the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) raised about the ratio of revenue to expenditures in Crown land—the Minister may not have been aware—there was a committee set up of farmers and departmental staff five years ago in which it was decided that the value to society for hunting purposes and natural environmental purposes, that the benefit of 25 percent of the cost of maintaining Crown lands is a cost to the rest of society. On that basis, a formula was established on leasing of Crown land to recoup approximately 75 percent of the costs, and the capital costs, through the years, are also recouped in that formula.

On a lighter note, I want to ask the Minister, who is Marvin Schwark?

Mr. Findlay: The previous Crown Lands Advisory Board had an M. Schwark on it, a Mel Schwark, and in the process of contacting him to be on the advisory board, to continue to be on the advisory board, an unfortunate error was made and the wrong M. Schwark was contacted by phone. Looking it up in the appropriate exchange, they phoned M. Schwark and it turned out to be Marvin instead of Melvin, so there was a little bit of a kaffuffle to get it straightened out, but the individual who was on before is the one who is still on and that was the intention. There was confusion on who M. Schwark was, unfortunately.

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Mr. Uruski: I have to smile at this one because this gentleman was appointed, disappointed; appointed and disappointed; and appointed again by the Order-in-Council of August 31. I am glad they finally have the right Melvin Schwark and I am pleased that the Melvin Schwark who was on the board is still serving on the board.

I want to ask the Minister whether he has overturned at any time the advisory committee's recommendations since he has been in office?

Mr. Findlay: Probably the case that the Member is referring is the case where there were three applicants. It was awarded to one individual, and then one of the other individuals appealed it and said the first person had not submitted truly factual information. On review by the old advisory committee, it was found out in the appeal process that nobody had submitted factual information. That piece of property will be readvertised this fall.

Mr. Uruski: Can the Minister indicate whether the department issued notices to the successful appellant? I will tell the Minister—it is in the case of southeastern Manitoba, so that you know the case I am speaking of. The department did issue a letter, or several letters, notifying the individual of his successful awarding of the land and indicating that a lease would follow; is that factual?

* (1500)

Mr. Findlay: The individual had signed an affidavit. He did receive a letter saying he was the successful applicant. He signed an affidavit that the information he was submitting was true and factual. The lease also says that if any falsified information comes to light that the lease can be terminated. It came to light in the appeal process that some of the information that he had put on the affidavit was not completely factual. So the department acted accordingly.

Mr. Uruski: Just let me get this straight. Do I understand the Minister indicating to me that—maybe the Minister should explain to us whether it was the original successful applicant who, on the basis of the application, was granted the land was the individual who in fact lost the land on appeal, or what actually transpired? Maybe my knowledge of the circumstance is not accurate.

Mr. Findlay: Okay, we will use farmer A and farmer B. Farmer A received the allocation initially. Farmer B appealed, saying that there was not totally factual information. The appeal granted the lease to farmer B. A had it first and then it went to B. Then, through staff investigation, they found out that farmer B had not given completely factual information, so they both were disqualified. The department decided that they would put it out for a one-year lease this year, in other words, readvertised it. Only farmer A applied the next time around, and he has gotten it on a one-year lease and it will be resubmitted again this fall. So they were both disqualified because it was proven, first, by appeal

and, secondly, by staff investigations that neither had given completely factual information, so they had signed false affidavits.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for that explanation. Then the additional information about farmer B coming to light before the board did in fact not come to light before the appeal board, the Crown Lands Advisory Board, but came into possession of the staff after the hearing to which the Minister then was advised and the recommendations were made?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, that is right.

Mr. Uruski: Is the Minister privy to what information was not presented to the board which staff were able to obtain that overturned the original committee's recommendation or the advisory committee's recommendation to the Minister?

Mr. Findlay: The misinformation on farmer A was in terms of cattle numbers. The misinformation on farmer B was that he did not put down all the land that he had at his disposal for his use, either owned or leased. Some of the land he leases, he leases on a verbal agreement rather than a written agreement, so he felt he did not have to include that as land available to him. As you clearly know, a lease of any nature makes land available to him so he had more land that he was really identifying, so he was not properly appraised and really had not as much use for the land as he made it look like in his application.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, the land in question is out on a casual one-year permit and will be re-advertised this fall or winter for a long-term grazing lease for the future. Is that correct?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, that is the procedure that they are on.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for the explanation. Can the Minister indicate whether there has been any change in the application of the Crown Land Improvement Policy? Maybe he should explain the policy to me as it exists today.

Mr. Findlay: There have been no changes in the Crown Land Improvement Policy since we have taken Government. The Crown Land Improvement Policy that was in place paid \$117 per acre for the process of clearing and putting it into production. If the lessee spent more than that per acre, it was at his expense. The Government level of support was only up to \$117 an acre. The only activity that is going on is on applications that have already been approved. The lessees have until March of 1991 to complete their improvement programs. There are no new lessee applications for improvements being accepted. It is just winding down the program between now and March of '91.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the will of the section to pass this item?

Mr. Findlay: If I could just add to that, if any lessee wants to get involved in any new improvement projects,

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it is at his expense. But certainly we will advise them and let them know of the regulations with what they can clear and where they can clear it.

Mr. Uruski: Just so I understand it, the Capital Program is being phased out? Is that what the Minister has indicated?

Mr. Findlay: The Government involvement in terms of putting money up to get involved in the clearing is going to be phased out between now and March of '91. Any lessee who wants to do some improvements at his own expense can do it, but the only compensation he gets is that there will be no increase in lease fee for 10 years. In other words, whatever improvements he makes, he gets the benefit of it for 10 years to offset the expense that he incurred to do those improvements.

* (1510)

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, that issue has been around for a while. I asked the Minister, as modest as the program is, and it has been scaled down substantially over the years, I felt that the program should not be totally discontinued because there are farmers who are, I would consider, beginning and small-time farmers who likely may not have the initial capital to do the land clearing. This program in a way assisted some of those to begin doing some clearing and improvements in order to expand their herd, recognizing that the other avenues will still be open, but generally the difficulty is, when times are fairly tough, to either borrow or in whatever way come up with the capital cost required to do the land clearing.

I would ask that the Minister review that policy and review that position that he has taken and at least continue the very modest program that there is. Admittedly, I was even one of those who reduced the scale of that program when pressure of funding was there, but we left that small amount in there to try and deal with some of the smaller operators and others who might take part in the program, and even if they could not, they queued up and were able to be in the program.

Although the program may be, from the staff point of view, a bit of an irritant now because there is not much that they can administer because there probably will be a fair number of requests, nevertheless, one could modify that policy to deal with some of the smaller applicants that may have one or two quarters of land, and those could be given priority over those who have, say, 7, 8, or 10 quarters of land in terms of the number of Crown lands, and those would be generally viewed as larger operators and would be able to achieve Crown land improvement through their own resources, and those who have less Crown land could in fact be assisted. So I ask the Minister to reconsider that policy.

Mr. Findlay: As the Member probably knows, the phasing down had been started back in November of '87. We have not had a chance to really look at the sort of projection that he is giving or the opinion that he is giving. Certainly, we will look at it with what advisability there is to continuing with some element

of capital assistance to smaller producers, younger producers, to get involved in clearing land and in addition to, as I already mentioned, the 10-year waiver on increased lease fees. Maybe that needs to be something up front to give them that little stimulus to be able to do some improvements. We will look at it.

Mr. Chairman: Item 5.(g)(1) Salaries—pass; item 5.(g)(2) Other Expenditures—pass.

Resolution No. 11: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,690,100 for Agriculture, Farm and Rural Development Division, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1989—pass.

I draw the section's attention to item No. 6., Policy and Economics Division, 6.(a) Administration: (1) Salaries—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I have very little comment on 6.(a) Administration, other than going through this entire division.

It would appear that there are only 31 staff involved when one looks at all of the areas that fall into this, and of those 31, five appear to be in a managerial position. I guess my question to the Minister is: Is there some reason why that sort of 1:5 ratio of managerial to everything else is required in this particular division? It seems very high.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce two people who have just joined us: Craig Lee, Assistant Deputy Minister; and Heather Gregory, Director, Economics Branch.

With his question in regard to the five management positions, if he looks in the book, on pages 14 and 15, there is one under Administration, one under Economics Branch, one under Natural Products Marketing Council, one under Farm Lands Ownership and one under Family Farm Protection Act. Those are the five management positions. There is a number of sections to this. That is why there are that many management positions.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Following that up, my question is how much of an administrative role does the manager under Administration have when it comes to the councils and the commissions that fall into this particular division? It would seem to me that they appear to be almost autonomous in many respects and that the level of administration that would be provided under 6.(a) here must be minimal for some of them.

Mr. Findlay: I just asked the ADM to justify his job. That is the essence of the question.

All the staff report to him and all the boards report to me. There is a fair bit of administrative activity with regard to all these different sections. They are not totally as autonomous as you might think.

* (1520)

Mr. Chairman: Item 6.(a) Administration: (1) Salaries—pass; item 6.(a)(2) Other Expenditures—pass.

Item 6.(b) Economics Branch: (1) Salaries—the Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I would just like a little clarification or breakdown on the nature of the 11 professional positions in the Economics Branch.

Mr. Findlay: The 11 positions are all economists, with 6 being in Policy Analysis, 4 in Economic and Market Analysis, and 1 in Statistics. That makes up the 11 economists.

Mr. Laurie Evans: The other question I have is: Has consideration been given to the consolidation of the Marketing Branch and the Economics Branch? If it has, what was the rationale for keeping them separate; and if it has not, what would be the rationale for keeping them separate? It appears to me that they certainly must work in close cooperation, and it would appear that there is some overlap in the responsibility of the Marketing Branch and the Economics Branch.

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, there is obvious reason to give consideration to that sort of amalgamation. So far the decision in past considerations has been to keep them separate because this branch does the analytical work and the Marketing Branch does the promotional work. Certainly, this branch will do some data generation for the Marketing Branch, some of the analytical work in support of the Marketing Branch.

It is fair to say that there will be opportunity in the future to give further consideration to that possibility of keeping them separate or the efficiency that might be generated by bringing them together. That is a decision that will have to be rethought somewhere down the road.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Going through the activities that are identified and the expected results—my question is to the Minister—it would appear from the other expenditures that little, if any, of this type of work is contracted out. Has there been any thought given to the contracting out of what would appear, in some cases, to be relatively routine accumulation of long-term data and that sort of thing which is not necessarily closely tied to policy or program coordination?

Mr. Findlay: This past year there were a total of seven different consultant activities that were involved:

- (1) A Price Waterhouse study on the review of supply-management.
- (2) an inter-cameo study of the indemnification of subsidization of the red meat sector, cost-shared by provinces and the federal Government.
- (3) another study involving W.P. Janzen on the development of papers related to assisting farmers rather than encouraging production.
- (4) Ray Josephson, evaluation of beginner farmers and sources of credit from information provided by diploma students.
- (5) Department of Highways, an inter-departmental cost-shared study of freight rates.

- (6) Arkarken Corporation, federal-provincial study of grain income support.
- (7) Deloitte Haskins & Sells, federal-provincial study of grain income support in conjunction with the previous item that I mentioned.

In terms of contracting out the routine data collection, I do not know whether it would be any more efficient done by contracting out as opposed to being done by staff in terms of routine collection of data for distribution to the various sources that want that kind of information.

Mr. Laurie Evans: A final question under the Economics Branch. I do not want this to sound overly critical, but I did catch this under No. 2 of the objectives here, and it is an issue that has concerned me for many years. It states, "To provide coordination of long-term policy and program development within the department." I guess my hang-up here—and it may be a hang-up, Mr. Chairperson—is I have never found it possible to have anyone provide me with what they would identify as the long-term policy of the Department of Agriculture.

I am not being critical of this because I have run into the same thing with the Faculty of Agriculture and other institutions which you would assume are operating with some long-term policy. What I find frequently appears to be happening is there is a great conglomerate of programs, but the programs do not seem to be held together in any fashion which would indicate that there is a long-term policy objective which those programs would hopefully lead to. Instead, frequently what happens is you get some motherhood statements, which are what I would regard some of the statements that are identified in the first few pages here, as the overall responsibilities and so on. One cannot argue with them, but they do not say very much.

Is there anywhere in the Manitoba Department of Agriculture a statement, which I would assume, at least, the executive summary should be something that is only two or three pages long which clearly identifies the long-term policy of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, in other words, something that you can get your teeth into and which you would assume would change drastically when you have, as we have had recently, a move from one end of the spectrum in the politics of the province to the other end of the spectrum. It would seem unreasonable to me that the long-term policy from the two ends of that pendulum swing would be identical. This is something that I do not think has ever been identified or something that you could get hold of.

Is that correct, or is there something that one could hand out that would be titled, "The Long-Term Policy of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture"?

* (1530)

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, the question that the Member asks, at any given time, may be difficult to put precise words to say that which you can put your teeth into, but I would refer him to page 6 of the Supplementary Estimates which gives eight specific objectives of the department. I do not think that it is fair to think that, because the Government changes, the department all

of a sudden swings its programs to any great magnitude. It is there to deliver, to the farmers of this province and the agriculture industry in general, the best possible technological transfer that we can get to them.

I do not see myself as wanting to change the direction entirely of what the department is doing. They have a mission that has always been in place of technological transfer to the farm community, and whether the NDP are in power or we are in power or the Liberals in power, I do not think that you would step in and just sweep aside the objectives and the programs and the activities that the department has been involved in for a long time. I do not think it is feasible or responsible.

You put certain handles on different programs and this sort of thing, but you cannot just change the daily activities of the branches. They have their objectives over a long period of time. The eight objectives on page 6 he can read at any time.

1. To reduce the economic risk for farmers and enhance and stabilize the incomes of farm families.

That is a very important principle through crop insurance, through stabilization programs.

2. To preserve family farms and enhance the viability of existing farm enterprises.

This is done in a large variety of ways through our extension branches and other specialists.

3. To provide an opportunity for farmers, including younger and beginning producers, to enter agriculture and develop viable farming operations.

You get a variety of programs and different departments that come with that area, whether it is the Young Farmer Rebate in MACC, or whatever it is.

4. To maintain and expand production of agricultural commodities, particularly those which lend themselves to further processing in this province.

We talked at a reasonable length at different times about diversification and secondary processing to increase the economic activity on our raw commodities in this province.

5. To seek export markets and secure access to these markets for the high quality commodities produced in Manitoba.

We talked certainly about that last night and it is a very valuable role the department plays and where we have great opportunities in the future.

6. To conserve and improve Manitoba's soil resources and preserve the environment.

That does not need any further explanation.

7. To support overall provincial Government priorities, including community economic development and employment creation.

It fits in well with the previous statements of activities that we are involved with in the department.

8. To promote participation by farmers, farm organizations and other residents of rural Manitoba in the decision-making which will enable the entire agricultural industry in Manitoba to meet the challenges of the future.

I think it is well-summed up in No. 8. We will work collectively together as department people, as farmers and as farm organizations to try to direct the industry to meet the challenges of the future as many and varied as they will turn out to be.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I thank the Minister for his comment. I do not disagree with it. It is just that when one looks at—I use the term “rhetoric” because there may not be a better term, but I do not want it to be in a negative context—but when one goes through an election and listens to the policy that is pronounced by the various Parties, one would certainly get the impression, when you listen to the NDP policy, that you have an interventionist type of Government, one that is going to move in and have a hands-on type of operation, which certainly I do not agree with.

On the other side of the pendulum, you get the impression that you have a non-interventionist laissez-faire type of an attitude from the Conservatives. There is no indication in this document yet that that type of an approach is being taken.

The reason I mention this, Mr. Chairperson, is I was astounded when I looked at this. I realize that there is a time frame involved, but you have a situation here where the preface, the letter that is written and is signed by the Minister in the two budgets that I have, which is the defeated one and the current one, there is not one word different in the letter that was signed by Mr. Harapiak and the new Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay).

If you go through this book and you take a look at the pages which relate to “Objective, Activity Identification and Expected Results,” I have gone through here and identified that practically in every case they are the same page but the number is different. One case it is 41, the next 43, and so on. That goes through with very few exceptions. The only exceptions are when there has been a budgetary change and that has necessitated the change in the figures, but the overall thing, the Objectives, the Activity Identification, the Expected Results, are identical between the two budgets. This certainly, to me, would indicate that you have got a conglomerative of programs that do not necessarily, in any way, reflect any philosophical policy differences.

I would assume that if and when this Government has the opportunity to present another budget that we would probably see something quite different. I know the Minister has indicated before that because of the time frame and the necessity, as they saw it, of getting into the House on the 21st of July that there was not time to make what I would assume would be the type of changes they may have anticipated. It looks to me as though they may have been better off had they taken a little more time and at least made some changes in here because I get the impression that this, and I have

not had the opportunity to look at the Estimates Books in all the other departments, but I got the impression that this is so similar that we are not going to see anything very major in change of policy direction between these two Governments, and had it not been for the unfortunate circumstances of a drought, the Department of Agriculture Estimates this time would have been virtually identical with the Estimates that were defeated earlier this year.

So, Mr. Chairperson, I have some difficulty with what would appear to be a lack of any policy change and the continuation of virtually the same programs. I do not want to appear to be overly critical of the Minister because of the time frame that is involved, but I certainly would appreciate some comment from him as to whether or not he would anticipate that had he been given another few months, whether there would have been quite a bit of difference between these two Estimate Supplements, the one that was defeated and the one now that is virtually identical.

* (1540)

Mr. Findlay: If the Member is looking for some directional changes that happened in the department, I guess he will not find it in the numbers, in the dollars and cents in the budget. We have taken considerably a different approach on a number of issues from the previous Government.

This question of school tax the other day, where he does not want to give it to the people who actually pay the tax, he wants to give it back to somebody else—we certainly recognize the support that we are prepared to give to the farm organizations to voluntary check-off legislation and that was something the previous Government did not act on.

We recognize our involvement in tripartite or our commitment to risk protection for producers through the tripartite process—we joined beans and are very close to joining the tripartite on red meats so that we can have that level of stabilization available to our producers in this province.

That is a completely different attitude than was presented by the previous Government. We are trying to put increased emphasis in the marketing area, increased emphasis in our ability to contact our clients, our producers out there through the extension branch and relate with them on a very positive note and work with their farm organizations in directing the industry. Those are some moves that I think are slightly different than the past administration was involved in.

We are trying to put increased emphasis on the diversification and the secondary processing that we can get in place in this province to improve the economy of the province through those activities, the job creation that it generates. So there is certainly some different emphasis with regard how we are operating as a staff. But in terms of the dollars, there is ongoing programs of delivery to the producers, to the agriculture industry of this province which—there will be some changes next year, but again I will not guarantee that you will find massive shifts in any particular direction because

no matter what the administration, the Department of Agriculture has certain long-term commitments that they must meet to the producers of this province.

One other area I will just mention, that the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) was quite happy the other day when we acted upon putting the vet grant into Fisher Branch, which is something they did not do and there was a vet there for the whole year and they did not put the money to the area. We are going to put some increased emphasis on the funding of the Weed Districts which is something that has not happened since 1981. I can tell them the group of people I was talking to this morning were very pleased to hear that we were interested in promoting the Weed Districts that are presently in place and getting in more in place to cover, eventually, the entire Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I appreciate the Minister's comments because certainly I think I have gone on record as being supportive of most of those that have been announced so far.

I guess one question that comes to mind when the Minister has made his comments. Can the Minister tell us exactly what the status is of the two Bills that have been given first reading and yet have not appeared printed? Is there a concern there?

Mr. Findlay: It has taken a little bit of time to get the final details straightened out and get it through translation, but it is through there now and they will appear in the House very, very soon.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Just one comment before we leave this branch and that is, as a new Member of the Legislature and a novice, I would like the Minister's comment—frankly I am concerned that we are now to the point where we have utilized in excess of 100 hours on Estimates. Of course the Minister will certainly come back and say, well, that is the Opposition's fault, which I do not disagree with. But it would seem to me, and I wonder if the Minister would agree that his time could probably be better spent getting back to his office and getting ready for the next set of Estimates where I would expect there be some additional changes and whether this should not be considered in terms of moving a little more quickly through, not only this department, but a lot of the others.

Mr. Findlay: I have to agree wholeheartedly. There is no doubt that we have had considerable demands on our time and staff time to get on with the programs of the department. Staff are sitting up there, staff are here. Staff are sort of waiting for their turn over the last three weeks I guess, getting past three weeks, now maybe closer to four weeks. Certainly, it does slow down the department. It slows down my ability, the Cabinet's ability to get on with the next Budget. You can well appreciate there are a lot of different farm organizations and groups of producers that are going to want to meet with me in conjunction with staff in the coming two or three months as the round-the-farm meetings starts. There is no question. We have a lot of work to do in terms of trying to determine what are some of the right directions to go on certain policies

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that the farm industry wants changed. So we could spend our time better.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Just in that vain then. I wish to go on record at this time indicating that my intention will be to ask very few questions on the remaining part of the Agricultural Estimates because we are moving into areas where I know the Minister and my colleague from the Interlake have different philosophical views and I differ from both of them in some respects. Looking through these areas, I think one could ask questions ad infinitum. We could be here until Christmas time or later on what is left in this area.

So I want to go on record as indicating that it is not a lack of ability to ask questions because, of course, the clarification and the edification that could be gained by asking many questions on these areas would be beneficial to me. But I think to the view of attempting to get through more of the department rather than have so many of them that are eventually going to be past on one Bill of concurrence, I would assume, as we get later on, I would hope that there would be a willingness to move through the remainder of this department rather quickly knowing that it could be dealt with in much greater depth, but hopefully just touching on the areas that there are major philosophical differences.

Mr. Uruski: We have sat here for the last half hour and we have had two Party labels. I can say that one is Conservative and one maybe ultra Conservative, and let them each wear whichever hat they wish in terms of their philosophical differences or philosophical parallels.

I want to say that really, in effect, in this House, we really do not have any difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives, none whatsoever. In fact, by listening to my friend from Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans), he is probably the ultra Conservative and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) might look like the moderate Conservative in this House here. Although, Mr. Chairman, his policies and his different direction in some areas has been to give money to those who need it least. We will deal with the Property Tax Credit Program very shortly.

Mr. Chairman, in this department, can the Minister indicate what studies they have undertaken dealing with food processing and the impacts on—since he talked about the enhancement of food processing—whether there have been any studies conducted on the impacts of free trade on the processing industry within agriculture following upon some of the comments that were made this spring by the owner of McCain Foods, and has become a very major player in Manitoba and that deals with the potato processing plant in Portage la Prairie.

I know the Minister, in some of his comments during the debates on Industry, Trade and Technology, tried to turn the debate and accuse the Opposition of not having faith in our farmers and that our farmers are just as efficient as those elsewhere. That has never been the debate about our farmers being efficient or not. The fact of the matter is that Manitoba's farmers

are much more vulnerable because of the cost of production: colder weather, higher energy costs, and the ability in our climate to produce far less. In the area of potatoes, for example, in Manitoba, we average about seven tonnes per acre and receive about \$1.10 a tonne in terms of potatoes. In contrast, U.S. potato growers produce about 25 tonnes per acre and receive between \$90 and \$95 a tonne Canadian for those potatoes.

I know Mr. McCain has already indicated that he has bought plants in the South. I think he said we have already purchased a plant in Washington and in South Dakota. Can the Minister indicate, since his role is to enhance food processing in this province, what are the impacts, what are the studies that have been done by the department, or what has been their relationship with McCain's in terms of the future of the plant in Portage la Prairie?

* (1550)

Mr. Findlay: I find it extremely unusual that the NDP Member is standing up here supporting the multinational companies instead of supporting the producers of the Province of Manitoba; a very, very strange circumstance. I guess you jump into bed with whomever you think is going to project the opinion you want to have projected. He is anti-free trade and we are pro-free trade. We are pro trade with any country in the world where we as producers have the ability to penetrate the market at a profit to our producers.

McCain's, if you speak to the potato producers of this province, had been a thorn in the side of producers for a long time in terms of being able to settle contracts. They have been a difficult company to deal with. I have looked at McCain's submission to the Free Trade Committee and really if you read this through—and I would suggest the former Minister read it—because all they do is complain about their old complaints like you just mentioned; potatoes yield higher down there; they say they cost less and the energy costs are less; transportation costs are less in the United States, but yet they chose to come and locate the plant in Manitoba. Do you know the reason why they came here? - (Interjection)- What about the quality of potatoes? - (Interjection)- Mr. Chairman, are you recognizing that Member or are you recognizing me?

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Findlay: Okay, thank you. The quality of the potatoes is why they located here. They have been selling the fries into Japan in competition with American companies, and their own companies in the United States if they bought two locations down there. Obviously, they can compete; an 80 cent dollar has a lot to do with their ability to compete. When you have the best quality, it is worth a premium. That is what we have here in the Province of Manitoba.

Our potato producers here in Manitoba sell potatoes down into the United States into the Fargo area. We can compete and its base is quality. We have certain disadvantages on climate and energy and labour costs,

sure, but we can still compete. I find it unusual that you would take the side of McCain's who all they do is bring out their old arguments, their old reasons for trying to beat down the producer price. That is the game of McCain's; anything to beat down the producer price. Buy it for the least and sell it for the most; that is the game the company is in. They will use any argument, any angle and any platform to do it. If the Members on the other side of this House stand up and support that principle of beat the producers down—we do not support it. We support the producers. We support free trade with the United States and any country in the world we can actively trade with.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, it is amusing to see the Minister again use his diversions in terms of trying to gain his point. No one approves of any tactics of any large company that have been employed in New Brunswick and the like.

The Minister should learn something from what is being said by this multinational, a Canadian multinational. The fact of the matter is they are telling you that they will have no problem with competing. They have already bought plants in the United States, that if the crunch comes and the value of the Canadian dollar as compared to the American dollar rises, what will they do? They will produce in the United States where it is cheaper to operate.—(Interjection)—The fact of the matter is they are also involved in further processing in other areas.

The Minister says, well, how can you support this company? I do not support this company, but this company is saying something to all of us, saying something to Manitoba farmers, saying something to Canadian farmers that is basically saying that when free trade comes in, in order for us to stay in business in this country—and we have built all over, they have built all over the world, that we will require in order for those process products to compete in the market place. We will require one of two things: either a closed border, which they will not have, and marketing boards will not have the power to regulate the price because the process product, the product that will go into those process foods will either have to be at a competitive price to US product or else they are out of business, or else they go south.

Ultimately, what will happen is that the farmers who he says he is protecting will be the vulnerable ones. They will be the ones to say well, if we want this plant and we want to sell our chicken, we want to sell our potatoes, we are going to have to give. It will be those farmer incomes who will be affected under this deal and who will the Minister then point a finger at and say well, McCain's is the bad old wolf, when they this year told him so, that that is what will occur, and that is in fact what will happen.

I know that I made a commitment that I would not raise too many trade questions in terms of this debate in these Estimates, but it is clear the Minister did not answer the point about what work his department has done in terms of analysis. Has he asked the department for the impact on marketing boards? Have the marketing boards written him and told him their

opinions on the free trade deal here in Manitoba? Has he met with those marketing boards?

Mr. Findlay: The Member asks about the marketing boards, and I guess one other comment I did not make in my previous dissertation I would like to put on the record, and that is my extreme disappointment with McCain's attitude about writing the producers of Manitoba saying, vote against the marketing board in the national referendum that was held. They said vote against the marketing board.

I think producers of the Province of Manitoba know whether they want a marketing board or they do not want one, and McCain taking the position that they are going to retaliate against the producers if they vote for a particular marketing board. That is incredible that they would take that position. I hope that you do not support them in that process of writing that kind of letter.—(Interjection)—Okay.

In terms of my meeting with the marketing boards, yes, within two to two-and-a-half months of being sworn in as Minister, I met with if not all certainly the vast majority of the marketing boards. The egg board had some concern about the public entity question, whether they would be determined to be a public entity and that might have some influence on the ability of their activity in the Surplus Removal Program. The legal opinion, I wrote the Minister of Trade, Crosbie, and asked for the legal opinion on the definition of public entity, and their legal opinion tells them that the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency will not be considered a public entity under the definition of free trade.

The dairy people were concerned about adding some products to the import control list, and they have been added to the import control list. We had some discussion on both those items at the Ministers of Agriculture Meeting, and there was no other province that indicated they had any problem with those particular interpretations and actions. All the poultry boards, and I would say particularly the milk board, said we do not see any gain in this process. We do not see that we are going to lose the industry over it. We are basically neutral. We realize there are some opportunities for the red meat sector and for the canola sector and, for that reason, we are not going to stand out and speak against free trade.

We are in favour of being able to retain our supply-management system in this country. I think it is fair to say that was recognized in the agreement, that supply-management systems can be maintained. In fact, the additional marketing boards can be organized in this country under that agreement. I would suggest they are neutral on the question. They are not violently against, and they are not going to stand up and speak in favour of it either.

(The Acting Chairman, Mr. Neil Gaudry, in the Chair.)

Certainly, the red meat sector and the canola sector are very strongly in favour of the opportunity they are going to have to sell their products into that market to the south. It is 10 times the consuming size of Canada and, if we are able to produce the quality they want and we have proven that we can and we know that

we will continue to do that through the research and the grading standards that we have in place in this country, we can compete very well. I believe there is no question that removal of tariffs at borders has got to be beneficial to us with whatever country we can do that.

In discussions with Japan, certainly their desire is to increase their level of trade with us, and they talk in terms of realizing that they have some very restrictive tariffs on their borders and they would like to have a more free opportunity to do trade with us. I think that is the direction we are going in this world with the progressive countries, and I hope that we see some progress in this direction in the GATT round of negotiations, which are much more difficult and involve some 95 countries. It is not an easy process to talk about bringing down trade barriers with that number of countries. I think it is an important principle that we have accomplished it or very nearly accomplished it here in North America. By and large, it will be of major benefit to the agricultural industry in the long term.

* (1600)

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, so the Minister is indicating that they have not done any further analysis on any of the industries, or can he elaborate on that area?

Mr. Findlay: The answer is no, but I have spoken to a lot of different producer organizations and they have given me those opinions of either strong support or neutral position. I believe they have done significant analysis of the effect on their industry, and I take their positions to be factual and informative and it gives me a good idea of where they stand.

Mr. Uruski: I thank the Minister for his comments.

I wanted to know whether he has seen the article just of Sunday, October 16, on farm program changes, in the Winnipeg Free Press, statements by Elmer McKenzie, a University of Guelph economist who supports the trade deal. He indicates that, and I quote, "It will not be admitted in official circles, but it would appear a primary reason for wanting free trade with the United States is to bring pressure to bear on provincial policies." This economist told a conference, sponsored by the University of Manitoba and the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists, that he supports the free trade deal. Can the Minister indicate whether or not he agrees with that assertion?

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, there is a fair bit of truth to the statement that the ability to negotiate freer trade north and south will put pressure on trying to have a freer trade policy between provinces. Certainly, in the red meat sector with the stabilization program in different provinces will have to be called some unfair trade practices between provinces. I will tell the Member that I have used that argument in trying to convince some of those provinces to realize what they are doing to us and that if they support free trade north and south, I would hope that they would support free trade east and west. So there is definitely some truth to that. That is a positive spin off of the Free Trade Agreement if

we can reduce some of the barriers between provinces and free flow of goods so that the location of the province or the area with comparative advantage can assert that comparative advantage and supply food at the lowest possible cost to the consumers.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, that same economist indicated that while he supports the trade deal and conceded that many of his arguments for the pact, the major one, was the one I and the Minister alluded to. That is why so many farm groups, including marketing boards and the Wheat Board and others, are so concerned about the free trade deal, that it is over a period of time—and no one says it will be—it is black and white. That is why the arguments that the Minister tries to throw in about employment practices and other red herrings into this debate to try and move off the debate on the question of the merits of the trade deal. It is really not free trade. That is the irony of this whole question. No one here objects to enhanced trading. We have had that debate.

Mr. Chairman, if the Minister concedes that this is going to occur, then he is admitting, at least if he has paralleled his thoughts with this economist, he is admitting that in a longer term, over a period of time, it is going to create great pressure on our supply-managed commodities because of the increase, on the one hand, of the global quota that is going to be increased in certain aspects of imports into the country, as well as the pressure that will be created by further processed products which will be in competition with Canadian processed products on our same market, which will not be subjected to the same price mechanisms that supply management has in place in this country.

I refer generally to the poultry industry. We will have, and it will be very clear that chicken pot pie or further chicken processed products will be able to come into being. Maybe a whole chicken and even those global quotas will increase, will come into this country. If they come into this country as a processed product and will be brought across the border without any restriction, obviously, the impact on the Canadian processing industry has to be to say, well, if we are going to stay in business, there is one of two ways of doing it, we either cut our input costs or we move south and set up a plant there. There will not be very much alternative.

The Minister in his comments about the dollar value having no relationship to this whole debate is ludicrous. Why have our hog producers of this province penetrated or moved as many hogs as they have south of the border in the last couple of years? It has been not because there have been excessive subsidies to the hog industry and has forced them to go over. He agrees with that position. If it has been subsidies or it has been grain or the Crow rate, as some have alleged, why has there not been a massive hog industry in North Dakota where there is no Crow rate, where the economy generally is an agricultural economy? The fact of the matter is it has been the cheap Canadian dollar. We have been able to pump hogs into the United States and our hog industry has flourished. It has been because of a 75- to 80- cent dollar.

But, Mr. Chairman, it is so closely interwoven into this whole agreement that when our dollar moves up,

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notwithstanding all the grandiose statements of the beef industry, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, that we will have a great opportunity to the United States for red meats, they have had that opportunity. They have had virtually over the last number of years an open border. The Minister should answer us. What is happening now in the beef industry? What is happening with the rolled beef that is coming in from the United States that is ungraded? What impact is it having on the Canadian market? Because there is; ask the packers. Maybe the Minister should check. Maybe he has some knowledge of that whole area of the ungraded beef, the boxed beef that is coming in from the United States into Canada, particularly into Manitoba, and is in fact playing havoc with the marketplace in the reverse at the present time. We talk about these great opportunities southward. Mr. Chairman, let him explain what is happening in the beef industry with that product coming into Manitoba.

* (1610)

Mr. Findlay: The Member talks about the dollar value or the value of the dollar. Certainly, free trade is not going to affect the value of the dollar other than the performance of the two countries.

If we are going to continue to do 80 percent of our export trade in Canada to the United States, and if we are going to do well with them, yes, our dollar will rise. If it is going to rise, you have to concede that we are going to do well as a country. If you concede we are going to do poorly, then it will drop below 80 cents. So if we are going to do well, naturally the dollar will rise. I am projecting we are going to do well, so it may well rise. You cannot have it rise without doing well. So I do not see where you are coming from in terms of saying that we are going to do well in one sense but be devastated in another sense.

The amount of beef coming into this country, in rolled beef, we are not aware that it is of any great amount. We still have a net export, to the United States, of beef. We have certainly a very significant net export of pork to the United States. We have exported to the United States basis the different value of the dollar but also the quality of the product. The leanness of the pork that is raised in Canada is very attractive to the American consumer. The pork industry has faced some significant challenges by the protective attitude of the American producers who try to keep us out of their markets. I would say considered some reasonably unfair practices in terms of the non-tariff trade barrier of chloramphenicol of some few years ago and they did not really succeed all that well in that one so they brought in countervail at 4.4 cents a pound. It has subsequently been appealed in the 1985-86 year and it is in the process of being reduced to 2.2 cents. For the subsequent years, a further appeal is going to occur and we should be able to win the appeal in the subsequent years because there is really no subsidization of the pork industry up here since then.

Now they are looking at trying to put countervail on the downstream products, in other words, the processed products. They will try any angle to keep us out of their market and I think when the Free Trade Agreement is

in place and we will have an opportunity for a dispute settling mechanism, I think we will be in a better position to present our case and defend ourselves in an opportunity where there is 50-50 representation on the panel from Canada and the United States. There will continue to be working groups that will work in the various sectors of agriculture, in fact, all sectors of trade between the two countries to try to work with the irritants that will undoubtedly come up as we move along in our trading practice with that country. We do a significant amount of trade with that country in agriculture and other sectors. I think that the attitude has to be positive, that we do not have trade barriers between us, otherwise we are going to get into the dispute we have seen in the hog industry and many other commodities.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairman, I have no intention of getting full fledged into the free trade debate at this particular time, but I think one or two things should be on record. First of all, there has been some discussion regarding the whole McCain issue here and certainly we do not support the McCain approach to dealing with the producer. I think they have a record, but certainly they are not the only large company that has a record of attempting to get the best quality product at the least price. This is the name of the game when you are in that type of business.

So that while we do not necessarily support that approach to it and I think I would agree with my colleague from St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), we certainly have reservations about the approach that was taken by McCain in dealing with the producers in attempting to impose their will, if you will use that term in the decision regarding the marketing board. But I do feel that I have to indicate to both my colleague from the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) and to the Minister that there is a philosophical difference between myself and the Minister when it comes to free trade.

Two things I would like to point out, Mr. Chairperson: one is simply this, if the Free Trade Agreement was solely within the agricultural area, then I would have much less difficulty with it. I think I would have to go on record as having serious reservations about the likelihood of being able to maintain the supply management sector as we now know it. Because I am satisfied of two things. One, we are going to have much more difficulty once that Free Trade Agreement is signed in adding anything to the exempted list.

Right now it is difficult, but the Americans have gone on record that they will be out to try and overcome the supply management and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) indicated that it is "sheltered." I like that term because to me there is a distinct difference between having something sheltered and something protected. It may in fact be sheltered, but a shelter tends to have a temporary connotation to it, so I do not feel that the marketing boards have adequate protection. They will be under tremendous pressure right from Day One. We already know that because we are already concerned and are squirming, if you will, to try and get more commodities on the exempted list to try and restrict the amount of processed material that will come in.

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I am firmly of the conviction that the supply managed areas are doomed under free trade. I do not think they will last long enough that you could say "Jack Robinson," if you want to use that old expression. I think they are gone; they will be gone very quickly. They will be under tremendous pressure immediately and the likelihood of adding new supply-management commodities to it after we are in free trade is utter nonsense in my opinion. I do not think there is a chance in the world of them ever being brought in. What concerns me more, Mr. Chairperson, with the whole area of free trade is not the movement of agricultural commodities, which we are already virtually in a free trade arrangement as far as most of them are concerned.

The area that people do not seem to look at is the whole concept of free trade when it comes to the service industries, and that is the area that in my opinion will be the one that will be a disaster for Canada. When one talks about the generation of a tremendous number of jobs in Canada, there may be jobs generated, but they are not going to be the jobs that you and I want or the jobs that we want for our youngsters. They are going to be the minimum wage jobs. They are going to be the jobs that are in the bottom list of the service sector. All of those jobs that you and I would aspire to are going to be south of the border and, as far as I am concerned, we have to look upon ourselves after free trade comes in as being essentially pseudo-Americans.

For the Minister to say that there is no relationship between the value of our dollar and free trade I think is whistling in the dark. There will certainly be rapid movement in the so-called harmonization of the two countries. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Chairperson, we are moving very, very rapidly to where the only thing that our Prime Minister can aspire to is being the governor of a state which will be part of America, probably within his lifetime. We are moving rapidly towards that thing, and I have severe reservations about free trade.

If it was restricted to the individual commodities and they were dealt with one at a time, I would have no problem with it, but taking this great leap of faith that we are required to do in moving into free trade is going to be a disaster for Canada.

Obviously there are many opportunities to debate free trade, but if we are so unfortunate as to have the current Government return federally and we are dragged kicking and screaming into this thing, then we have a serious situation on our hands and one which all of us will live to regret.

* (1620)

Mr. Findlay: I do not get up and hide from all the dark clouds that are threatening all around the horizon. I get up every day with optimism and I am going to meet the challenges. That is the way this country was built. You think what has happened in this country over just 100 years in terms of the way we have civilized it and developed it and where we are going in the future, if we are going to worry about all the dark clouds and

say we are going to hide from everybody, we are doomed and done as an industry.

I am going to stick just to agriculture. I will comment on the marketing boards, because certainly the marketing boards are always under scrutiny and criticism and observation from beyond their own confines, but I will say that if there is anything that is going to destroy marketing boards, they are going to destroy from within because of greed to have quota—not only at the producer level. The former Minister well knows the competitions that are going on between the provinces. We have divided up the quota on a national program across the country and various provinces have certain amounts of quota. Now we see different provinces—and B.C. is the best example right now—saying, hey, we want more quota, we want to be self-sufficient, we want to take it from somebody. They are making threatening gestures about withdrawing from the national programs.

Just here about three weeks ago the Canadian Supply Management Quota Committee for the milk producers was meeting in Winnipeg here and unannounced in dropped three Ministers from B.C. I asked them why they were here—oh, they were just here to observe. You can imagine the pressure put on the delegates, with no other Ministers in the room and three drop in from B.C. Everybody knew what they were here for; they were here to do a bit of arm twisting to get more quota for them. If they do not get it that way, they are going to give notice eventually. They are threatening to give notice they are going to withdraw, so it is going to be from within that supply management is going to have difficulty. They cannot discipline themselves.

Do not give me big dark clouds about how we are going to lose supply management because of free trade with the United States. Look at the issues we have right here in front of us. I recognize fully the ability of producers through marketing boards, through supply management, through the price setting mechanisms that they have put in place, their ability to extract from the marketplace true value for the commodity they are producing. I give them high marks for it; they have done a very good job. The only problem is not every producer has the opportunity to produce those products and that creates antagonisms continually.

If we are going to have provincial competition like we have going on now, that provincial competition is not going to back off. It is going to continue, so I think the threat is from within, not from across the 49th Parallel with regard to supply management in the future. I hope that they are able to solve their internal problems and I do not think Governments should get too much involved in trying to arm twist the movement of quota across this country.

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): I recall in the olden days when we used to have to ride shotgun with our poultry and egg shipments into British Columbia and Craig Lee would remember that. I hope we do not have to go back and get our trusty rifles out again.

Mr. Chairman, I was fascinated by some of the debate of the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski)—prompted

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a couple of questions that I would like to address to the Minister. If they have been asked previously in the Estimates, I apologize. But I would be interested to know if there are McCain plants in the United States, a Canadian McCain company, and if he is aware of any potato shipments that have gone to those plants in say the last year or two?

Mr. Findlay: As far as we are aware, McCain's has not moved any potatoes out of Manitoba to those two plants, that they have allegedly purchased in the United States, I believe one in Nebraska and one further west. They have not moved any potatoes.

Mr. Rose: I appreciate the word "alleged" in there. I think it is still a bogey of whether they really have plants. I will be looking at that in the morning.

I was wondering if in regard to potato exports from Manitoba into the United States, if there have been any substantial shipments? I know there were previously, but any substantial shipments in the last couple of years? If you could give us some sort of ballpark tonnage figures if the answer is positive and why, indeed, Americans would be buying higher priced potatoes out of Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: We are not aware of the volume of potatoes that have moved, but there have been potatoes moving to the Fargo plant for processing. It is my information, as I recall from previous discussion with producers, that they were selling them at a profit by doing that. So it was to the advantage of the Manitoba producer to sell the potatoes to Fargo, whether it was cheaper or more expensive than the American potato, we do not know the answer to that. All we were concerned about is our producers made a profit in selling them to that processing plant. But never lose sight of the fact that the best quality potato in Canada, as far as I know, is produced here in Manitoba. So that quality has an attraction to any processor that is trying to produce a quality product.

Mr. Rose: I would think, and I would like some confirmation of my thoughts from the Minister, if indeed a marketing board for potatoes was put into effect that this would deter our ability to ship into the United States? Is that correct? Is my assumption correct there?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, we have a marketing board for potatoes in the Province of Manitoba. We had one for some considerable period of time for the table stock of potatoes, which is about 20 percent of our total production. The processing potatoes are really processed by two companies. The price negotiation that occurs between those two companies and the producers really occurs between Keystone Vegetable Producers and those two companies. The Vegetable Producers Association negotiates on behalf of those processed potato growers.

In terms of the ability of the marketing board to restrict export trade, the marketing board cannot restrict export trade. We do not have any jurisdiction over export trade. There have been exports going on to the United States on an ongoing basis, probably

greater in some years than others. The marketing board is just dealing with the table stock potatoes in the Province of Manitoba. It has been in place for some time and is working well.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

Mr. Rose: I acknowledge that, but it has been traditional that when a marketing board has been established in Canada, that the Americans put restrictions on exports into that country; I think our exports into their country such as we have on eggs, chickens, turkeys and what have you, cheese, milk products.

An Honourable Member: It is the other way around.

Mr. Rose: Both ways, it is reciprocal.

Mr. Chairman, I have another set of questions in regard to eggs in Manitoba. As I understand it, and it is probably traditional, in the Province of Manitoba we probably produce twice as many eggs as we need for our local consumption here within this province. I see three fingers go up and that does not surprise me. When I have been to the United States, principally in California and what have you in the last couple of years, I have noticed that their prices vary but on occasion and most of the time are higher priced in terms of Canadian dollars than our local prices here.

I am wondering why, under those conditions, we do not have some of our egg products, shell egg products particularly, exported into regions like California. It is such a big market. It is practically the size of Canada in total, just California. There are over 20 million people there. I am wondering, is there not an opportunity, have we pursued it, and what is the reason why we do not ship some of our Manitoba eggs, especially when we have so much surplus in this country?

Mr. Findlay: One minute we are hearing you are against free trade, the next minute they want us to trade with the United States. I guess there is some dilemma over there as to which way we should go. Just in terms of the amount of eggs that are sold in the United States, any surplus eggs produced in Canada are tendered for sale by CEMA, and brokers in the United States do at times purchase eggs of Canadian origin. Some of them will move into the processing market; some of them will end up as table eggs. We do not know the volumes. Whether there is transportation limitations in terms of cost in getting them to California, if you say that they are higher priced on the table there than here, I do not know the true answer to that. CEMA does sell surplus eggs into wherever there is a reasonable offer given on the tenders they give.

Mr. Rose: I will accept that answer although I have some doubts about it—the volume of eggs that are shipped into the United States even for breaking, because I know that, like my previous question, there are restrictions on the importation of Canadian eggs into the United States.

I was wondering if the Minister could tell us approximately what percentage—as a follow-up question to what I heard from the Honourable Member

for Interlake (Mr. Uruski)—what percentage of soya bean meal and cornmeal that is used by the egg producers in Manitoba comes from the United States?

* (1630)

Mr. Findlay: When I met with the egg board, I certainly asked that question about what their feeling was on using protein supplements from Canada like canola meal. Their comment back was, well, they are just not sure if all the potential nutritional factors that might negatively impact on their birds have been properly researched. So they have almost a psychological hang-up, I think, about shifting farm soya bean meal to canola meal. Certainly, the amount of soya bean meal that is fed, basically, it all comes in from the United States. There is no soya bean meal produced here in Manitoba or western Canada.

Even last night I spoke to the Canadian Feed Industry Association and threw that challenge to them about, let us do whatever we can to increase the sales of protein supplements of Canadian origin, particularly canola meal as opposed to continuing to use soya bean meal. Certainly on a per pound protein basis, canola meal is a cheaper source of protein than is soya bean. There is always a psychological hang-up by the feed people and by the producers about certain alleged problems that might occur with canola meal. The Animal Science Department at the university has continually done work with that product in poultry. I am not aware that there is any great problem with it. It is just to get the producers to accept the fact that the research indicates that there is no great problem.

I guess one other thing that has to be considered sometimes is the ability of producers, through the price-setting mechanisms, to pass on their costs. If soya bean costs a bit more, we just pass on the cost and continue to use whatever we are comfortable with. People like to live in a comfort zone. We are continually pushing and trying to get them to recognize canola. Where there is research they indicate it is a safe and effective protein supplement, we would like to see more of it used.

Mr. Rose: I thank the Minister for those comments. It prompts another question that I had not thought of before.

First of all, I would like to know if indeed out of Manitoba or in Canada we are shipping any canola feed rations to the United States. If not, have any of our staff from Manitoba gone down to examine—you say that you are doing some work at the universities here—have any of our research people or staff or farm organizations taken trips down to California where they feed a considerable amount of canola feed?

I have many connections in California in the poultry feeding business. As a matter of fact, they have requested on occasion that I let them know where canola sources are in Manitoba, and through the Keystone Agriculture group I have sent some literature down there in the past. I have not heard any feedback yet. I was wondering if you could respond to those as it would appear to me—and they are feeding

considerable quantities of canola, certainly in California anyway, where they are far away from the traditional soya markets—whether that would not be wise to see how they are feeding canola and indeed we might not only find that we can use canola here in Manitoba—I almost said “granola”—close, but not close enough. It is a good thing I read my notes. We need a laugh once in awhile. Anyway, I just wonder if indeed we might not only find that we can use canola here and stop our imports of some of our soya meal, but also find a market down in California for canola meal.

Mr. Findlay: To the best of our knowledge, the crushing plants, CSP, particularly, in Altona and Harrowby, have done a good job of being able to sell canola meal. They have sold a fair bit to the United States over a period of time. While I am not aware that there is any surplus of meal that is not finding a market in either Canada or the United States or abroad, to the best of our knowledge we are doing a very effective job. The private companies are doing a very effective job of marketing canola meal.

Mr. Rose: I thank the Minister for that. But it seems funny to me that we can get the Americans, perhaps I might be reading between the lines here, to feed our canola to their livestock, and yet we cannot get them to feed the canola to our own livestock and restrict or limit, to some degree, the import of soy and cornmeal from the United States. It seems that we are doing something wrong here.

Mr. Findlay: I think that over time there will be a greater level of acceptance and a greater utilization of canola meal in poultry rations. There is no question. Whether there is something that we can learn from them, it will be an interesting discussion that we should have with the researchers at the university here as to how they view the problems of the low level of acceptance in the poultry industry of canola meal. We intend to have that discussion and see where the issue is at.

My only understanding of it is just the comments that came back from the egg board when I asked them: Can you use more? They started hemming and hawing: We are not sure about the research. We are comfortable with soybean meal. We are not sure we want to promote our producer shifting to something that might give them trouble. So we will carry on the discussion with researchers to determine what the problems are perceived to be with the canola meal, and then follow that up with the producer board and see if we can work through them to stimulate the utilization here in the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Chairman: Item 6.(b)(1) Economics Branch: Salaries—pass; 6.(b)(2)—pass.

Item 6.(c) Manitoba Natural Products Marketing Council: (1) Salaries—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: There is just one question here, Mr. Chairperson, and that is: Does this particular marketing council act as sort of a second level appeal, or do most of these commissions and other marketing boards that

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fall under it not have a built-in appeal mechanism within them individually, and this would be a second-level appeal?

Mr. Findlay: I would like to introduce Gordon McKenzie who just joined us, the Secretary of Management of the Natural Products Marketing Council.

Certainly, if a producer has a dispute with the board I would assume he would attempt to resolve that dispute with the board first. He might call that the first level of appeal, but really the only official appeal that they are going to have an opportunity to lodge is with the Natural Products Marketing Council.

Mr. Laurie Evans: To follow up to that, just how much time is involved in dispute settling within the Natural Products Marketing Council? Is this a major component of their overall responsibility?

* (1640)

Mr. Findlay: It would be fair to say that it would average somewhere in the vicinity of 15 appeals per year, and they would take a quarter to a third to maybe 40 percent of the staff's time dealing with those appeals. Some are much more involved than others and the number of appeals can fluctuate wildly from one year to the next, depending on the particular circumstances that evolve with the different boards.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, are there any areas in which, in terms of the interprovincial agreements that—I know on the broiler board, we were having difficulty in meeting the national allocation of quota. Have those issues generally been resolved over the last couple of years in terms of the present status of the industry and the national quota? Are we fairly well in line or are there still some anomalies there?

Mr. Findlay: Basically, we are meeting our national quota on every board except the broiler board. Two years ago, we met about 93 percent of the national quota; one year ago, 97 percent; and this year, it looks like maybe about 95 percent. So we are still under a fair bit really, but it is the only commodity that is being underproduced.

Mr. Uruski: Can I ask the Minister whether he is intending to meet with the broiler board, and is there an intent to try and at least discuss with them either expansion of new barn space and/or—because I distinctly remember the debates in this House about small producers wanting to get into the industry and the emotional debate that generates, and the boards on the other hand wanting to put greater restrictions on regulated production. The Minister is faced with that dilemma now, and I ask him how are we intending to resolve that situation and over what time frame?

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, the level of 1,000 birds has been in place for some time and the board has not reduced that. The only limitation that was put on, I guess back in your day, was the restriction that unregistered producers could not sell to a licensed processor. So

that reduced the ability of those unlicensed producers to be selling at where our count is made, I guess you might use the term, which is one of the limitations that is preventing us from meeting our 100 percent quota. So the council has been attempting to look at the feasibility of removing that restriction, which you will take credit for having put on. I think that will be one way of solving the problem.

Mr. Uruski: I was about to say that. In fact, in the last period of time that I had the opportunity of being Minister, I believe that one of my directives was to at least say to the council, if the board does not wish to take actions on their own, you tell them that we will take them for you and we will remove in fact that restriction and will quickly meet our national quota.

I would urge the Minister that in fact, if it has not been met, that message be put forward very quickly to the board and it be dealt with. I certainly would have no difficulty and would support, and will tell the Minister right here, that move because I have advocated that one myself. It was with great consternation that we found ourselves over many years saying, we need more quota, we need more quota, and here we find an instance where this board has caved in.

In fact, it is not all their doing, I have to say, because of some of the shenanigans that were being played, and I call it "shenanigans," by one of our large retailers, and that being SuperValu who took their entire national import quota and lobbed it all into Manitoba and basically, over a short period of time, almost killed or put out of business one of our processors or would have had great impact on our processing industry and of course depressed the prices quite extensively.

So in this whole area, I would hope that the Minister moves in this area and that we in fact get back on track. Maybe one of the best solutions might be for all concerned is in fact to reopen that whole question and remove that regulation of not allowing the unregistered producers to process in a commercial establishment. Let us get rid of it. Let us in fact open it up and deal with that question. In some areas, it may enhance some of the opportunities for local expansion if there is, say, a small processing plant, whether it be in the Swan River area or in areas further away from the mainstream processing which may encourage some local development, as long as it is done well and according to standards. I think it may be certainly a move that I would advocate and suggest the Minister consider that very seriously.

I would like to ask the Minister whether the policy of having the directors' salaries and expenses printed in annual reports is in fact being done. I believe it was and, if it is being done, I want that assurance.

* (1650)

Mr. Findlay: Funny you should raise that question, because I will tell you, as you probably well remember, I served a term on the Natural Products Marketing Council—and I am going back to just before you removed me—going back now some almost six years, that was an important principle. We felt that producers

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should know exactly what their directors are drawing in salary because they can make decisions knowing that information. It has taken a long time but basically now those directors' salaries are published in the annual report, and I am pleased to say that has been accomplished.

Mr. Chairman: Item 6.(c) Manitoba Natural Products Marketing Council: (1) Salaries—pass; item 6.(c)(2) Other Expenditures—pass.

Item 6.(d) Milk Prices Review Commission—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairperson, I know that there is one minor change that has been made in the write-up here. It now states, "Establish retail price controls for fluid milk to the consumer." whereas in the past it said, "Establish minimum and maximum."

I would ask the Minister: Has he in fact established a policy regarding the setting of minimum prices for milk through the Milk Prices Review Commission?

Mr. Findlay: The board that is in place has been instructed to look at the minimum price of milk situation and come back with some recommendations of ways and means of trying to assure that consumers are paying the lowest possible price for milk in the Province of Manitoba. Whether it will ultimately mean the removal or removal to some degree or widening the spread between minimum and maximum, it is hard to say how it will eventually be done. We want to be assured that the lowest possible price is paid by consumers for milk in the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Laurie Evans: My question then is a little more specific. Does the Minister have any reservations regarding the elimination of the minimum price for milk?

Mr. Findlay: I would like to introduce Adrian Strutinsky, the executive secretary of the Milk Prices Review Commission.

Certainly, there are always unknowns about making a specific move like that. The small retailers have certainly shown concern about their ability to compete if the minimum price is removed. We have asked the new commission to give it some very serious scrutiny. I think it is a fair request that consumers have the lowest possible price of milk but, at the same time, we have to maintain stability in the industry to the greatest possible extent. If there is a spread between the minimum and maximum that everybody can live with, that might be the angle, I do not know. There are several angles being looked at.

Mr. Uruski: I certainly thank the Minister for having an open mind on this question and listening to some of the consumer groups who have voiced concern, especially in the inner city and areas where very large supermarkets are not available to many of those residents, as well as those in the Canadian Independent Retail Business Association—Mr. Gainer, from Selkirk, and his associates in the industry. I am pleased that he has taken an open mind in this question and is prepared to review it.

I believe that although it is not a policy that is very easy to explain, one looks at the experience in Alberta where they do not have a maximum price but they maintain the minimum price in the Province of Alberta and they do happen to have the lowest consumer prices of milk in this country. The Minister should be aware that all the statistical information that he will find is that milk consumption actually increased when controls came back into being. I am sure he will want to ask his commission and his staff for that correlation of data and, before any decision is made in this whole question, he will want to review that data.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the will of the committee to have this item pass? Item 6.(d) Milk Prices Review Commission—pass.

Item 6.(e) Manitoba Farm Lands Ownership Board: (1) Salaries—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Has the Minister any plans for changes within The Farm Lands Ownership Act that is under this particular board?

Mr. Findlay: We have some concerns about the necessity to keep total restriction on farm land ownership to just Manitobans or living within 10 miles of the border. It is difficult to say that some other Canadians should not have some opportunities at certain times to be able to purchase land in the Province of Manitoba, particularly if it is deemed to be in the best interests of the economy of the Province of Manitoba. I think the board has always had that discretion to what is in the best interests of the economy of the Province of Manitoba with regard to reviewing various proposals or requests that come to the board.

No, we are not proposing any changes to the Act this particular Session, but that does not rule out the possibility we will look at that particular question in the future. Saskatchewan, you may well be aware, has just made that sort of change to the upper limit of 320 acres for other Canadians to own in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Certainly, the concern about foreign ownership is not as great now as it used to be, and with somewhat depressed land prices, people who are in the position of wanting to sell their land, particularly those who want to retire, are interested in selling it to the highest possible bidder. Many times that might be a person from outside the Province of Manitoba and if his purchase is going to be in the best interests of the economy of the province, in terms of keeping that land in a good viable situation, I think we have to look at the ability of us to sell to other Canadians.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Can the Minister tell us whether the issue relating to the Brunkild land—what is it?—Tusculum Limited (phonetic)—has that been resolved or is that still before the board?

Mr. Findlay: This is certainly one of those cases where it has been decided by the board that in the best interests of the economy of the Province of Manitoba, the one-quarter where Cordell Bestland lived, that sale of that quarter has been approved.

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They had also applied for purchase of approximately six other quarters from his brother and he did not approve that. Their ambition is to establish an organic farming operation here in the Province of Manitoba at their own expense, and let us see how they go at it. If they are able to be successful and market the product into the eastern market, particularly southern Ontario, let them go to it and see if they can prove their point. The approval on the sale of the one-quarter has been given.

* (1700)

Mr. Chairman: The hour being 5 p.m., and time for Private Members' Hour, committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Mark Minenko (Chairman of the Committee of Supply): The Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

BILL NO. 2—THE BUSINESS NAMES REGISTRATION AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 2, The Business Names Registration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la loi sur l'enregistrement des noms commerciaux, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae)—the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): I would like to address some comments with respect to this Bill, if I may.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement that this will stand in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae)? (Agreed)

Mr. Minenko: It has been an honour for me to rise again in this House to make a few comments with respect to some of the proposed legislation standing before this House.

One of the things that certainly has been impressed upon me are the many demands and responsibilities

place on Government today, certainly the demands that we hear every day in Question Period, the demands that we hear about and debate on other Bills, again the demands of Government to provide an economic climate in which industries both large and small can indeed flourish.

In addressing my comments to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, I would perhaps take the opportunity, as it in fact arises through a set of unfortunate circumstances relating to the use of the word "Brick" as in Brick's Fine Furniture and Brick Warehouse, as this matter has seriously affected one of the many successful small business in the Province of Manitoba. I am indeed encouraged by the attention of all Honourable Members of the House to my remarks on this Bill.

We realize certainly that small businesses have in fact a very large and important role to play in the Province of Manitoba. They have a large role to play with respect to the establishment of jobs, the provision and continuing provision of wealth to the Province of Manitoba, the opportunities that small businesses provide for Manitobans to exhibit their entrepreneurial spirit in engaging upon a new adventure, a new venture to provide themselves with the livelihood, to provide Manitobans with new job opportunities, to provide in fact all of Manitoba making Manitoba a much better place to live.

It is in tribute to the many small business people throughout Manitoba that I would just like to add a few of my other comments. I would just like to add, Mr. Speaker, that many of these small business people, men and women, in many situations with children assisting their parents, spent many a day, many a night in their chosen endeavour, in their chosen venture. Many children are indeed raised in the confines of that particular venture, in the store or business where their parents spend many hundreds, nay thousands of hours every year. In fact, I believe that in many circumstances where small business people have a residence separate from their place of business that it would seem oftentimes that their business, their place of business, has become their home.

And it often happens that they in fact do move into the confines of their venture to ensure its success, to ensure that their efforts, both financial and physical, do not go to waste, and for these many reasons, and these many attributes of our business people in Manitoba I believe we all must pay tribute.

* (1710)

Mr. Speaker, I believe also that business people feel that there are many important things to ensuring the success of their business. I believe that small business people would like to see a certain amount of certainty in their business. They believe and they understand that for the first several months, or perhaps even several years, there may be many more valleys to the success of their business than crests, but they are prepared to invest their time and their finances to ensure the success of their particular business. They would certainly appreciate some certainty, the certainty of supply, certainty of sales, and most certainly the certainty of

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the way of doing business, knowing that they have set up a business under a particular set of laws and then be able to continue their business under those same laws.

I would just like to perhaps point out, being a solicitor in the Province of Manitoba, that I am prepared to advise all Members of this House that the whole system of business names registration is indeed set up in an easily understandable fashion, a fashion where any one of us in this Chamber, who I believe represent a cross section of people in Manitoba, would be able to walk into the office, the appropriate offices, the Woodsworth Building, and file documents to set in motion the setting up of a business. And it is indeed one of perhaps few areas touching on Government where people do not in fact need much more advice than is provided to them in the appropriate form.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, just recently a friend of mine launched into an endeavour of trying to set up his own business in construction. From the initial period of time where there was a little uncertainty on his own part, he has increased his business to the point where it is soon becoming a very profitable business for himself. It is again a tribute that I and the Liberal Party, as I am sure all Honourable Members in this House, pay to many of these small business people who launch into that first venture.

This brings me then to discuss the particular aspects of the Bill presently before the House and what the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) has attempted to do. The matter which this Bill attempts to address certainly asks for a solution from this House, a solution which should not be a simple shotgun approach of saying, let us try something and see if it flies, as we have heard from some of the Members of the New Democratic Party.

This problem, Mr. Speaker, needs a solution, a solution which should be a considered, well thought out proposal that indeed not only addresses the problem and successfully brings the problem to the attention and scrutiny of the Manitoba Legislature, but addresses the problem head on, addresses the problem in a manner in which it will withstand court challenge.

Even from some of the Member for Elmwood's (Mr. Maloway) own caucus Members, in reviewing some of their speeches, they seem to suggest themselves that it may well be open to court challenge. Yet this seems in some contrast to what they seem to say, that we should attempt to reduce legal costs because they are inordinately high in this area or that area, and yet, by making this proposal, I believe that it will simply encourage court challenges on constitutional grounds. I believe some of the Members, New Democrats, recognize this particular problem, and yet we have this Bill before us.

Certainly we in the Liberal Party would look to a solution that is well thought out and considered, so it does not encourage those extra legal costs, so it does not encourage further litigation where none presently perhaps exists, and certainly one would seem to be able to summarize from some of the comments of the Members of the New Democratic Party that this would

certainly open the floodgates to further challenges and further expense.

We believe this Bill may create false hope and expectations of small business people involved directly in this matter and others who may in the future be directly affected, and that is indeed a concern that needs to be addressed. It is indeed encouraging to see all Members of the Chamber considering these remarks.

As I mentioned earlier, we believe that what is an important factor in running ones own business is a certain amount of certainty and there is indeed grave concern that this Bill, although may I add, well motivated, will not address the concerns that have been expressed by Honourable Members in this Chamber before. We believe that this Bill may well encourage further court challenges resulting in further legal costs to small business. Certainly, as a practising solicitor, it is indeed a matter of concern for myself when I see the fees that are being paid to defend a small business person's right to use their own name in their own business, because those legal fees that are often caused by poor draftsmanship or selection of words cost people, cost Manitobans dollars.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) to review the Bill, review the comments that all Honourable Members have made to date, to perhaps review with counsel the possible ramifications of what he has suggested, and to perhaps return to the Chamber with amendments to this Bill, to indeed address the concerns that he has raised in this House.

Mr. Speaker: By agreement, that one will stand in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae).

BILL NO. 3—THE CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 3, The Corporations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les corporations, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). (Stand)

BILL NO. 13—THE MANITOBA HYDRO AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)—the Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): I would like to speak to this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Would it be agreeable to leave it standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)? (Agreed)

* (1720)

Mr. Angus: I thank my colleagues who have been kind enough to allow me to make representation on this

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most important of issues. On the surface, any apparent thrust to circumnavigate those efforts of the Free Trade Agreement that are going to force one of the province's biggest assets, biggest corporations, Manitoba Hydro, to do something that we believe is not right and not in the best interest of Manitobans, would appear to be a reasonable approach and something that I should be able to support.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mark Minenko, in the Chair.)

I think I do agree with my colleague who has introduced this, my colleague from Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), in some of the remarks he has made earlier in the anti free trade and in the restrictiveness of the Free Trade Agreement which is going to cause future Manitobans a great deal of aggravation and concern. I notice that the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is wagging his head in a negative fashion and I am sure that as a member of the board—

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): A point of order. I just want to make it perfectly clear for the record, I was not wagging my head. I was shaking my head from side to side.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Enns: Seeing as how we are very sensitive about what words we use, in case I use another wrong word or something else.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

Mr. Angus: A dispute over the facts, as you have rightly pointed out, is not debatable. While I recognize that our canine friends tend to use the negative motion and their derriere to signify happiness, this particular Member was using his head in a similar manner to indicate negativism towards the statements that I was making.

The statements I was making are that the Free Trade Agreement is going to have a negative impact on the future rights of Manitobans to decide how they want to dispose of and/or distribute one of their major assets and that is of hydro-electricity. Perhaps the Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) does have more information, as he sits on the board. I would hope that he has looked at the restrictive nature of the Free Trade Agreement and the clauses that we believe will affect Manitoba's best interest. So I commend my honourable friend from Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for bringing forward an action that he believes is going to assist future Manitobans to maintain their sovereignty right of independence of self-dependence and decision making.

I stop short of endorsing this Bill in its entirety. I do so because there is a big difference between being anti free trade, as per the Mulroney-Reagan trade deal, and being anti business or being restrictive of business. I think that it is very important that we recognize the negative potential impact of the amendments that are being proposed from my honourable friend from Flin Flon. While I recognize that his heart is in the right

place and his actions by introducing this Bill are desirous of ensuring that nothing in the Free Trade Agreement will force future Manitobans to do anything that they do not want to do, I think that the route he has taken so shackles the Board of Governors, if you like, or the Board of Directors and the administration of the Hydro, that it is going to absolutely cripple their ability in the future to be able to act in the best interest of Manitobans.

Having said that, I think that what I would like to propose are some amendments to the Bill 13, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act, that will do what the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has intended it to do and that is to restrict the sovereignty rights of future elected representatives and/or Hydro administrators to be able to deal effectively with the current circumstances and/or conditions as they see them but not force them to do anything because of Canadian legislation that was passed in 1988, namely the Free Trade Agreement.

So I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we agree on this side of the House that there are things in the Free Trade Agreement that will restrict the sovereignty rights and the ability of future Governments, future administrators from the Hydro to be able to sell their product and/or deal with their commodity as they see fit based on the best judgment. We have been assured on a continued basis from the Members on the other side that those restrictions are not there. I believe that a very simple motion, one that I have written out, one that is here and that I am prepared to pass to the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) and to anybody else and introduce at the appropriate time, when you allow me, Sir, to introduce it. I would like to read it into the records to get it on the table.

As I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to repeat: the facts are that we have been assured by the Government that there is nothing in the Free Trade Agreement that restricts the ability of Manitobans, future Manitobans, legislators or administrators, to market their product in the way they see fit. I think that I find Mr. Storie's motion in its totality to be very, very restrictive, very directive to future Governments in the future by handcuffing them to do certain things today. So I am going to be moving at the appropriate time. I believe that is in order.

An Honourable Member: When is that?

Mr. Angus: When we get to the committee stage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but quite frankly, I am very concerned about ever getting to the committee stage because of the delaying tactics of the Government. However, I will be moving at the appropriate time that section 2 of Bill 13, which adds section 16(1), be repealed and the following is added after Section 16.

The Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), Mr. Deputy Speaker, is very, very akin to pointing out the rules to everybody, but if you will monitor my words carefully, as I am sure he is, he will find out that I am being very considerate and sharing the fact that it is my intention to introduce this motion at the appropriate stage to bring some common sense and some

reasonableness to the motion that is already existing on the table.

Basically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the motion is going to say, "Notwithstanding the trade agreement"—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hesitate to interrupt the Honourable Member, but I would like to direct his attention that during debate on second reading Members should be addressing the principles of the Bill and not the particular sections.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Deputy Speaker, then let me thank you for that guidance and let me simply indicate to you that it is my intention to speak to the principles of a Bill that ties the hands of Hydro and restricts and forces future decisions, based on limited today information, and I am going to be suggesting that in speaking to the principle of the Bill that we can accomplish what the Member for Flin Flon is attempting to do by proposing some changes in a general sense that would affect the principles of this Bill.

And, basically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we would be doing is saying that notwithstanding the Free Trade Agreement signed on the 2nd day of January, 1988, by the Governments of Canada and the Governments of the United States, or any law of Canada implementing the agreement, the corporation is not required to supply purchases outside of Canada with power generated in Manitoba unless the supply is required under a contract entered into under specific clauses that would be existing.

An Honourable Member: What is the principle?

* (1730)

Mr. Angus: The principle is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to my honourable friend from Churchill who is having difficulty not finding the principle in his argument because it has not been listed in Beauchesne's—

An Honourable Member: Because there is no principle.

Mr. Angus: The principle is that this is going to allow Manitoba Hydro to deal with their business—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. If other Honourable Members would like to direct their comments to this Bill, perhaps they could rise upon the completion of the Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Angus: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for bringing calm and order and common sense back into the realms of this Chamber.

Let me just suggest that the principle is that we want to put Hydro in a position where it can deal with a very natural resource and a commodity that we all value, and we do not want to restrict them to doing certain things based on today's information. We do not want to restrict them by making them sell hydro if they do not want to sell it. We do not want to restrict them by

making them sell hydro at a specific set of circumstances, or dictates that are determined by today, whether they be free trade or whether they be recovering cost, or whether they be at the same rate that Manitobans are getting them, or want to sell them at.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill, the proposed Bill that is the amendment to The Hydro Act, should in fact be amended to say that there is nothing in the Free Trade Agreement that will restrict us. Then what happens is that the argument becomes one of Constitutional argument: does Manitoba have the sovereignty right to dictate, or determine, in the future its own rights with Hydro; and is there anything that has happened in 1988 that says that we are going to be forced, because of a Free Trade Agreement, to market our product under circumstances that we find undesirable in the future? It is a very fine line, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have said—that is, the Government has said—they are not going to have that restriction.

This particular motion by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has gone in and said notwithstanding the Free Trade Agreement, and I support that, but he has gone one step too far in restricting the common business sense of being able to determine, based on circumstances in the future what they can do. If this Government has any realism in it, in its words, it will say yes, this amendment is acceptable and it should be passed. And they in fact should be bringing those amendments in. They should be saying and putting on the record that it is the position of the Government of Manitoba today, in 1988, that notwithstanding anything in Free Trade Agreement, we will not in the future be forced to do anything that the Free Trade Agreement tells us to do as it applies to the Hydro and it has, for that matter, to water as we have already introduced.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, with ample notice so that everybody can do their homework and get their facts lined up so that they can deal with this when it gets to the committee stage. It is my full intention to introduce this at the committee stage in relation to amending the original Bill from the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: By agreement Bill No. 13, will continue to stand in the name of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

BILL NO.16—THE REAL PROPERTY AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 16, The Real Property Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik). (Stand)

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BILL NO. 20—THE WATER RIGHTS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), Bill No. 20, The Water Rights Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les droits d'utilisation de l'eau, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). (Stand)

BILL NO. 22—THE LIQUOR CONTROL AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), Bill No. 22, The Liquor Control Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). (Stand)

BILL NO. 25—THE UNFAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 25, The Unfair Business Practices Act; Loi sur les pratiques commerciales déloyales, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), but I believe the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has six minutes remaining. (Stand)

BILL NO. 26—THE CONSUMER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 26, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). (Stand)

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. NO. 6—RURAL POSTAL SERVICE

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), Resolution No. 6, Rural Postal Service—the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): First of all, before speaking on this resolution, I would like to propose an amendment and then have the opportunity to speak to it.

I move, seconded by the Member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst), that Resolution No. 6 be amended by deleting paragraphs 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, and by inserting the following paragraph in the last WHEREAS clause:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba is of the opinion that post offices provide valuable services to rural Manitoba and is therefore concerned about any possible negative social

and economic effects caused by the closing of post offices in many rural communities across Manitoba.

MOTION presented.

* (1740)

Mr. Speaker: We are going to take a couple of minutes recess here, because the Honourable Member did not bring in any copies for anybody else, as I thought we were going to do in the future. The Page has gone to get some copies made.

(RECESS)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): May I address the resolution?

Mr. Speaker: No, you have already moved the amendment.

I would like to advise Honourable Members that this is a very complex amendment. I have some reservations about its admissibility and I will therefore be taking it under advisement.

The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Cummings: I interpret that as to say that you have not ruled on the admissibility of the amendment.—(Interjection)—Actually, that is what I want to do, because a great deal of—(Interjection)—One of the problems that seems to arise every time the Members opposite, particularly the Members of the third Party, start talking about postal service in this province, they have a hang-up about whether or not—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister is speaking to the proposed resolution?

Mr. Cummings: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: But the Honourable Member is not speaking to the amendment that he proposed.

Mr. Cummings: I would not do that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Good.

Mr. Cummings: The Members opposite say that they would like to hear a discussion on rural post office. I suppose I am probably in as good a position as anyone to talk about whether or not postal services should be delivered as part of an independent standing building and operation, or whether they should be part of an ongoing business in a community, or whether they should be delivered through private homes or whatever other services can be made available. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, what we need most of all in rural Manitoba is some idea of whether or not we will be able to maintain postal service, whether or not postal services will be available in as many of our rural centres as possible.

Frankly, the program that Canada Post has embarked upon probably is the best possible compromise that

we can have in order to maintain as much of the rural postal presence as possible across rural Canada, because there were communities for many years that received their postal services through the good offices of a store or a business that was available within the community. Those hours were always lengthy. Mail was always available over a long period of time during the day, but of course the method of delivery was not as efficient as we have today. Obviously, the problems of postal delivery 30 or 40 years ago were an awful lot different than the complexity of delivery of postal services today.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the problems that the postal services are facing today is that we still have a diminishing population in various parts of our province. In order to service that population, they have to seek alternate means by which they can deliver services to those people, means that are as efficient as possible because people are demanding that Canada Post be reasonable and efficient in its delivery of services. They are also demanding that delivery be timely.

In the larger centres across the province, we have a reasonably timely delivery. If we want to debate whether or not delivery of postal services across the province are within specified time frames is a separate matter, however, than from delivering to location. I believe that this postal service resolution raises the question of availability and location and employment are the three items that the Members wish to see discussed.

First of all, let us remember that if a job is being performed by the postal union employees or whether it is being performed by someone in the private sector, it is still a job and it is still a paying job. The key is still if we are getting service out to the people who are paying for it and who deserve it. There has to be an economic use of staff, an economic use of availability of delivery of service.

I find it rather strange that we have seen so many people who are saying that some of the new services that are being made available are not complete enough for the areas in which they are being offered. Mr. Speaker, I am looking at a checklist here that outlines some 10 or 12 services that should be available through a normal postal outlet. Out of those, there are only two that I see that would not normally be available at a designated private business operation. One would be the operation of postage metres and the other would be for dropping off discounted large mailings.

The customers of these franchised dealerships would still be able to mail all categories of regular mail, all special service items. They would have retail products available. They will have Canadian international money orders available. They will be able to receive delivery of mail, including personal contact items, be able to pick up all called for items within the community, Government and federal forms, and I would think it goes without saying, be able to continue to expect delivery of service in confidence that there will be privacy involved. Obviously, the same rules will apply to a franchise operator in regard to confidentiality, privacy and the non-disclosure of someone else's business.

Going back to the communities that had postal centres that no longer are able to support those centres,

there are a few communities out there in the last 20 years that would have been more than happy if they could have chosen another method of mail delivery within their community, rather than have to give up the postal service or lose the postal service as it was first of all outlined. That is why I have to indicate and remind the Members of this Legislature, and remind particularly the NDP Opposition who have proposed this resolution, that no postmaster presently employed with the corporation needs to feel that he would be put out of work as a result of the directions that they are taking. In fact, the number of new postmasters hired far exceeds any franchising that has gone on within the corporation.

* (1750)

While we have to be concerned and continue to be concerned about whether or not there will be any reduction of service—and that was, of course, the objective of what I put before you a few minutes ago, Mr. Speaker—that changes will have to take place but they have to take place in a manner in which they take advantage of any natural opportunities that may arise for change. When changing the service, the corporation must be held accountable and must be kept aware of the fact that we are demanding service and continued service. We have to be prepared to take a considered approach to this as to how those services can best be delivered in rural Manitoba or in any other part of the province.

I see from statistics that Canada Post has supplied that, in fact, in the next few years the number of postal outlets will probably increase between 5,000 and 7,000 across the country. That is not a number that I think anyone who is of a reasonable state of mind would be prepared to ignore. There has been a lot of complaining about the manner in which the post office has gone about the changing of postal outlets. Some of those complaints have been well founded; some of them have not. The fact that in some instances Canada Post was seen to have abruptly made changes regarding postal outlets in the province indicates to me that there was some bona fide concern that was raised at those meetings.

Largely, the post office, if it follows its corporate outline on how it should follow procedures wherever postal services are considered for change across the province or anywhere in the country through consultation and through looking for natural opportunities to present themselves for change to be available, including retirements and those types of opportunities, I think the corporation has to be given at least a reasonable opportunity to provide the most efficient service because if we continue to hamstring the corporation with deficits, if we continue to say that we must subsidize the service, that is one thing, Mr. Speaker. The corollary of a deficit is that it must be paid by someone. Either the Government is going to have to pick up a multimillion dollar deficit on a regular basis or, conversely, the post office is going to have to raise its rates to a level that would be largely unacceptable to most people in this room and I think to most people across the country.

There has to be a reasoned approach. I am not going to defend the fact that there has been a great deal of

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controversy about some of the closures. But the post office has indicated that it is prepared to follow up in areas and has done surveys. Of those surveys, they have had results in excess of 75 percent and 85 percent that indicate that people have been and continue to be well satisfied with retail postal services that are being offered to them as opposed to the fact that there is a percentage generally under 12 percent, 15 percent that say that they are not happy with the new service that they are receiving.

I would like to wrap up my remarks by saying that the resolution that is presented here is one that is all encompassing, one that does not recognize some of the realities that we have in rural Manitoba and I suggest is rather impractical in some of whereases and conclusions that are brought forward.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I hope that the Members opposite are still applauding when I am done. We are not quite so certain that will be the case, but I remain ever hopeful.

I am pleased to be able to rise to speak to this motion. Like the Member who just concluded, I, too, have my roots in rural Manitoba. I, too, experienced rural postal delivery. Mr. Speaker is smiling because he knows from whence I speak. I was on a rural route and looked forward to the mail being delivery to my mailbox—one of the lucky ones actually in rural Manitoba, but certainly had many friends who utilized the services of the postmaster in Baldur, Manitoba. I can tell you, as the Member for St. Rose (Mr. Cummings) has just done, that the post office was a focal point for many, many years in rural Manitoba. It was a gathering spot on many occasions for the people in rural Manitoba to meet and discuss the week's business or the month's business, whatever it might be, to discuss the weather and the trials and tribulations of farming, and farming as a lifestyle. But, Mr. Speaker, I think it is perplexing to see a Conservative federal Government in league with a provincial Conservative Government on an issue which I think many perceive as an attack on the lifestyle of those communities.

The resolution as presented I think underscores the real interest that people have in maintaining this important service for those communities—just as a community school. We all remember and I know you, Mr. Speaker, as well as anyone in this Chamber, recalls the divisiveness of the debate about closing a local school—closing school districts, amalgamating the school districts, going from a small one-room school into a larger school in some of our communities, it was divisive. As “progress”—and I use that word in quotations—overtook us, schools were forced to close in many of our communities and the closure of those

schools was a traumatic event. There are those now who still question the advisability of making decisions to unify school districts, to have students travel miles and miles to school rather than attend a local school.

What we are doing in some of these communities is in a similar vein. It is attacking a way of life. It is attacking an institution that has formed part of the lifestyle of that community. I think it is tragic that the provincial Conservative Party, which clearly has an interest, or used to have an interest in maintaining the lifestyle of rural Manitoba, has chosen for—in my opinion, and I emphasize that it is only my opinion—politically motivated reasons to support their federal colleagues, have decided in this instance not to condemn the practice of closing post offices, of attacking the postal service in the various ways that this Government has chosen to do, whether it is in the super mailboxes or the hikes in postal fees or whatever.

I can guarantee, and I think I can say without a moment's hesitation, that had there been a Liberal Government or an NDP Government in Ottawa, this movement on behalf of Canada Post would have been attacked by every Tory from coast to coast, without exception. There would have been none of this philandering to the interests of the federal Government. I do not think there is a Member on that side of the House who represents rural Manitoba or who represents any constituency in this province that would have sat idly by and watched the services that are provided to our rural communities deteriorate.

This resolution goes on to enumerate the problems that are being created by this new attitude which has been inspired by the federal Government. It says that 200 rural post offices have already been closed. It talks about the number of jobs that could be lost in rural Canada because of these closures, and it goes on to talk about the role that Rural Dignity and that campaign has had on the views of Canadians. Some 200,000 people-plus have already signed a petition sponsored by Rural Dignity and they have clearly sent a message to the federal Government, one which has been obviously missed by the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), a constituency which I am sure is going to be affected by this tragic policy on the part of Canada Post.

* (1800)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).