

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY of MANITOBA
Thursday, March 3, 1977

TIME: 2:30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Honourable Peter Fox (Kildonan): Before we proceed I should like to direct the attention of the honourable members to the gallery where we have some 12 students from Glenboro High and some exchange students from the United States, from the constituency of the Honourable Member for Rock Lake.

On behalf of all the honourable members, we welcome you.

Presenting Petitions; Reading and Receiving Petitions; Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees; Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports; Notices of Motion;

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HONOURABLE RUSSELL PAULLEY, on behalf of the Honourable Attorney-General, introduced **Bill No. 16, an Act to amend The Garage Keepers Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. LLOYD AXWORTHY introduced **Bill No. 17, The Freedom of Information Act.**

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. SIDNEY SPIVAK, Q.C.: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. In November of last year the Premier, with reference to the Federal Budget, issued a press statement in which he recommended a federal tax cut to create jobs. I wonder if the Minister of Finance is in a position to indicate whether the province intends to cut taxes?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HONOURABLE SAUL A. MILLER (Seven Oaks): Mr. Speaker, the member will have to wait for an answer until Budget night.

MR. SPIVAK: Yes, I wonder if the Minister of Finance is in a position to indicate whether the province is prepared to put its money where its mouth is?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. Again, I have to remind honourable members that the purpose of the question is to obtain information, not to supply it to the House. Questions oral or written must not be ironical, rhetorical, offensive or contain innuendo satire or ridicule and the honourable member has that knowledge and has had it before him for some time. The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Finance, relates to the Mineral Acreage Tax. I wonder if he can indicate to the House and confirm the fact that a majority of people owing the tax have in fact not paid?

MR. MILLER: No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm that statement nor deny it either. I'll take that question as notice.

MR. AXWORTHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Corrections. In view of the statement that he was reported to have made yesterday concerning a position on rent control, can he now report to the House if the Cabinet has rescinded or changed its decision to abolish the Rent Control Program as of October this year?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Corrections.

HONOURABLE J. R. BOYCE (Winnipeg Centre): Mr. Speaker, the position of Cabinet will be made known by the appropriate Minister. In response to the question I responded as to my opinion, we should not wind down rent control any faster than we wind up the construction industry to provide adequate houses for the people, especially in my constituency. . .

MR. AXWORTHY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister then indicate that he has requested that the government change its position on the rent control program and that it will not be abolished on October 14th.

MR. PAULLEY: On a point of order, I think the question is improper, anticipatory and it's a personal observation of the Minister of Corrections.

MR. AXWORTHY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. To rephrase the question under the Minister of Corrections, can he indicate whether he is prepared to resign from Cabinet if the Rent Control Program is not abolished.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Swan River.

MR. JAMES H. BILTON: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Does the Minister have any information of the reported harshness of Manitoba teenagers at the recently closed Saskatchewan Wilderness Camp?

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, that particular facility is has been used by the Department of Health

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and Social Development but the people who have been placed there under the direction of the Director of Child Welfare are not under my direct ministry. I have called for a report for anybody who may be involved with my ministry.

MR. BILTON: I wonder if I may direct a question to the Minister of Health, Sir, on this subject. How many teenagers from this province were enrolled in that camp and where are they now?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health and Social Development.

HONOURABLE LAURENT L. DESJARDINS (St. Boniface): Well, Mr. Speaker, I think my honourable friend can find the story of the position of the department in the same place where he got this story. I can't give him the details as to how many; I can tell him though that we're very concerned and we're trying to get some of these children back here into Manitoba and we'll treat this during our Estimates which I believe will be following the Department of Education.

MR. BILTON: Another question to the Minister of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Has the Minister had discussions with the federal Solicitor-General in regard to the agreement pertaining to the exchange of prisoners in the United States of America?

MR. BOYCE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, while treaties with other countries falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government, these accords were worked out through the co-operation of the provincial jurisdictions.

MR. BILTON: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that reply. Can he give us any idea as to how many Manitobans this will affect?

MR. BOYCE: I'll take the question as notice, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HARRY E. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Deputy Premier of the Province. I would like to ask the Deputy Premier if the government is considering an early expedition of some of the changes recommended by the Law Reform Commission which have received approval of the Attorney-General?

MR. PAULLEY: I think my proper answer to that my honourable friend will have to await the introduction of any changes resulting from the report of the Law Reform Commission.

MR. GRAHAM: I neglected to inform you, this is the Law Reform Commission Report on election reform is the one that I'm dealing with specifically.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. STEVE PATRICK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Development concerning the Wilderness Camp in Saskatchewan and the delinquent teenagers from Manitoba. Can the Minister indicate to the House if these boys are back in Manitoba now and where are they placed?

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry I can't give the answer; this is something that I have asked the Deputy Minister to look into. We're very concerned, as concerned as the Province of Saskatchewan. I can't tell him where these children are at this time but I know we're trying to get them back as soon as possible.

MR. PATRICK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. During the last session of the House, we asked the Minister and he indicated to the House that he would have a full report. Has he got a report as a result of the investigation on the Wilderness Camp in Saskatchewan? At the last session, the Minister indicated to the House when we asked him the question that he would have a full report and investigation to this case and has he got a report?

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I don't recall exactly what was stated last year on that; I can tell you that this will be debated very thoroughly during the Estimates.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Wolseley.

MR. ROBERT G. WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Urban Affairs, is the Minister prepared to explain to the House why he will not give the City of Winnipeg the right to control massage parlours, as reported in the newspaper?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I believe the City has the necessary authorities to do what it has to do and I can't see specific legislation dealing with specific kind of businesses like massage parlours being introduced in this Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. HARRY J. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Honourable, the Minister of Agriculture, and ask him whether or not he can indicate to the House as to when we can expect the introduction of the bill having to do with land ownership?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HONOURABLE SAMUEL USKIW (Lac du Bonnet): Soon, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I suppose that answer could, under your admonition about . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

MR. ENNS: My question to the same Minister. In light of the great deal of interest by many people currently transacting land deals in the province, could the Minister indicate a refinement of that answer?

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Member for Lakeside knows the procedures of the Assembly and obviously I'm not in a position to give him any details until the bill is introduced.

MR. ENNS: A final supplementary answer. Then is it the government's intention to carry out their previous behaviour introducing this kind of major legislation in the closing and in the final days of the session?

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, to facilitate my honourable friend, the Member for Lakeside, I would indicate to him that we will attempt to have that bill introduced very very soon so that we will have ample opportunity to discuss it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. L.R. (Bud) SHERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Honourable, the Minister of Labour. I would like to ask him when he will be issuing instructions to commence investigation into the matter of the MTS employee suspension that is still under consideration?

MR. PAULLEY: I believe I reported to the House yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that I had appointed an investigator, that I had received a reply from the investigator, and I thought that that was accepted by the House. I don't know what my honourable friend has in mind.

MR. SHERMAN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister confirm to the House that that investigator has not been instructed to proceed with an investigation?

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is one of the responsibilities of the Minister of Labour to appoint investigators. I indicated to the House that one was appointed. I still don't know what my honourable friend is fishing for.

MR. SHERMAN: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister assure the House that there will be no time lag between the appointment of an investigator to investigate, and the actual activity of investigating?

MR. PAULLEY: Had my honourable friend had his ears open yesterday, Mr. Speaker, he would have noted that I said that I had received the report.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. BOB BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister of Health, and would ask him if he could confirm that he has received complaints from the Manitoba Sports Federation about the poor services they are Administrative Centre for Sports. receiving from the

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, no, and this Administration Centre does not deliver any service to the Sports Federation, so it would have nothing to do with the Sports Federation and I think we answered that question a few days ago.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Member for River Heights asked a question about, I think it was on page 22 of the Auditor's Report, dealing with an amount of \$3,028,306, and he asked, "Where is the money paid out? Was it paid out in last year's Estimates, is it estimated for this year?" I would indicate to him that these are advances partially paid out through capitals and part through current. It's an amount that is indicated as outstanding advance. The final amount is not known because we are still negotiating with CMHC and the federal Department of Public Works to determine what recapture and recovery we could achieve from them. We should know that within the next few months, in which case the amount shown here would be reduced accordingly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. SPIVAK: I thank the minister for his answer. I wonder if he is in a position to indicate now exactly how much the cost has been of the operation of the Churchill Prefab Housing Plant; that is the cost to the people of Manitoba.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MILLER: No, Mr. Speaker, obviously I couldn't have that information available with me. I was simply responding to a question, a specific question, and explaining why an amount is shown here and why it is still shown as an advance when in fact the final amount may be different. And until we know what the Federal Government will contribute, either through CMHC or the Department of Public Works there would be no advantage in writing off an amount or charging off an amount when we know there will be some recovery.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Industry and Commerce. The latest consumer price index indicates that Winnipeg has led in the increased cost of housing over the last year, of all cities in Canada. I wonder if he can indicate why this has come about?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. It's asking for an opinion. Could the honourable member be more specific?

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, I'll phrase it another way. Has his department undertaken any studies to try and determine why the cost of housing has increased higher in Winnipeg than in any other city in Canada?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, first of all I am not sure that I am prepared to accept the observation of my honourable friend. But there is no doubt that the cost of housing has increased rapidly throughout Canada and there are many factors involved, as my honourable friend knows, one in

particular that we are concerned with is the escalating cost of serviced land in the City of Winnipeg in particular, and this is why, Mr. Speaker, in The Throne Speech we indicated a massive land development program whereby serviced lots would be made available to consumers in Manitoba near cost without any rip-off being involved.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, I again ask the Minister, has his department undertaken any study or review that would indicate why the cost of housing has increased in Winnipeg higher than any other city in Canada?

MR. EVANS: I have indicated that I am not prepared to accept the honourable member's observation. We do engage in studies from time to time, of course. You can analyse the consumer price index as we can. It does break down into residential components and you can look at the subcomponents and see for yourself what may be involved. It may be additional prices for materials, or what have you. But the fact is that there are obviously people that are looking at changing prices, and so on. But again I say, Mr. Speaker, I don't accept the allegations. Honourable member's

MR. SPIVAK: I wonder if the Minister is in a position to indicate whether the manner and application of rent controls in Manitoba has been a factor in the escalation of the price?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. This is again asking for an opinion. The Honourable Member for Rock Lake.

MR. EINARSON: Mr. Speaker, I direct this question to the Minister of Agriculture, and I would like to ask him if he can confirm or otherwise, as to whether Mr. Rudy Usick has been reappointed to the Manitoba Marketing Board?

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I did answer a similar question some time ago. No, the former member has resigned from the board and remains that way, and a new member has been appointed yesterday.

MR. EINARSON: Mr. Speaker, I direct a second question to the Minister. Do I understand from the Minister, then, that Mr. Usick will not be reappointed to the marketing board?

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I don't know. I gather from him, at least in his public statement, that he would prefer not to be reappointed.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the same Minister. Can we anticipate then in the possibility of a successful vote on the beef question that the same Mr. Rudy Usick would be appointed to the beef marketing board?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Lakeside should know that there is to be no appointed members to that Board. — (Interjection) — Well, the Member for Lakeside suggests that is not the way this government operates. Perhaps he's reflecting on his own performance when he was Minister, Mr. Speaker, because it is true that on previous occasions during their term of office, they had always appointed a provisional board. In this particular referendum, the board will be elected from Day One.

MR. WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Acting Minister of Tourism. I wonder if the member was aware of the opening tomorrow of the Gull Harbour complex and are the members of the House invited, who is invited, it seems to be a well-kept secret?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon-West.

MR. EDWARD MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Honourable the Minister of Finance. It relates to the reports of the sighting of unidentified flying objects in the Sundown area of Manitoba. My question, Sir, is: Has the Minister taken the necessary steps to ensure that there will be no loss of revenue to the provincial treasury by the non-payment of sales tax on these aircraft using our air space?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. Order please. I should again like to remind the members the purpose of a question is to obtain information. Order please. If you people wish to spend your time wasting your question hour, that's fine with me but until I get order, we don't proceed. And I want to remind the honourable members that a question, oral or written, must not be ironical, rhetorical, offensive, contain innuendo, satire or ridicule and if the members wish to have that they are just not going to get an answer and if the Honourable Member for Lakeside doesn't sit down, I will tell him to leave the Chamber. He should have the courtesy to realize that a member who has the floor is entitled to speak; at the present time, I have the floor. The Honourable Member for Brandon-West have another question? The Honourable Member for Lakeside state his point of order. Order please.

MR. ENNS: In that presentation of the forbidden questions, Sir, I didn't note the word 'comical,' Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: If the honourable member wishes to debate that issue, he should take it up with the Rules Committee. In the future, if he makes any more reflections on the Chair, I shall ask him to leave. The Honourable Member for Brandon-West.

MR. MCGILL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did have a supplementary question. I wish to ask the Minister of Finance if in view of the fact that orange color had been sighted in this area, could he assure us that this was not the result of the NDP flying trial balloons?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I'll try to answer both questions. The first one, before the supplementary, if the member would identify the jurisdiction from whence these flying objects came, I'll send them a bill. And maybe we can collect.

On the second, I cannot say for sure what the orange-colored flying objects might be but I think I can say with some assurance that they are no way connected with the New Democratic Party.

MR. SPIVAK: I am directing my question to the Minister of Finance. Some time ago, the First Minister announced that travel by government officials would be restricted to absolute essential matters. I wonder if he can indicate what steps the Department of Finance has undertaken to ensure that this policy was carried out.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, these are administrative matters. Although this memo was sent out from the Department of Finance, it is the responsibility of each ministry and their administration to ride herd on this and I think they have done so successfully.

MR. SPIVAK: I then want to understand what the Minister is saying. Is the Minister saying that the policy was simply announced and a memo was sent or were there parameters set by the government to ensure that this policy would be followed?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, basically, the suggestion was that common sense be used rather than setting out firm and definite parameters or references because, in the final analysis, you can't beat common sense.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Corrections. In his announcement of the new juvenile crisis centre, can he indicate to the House what the costs of this new centre will be and how many new employees the department will be adding to service it?

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I did not announce a new crisis centre. What I said was that we are attempting to extend probation services in the core area on a twenty-four hour basis.

MR. AXWORTHY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister indicate whether this extension of services on a twenty-four hour basis which is sixteen hours more than the present service offers it, will have the addition of new workers or new costs to the department and can he indicate how much that will be?

MR. BOYCE: Well, of course, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the House will vote me the monies necessary for me to do it; if they don't, then I won't be able to do it.

MR. AXWORTHY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister indicate whether as part of this program, his department will be providing the grants to the several private agencies presently offering a crisis service for juveniles in the inner city particularly Rossbrook House which has not received a grant yet for this year for the same kind of service.

MR. BOYCE: Most definitely, Mr. Speaker. In fact this particular expansion of services in co-operation with the agencies in the private sector, we're finally getting to work together toward a common goal but our ministry's contribution to such services including Sister MacNamara who is doing a terrific job at Rossbrook House.

MR. AXWORTHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister then indicate that he has in fact been in direct consultation to work out this program with Rossbrook House and other agencies in that area in setting up this service?

MR. BOYCE: Well, I don't want to be out of order, Mr. Speaker. No, I'm not in direct negotiations with anyone, you know, I don't operate the bureaucracy. I think a politician's job is to muster the resources that competent people can do their work.

MR. EINARSON: Mr. Speaker, I pose another question to the Minister of Agriculture which is related to questions posed earlier. Could the Minister indicate who the person is who has taken the place of Mr. Rudy Usick on the Marketing Board?

Mr. Usknw: Mr. Speaker, the Orders in Council are public information readily available to my honourable friend.

Mr. Spivak: My question is to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. I believe yesterday gasoline prices went up in Manitoba and in Cacada. I wonder if he can indicate whether his department has undertaken any study to indicate the proportionate amount of the increase over October 1973 that the consumer is now paying, that is, the proportionate amount of the increased price that now goes to governments, either provincial or federal in this country.

Mr. Miller: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information readily available. I'll take that question as notice.

Mr. Spivak: I wonder then if the Minister of Finance would be in a position as well to determine whether he can confirm that over 80 percent of . . .

Mr. Speaker: Order please. The honourable member is offering an opinion which is not according to our rules.

Mr. Spivak: No, I'm asking for confirmation of this, Mr. Speaker. I'm asking for confirmation of the fact that 80 percent of the increased price paid by the consumer is really paid by way of taxation to government.

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Mr. Miller: Mr. Speaker, that figure of 80 percent, I don't know whether it's 80 percent too high or 80 percent too low. If the member is suggesting that in fact, since 1973 the federal government as a matter of policy has taxed away or taken away much of the increase in the price of oil and products, that is probably so. I think it was a matter of policy on the part of the federal government but insofar as the province is concerned, that is somewhat different and that's the information I will try to get for him.

MR. SHERMAN: MR. Speaker, I would like to direct a fourth supplementary to the Minister of Labour.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. Fourth supplementaries are out of order. The honourable member knows that.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, having permitted a time lapse to occur in the tradition of the Minister himself with respect to some of these questions, I then will put it as a new question entirely, related to a new subject — the suspension of MTS employees for activities related to certification proceedings. Can the Minister confirm that an investigator appointed by his department earlier this week to investigate one of the suspensions still unresolved, was subsequently ordered within the past twenty-four hours by his office not to proceed with that investigation. .

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MR. PAULLEY: One of these days, Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend who is so knowledgeable of the operation of the Department of Labour will realize that I, as Minister of the Department, is responsible for appointment and revoking of appointments of investigators, not the Department itself or any member other than myself.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, can I ask a supplementary question? Whether the Minister's office notwithstanding the dictates that he's outlined to this House, intervened in what was to have been an investigation that was to be carried out with respect to one of those suspensions.

MR. PAULLEY: It's pretty hard to penetrate sometimes, Mr. Speaker, the minds of some of the honourable members of this House. The Honourable Member for Lakeside says to me, "keep trying." I have been trying ever since my honourable friend entered the House some years ago without success.

I indicate that I have and accept the responsibility for the conduct of the Department. I indicated to the Honourable Member for Assiniboia, gentlemen, just yesterday — (Interjection) — Oh, I'm not saying that my honourable friend isn't. Let him use his judgment as to whether the cap fits or not.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. PAULLEY: But the point is, Mr. Speaker, I received a report which was satisfactory to me and it appears that the matter has been resolved satisfactory to those involved.

ORDERS FOR RETURN

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. ARNOLD BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move, seconded by the Member for Gladstone,

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Does the Honourable Minister of Health wish to accept the Order for Return? Order please. Is the Honourable Minister prepared to accept, then we won't have it read in we'll just have it written into Hansard. Will the honourable member sit down while I'm taking the floor. Again I request, is there agreement that this Order be accepted, then we won't have to go through the total procedure? The Honourable Minister.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, that was my intent to expedite the work of this House. I was going to ask for clarifications. I have no trouble in accepting it except No. (1), if my honourable friend means by this the total staff of every day care, this is something that I can't give him or something he can get as well as I. If he's talking about staff in the department, I'm certainly ready to accept this.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, as Acting House Leader on this side I recognize a little bit of difficulty that we're getting into in the manner and way in which we're handling the Returns. I appreciate that whenever possible expeditious use of our time is of all our concerns.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member get to the point.

MR. ENNS: But on the other hand we can't have half acceptance or explanations by the Ministers on these Orders for Returns and then maintain a clear record of how these Orders for Returns are presented to the House. I quite frankly, Sir, suggest that the Returns be allowed to be read as stated, the Ministers then making their comments either in acceptance or asking for qualifications or rejections.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour as House Leader.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, as House Leader may I remind my honourable friend the Member for Lakeside and appreciate the fact that I know he is the Acting House Leader of the Conservative Party, that on many occasions on Orders for Return and indeed motions of other natures questions have been asked for the purpose of clarification as to the intent of the motion, and that is why the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Development asked the question: "Is the honourable member who is seeking the information asking in respect of all Day Care Centres or just those concerned within the department?" I would respectfully suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is legitimate and not an attempt to violate any of the proceedings of the House or to differ from what has been done in the past.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. BROWN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the intent really was two-fold. One was how many people were working within the Department on Day Care Centres and the other of course was how many people were working in the various Day Care Centres.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, any information that I can give him that is related to the Department, I'll accept. Now I think he's out of order if he's asking me to find out outside, and I haven't any more facilities than my honourable friend for that, and if he accepts the answer of (2), (3) and (4), fine; if not I consider the No. (1) out of order and I haven't the facilities or that information available.

MR. SPEAKER: I shall have to rule in this instance that that information which pertains to provincial administration and operation may be requested. Other information that is of a private nature the honourable member will have to find for himself. If that's acceptable the Order will be so

issued. The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. BROWN: That is acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, there are three other Orders. Is the Honourable Minister prepared to accept all of them with that caveat?

MR. DESJARDINS: The next one, Mr. Speaker, the same thing, No. (1), if he's talking about total staff man-years hired by the government, fine; if he's talking about staff in the working of a Day Care it's the same answer. So I wonder if he would clarify this?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland agree to the same caveat?

MR. BROWN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we should possibly continue on in this same fashion and talk about the people who are directly involved in the Department.

MR. SPEAKER: The third one?

MR. DESJARDINS: The third one is acceptable. I just want my honourable friend to know now that this entails a lot of work and it will take awhile before we can answer this. This is a difficult one, we'd have to go through all the records.

While I'm on my feet, the fourth one I can accept it the way it is, but for clarification I would suggest my honourable friend if he would agree to delete the (i) in every case, as nursery school program, because that is not the program under day care. We have no program under this. I could accept it and say nothing, but . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

MR. BROWN: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. So ordered. All four Orders for Return.

ORDER NO. 20: On Motion of Mr. Brown;

THAT an Order of the House do issue for a return showing the following information for each fiscal year since inception of the Department of Health and Social Development's day care program:

(1) What is the total number of actual staff man-years tied to the total operation of the day care program?

(2) What is the total number of actual staff man-years tied to the operation of the Day Care Office itself?

(3) What is the total number of actual staff man-years tied directly to program accounting by professional and clerical staff attached to the Day Care Office?

(4) What is the total number of actual staff man-years tied to the Day Care Office personnel assigned the function of a resources staff?)

ORDER NO. 21:

THAT an Order of the House do issue for a return showing the following information for each fiscal year since inception of the Department of Health and Social Development's day care program:

(1) What is the total number of staff man-years directly tied to the day care program.

(i) actual

(ii) voted

(iii) requested.

(2) What is the total amount of subsidy grants directly tied to the day care program.

(i) actual

(ii) voted

(iii) requested.

(3) What is the total amount of maintenance grants directly tied to the day care program.

(i) actual

(ii) voted

(iii) requested.

(4) What is the total amount of start-up grants directly tied to the day care program.

(i) actual

(ii) voted

(iii) requested.

ORDER NO. 22:

THAT an Order of the House do issue for a return showing the following information for each fiscal year since inception of the Department of Health and Social Development's day care program:

1. (a) What is the number of fully subsidized child care spaces provided for children of single parent families.

(b) What is the number of fully subsidized child care spaces provided for children of two parent families.

2. (a) What is the number of single parent families receiving fully subsidized day care assistance.

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(b) What is the number of two parent families receiving fully subsidized day care assistance.

3. (a) What is the number of partially subsidized child care spaces provided for children of single parent families.

(b) What is the number of partially subsidized child care spaces provided for children of two parent families.

4. (a) What is the number of single parent families receiving partially subsidized day care assistance.

(b) What is the number of two parent families receiving partially subsidized day care assistance.

ORDER NO. 23:

THAT an Order of the House do issue for a return showing the following information for each fiscal year since inception of the Department of Health and Social Development's day care program:

(1) What is the total number of fully subsidized child care spaces in Winnipeg provided through each of the following options:

- (i) Nursery school program
- (ii) Family day care program
- (iii) Group day care program.

(2) What is the total number of fully subsidized child care spaces in northern Manitoba provided through each of the following options:

- (i) Nursery school program
- (ii) Family day care program
- (iii) Group day care program.

(3) What is the total number of fully subsidized child care spaces in rural Manitoba (i.e. areas other than Winnipeg and northern Manitoba) provided through each of the following options:

- (i) Nursery school program
- (ii) Family day care program
- (iii) Group day care program.

(4) What is the total number of partially subsidized child care spaces in Winnipeg provided through each of the following options:

- (i) Nursery school program
- (ii) Family day care program
- (iii) Group day care program.

(5) What is the total number of partially subsidized child care spaces in northern Manitoba provided through each of the following options:

- (i) Nursery school program
- (ii) Family day care program
- (iii) Group day care program.

(6) What is the total number of partially subsidized child care spaces in rural Manitoba (i.e. areas other than Winnipeg and northern Manitoba) provided through each of the following options:

- (i) Nursery school program
- (ii) Family day care program
- (iii) Group day care program.

(7) What is the total number of licensed child care spaces being operated in Winnipeg under the provincial day care program through the following options:

- (i) Nursery school program
- (ii) Family day care program
- (iii) Group day care program.

(8) What is the total number of licensed child care spaces being operated in northern Manitoba under the provincial day care program through the following options;

- (i) Nursery school program
- (ii) Family day care program
- (iii) Group day care program.

(9) What is the total number of licensed child care spaces being operated in rural Manitoba (i.e. areas other than Winnipeg and northern Manitoba) under the provincial day care program and through the following options:

- (i) Nursery school program
- (ii) Family day care program
- (iii) Group day care program.

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable, the Minister of Education that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply with the Honourable Member for Logan in the Chair.

SUPPLY - DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would refer honourable members to Page 21 of 48(b)(1). their Estimates Book, Resolution The Honourable Member for Brandon West has seventeen minutes.

MR. MCGILL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I would like to conclude rather briefly. We have not responded to some of the explanations that have been offered by the Minister in his opening remarks, but I'm sure there will be an opportunity during the examination of the detailed Estimates to make some comments.

I think though that the concluding remarks of the Minister were quite indicative of his preference in this debate. I think, Mr. Chairman, he made it quite clear that he would much sooner attack the opposition parties' views on education in Manitoba than he would defend his own department's spending Estimates.

Mr. Chairman, I don't need to point out to him, as an experienced Minister of the Crown, that the purpose of this Committee is for the Minister to present to the Committee his proposed spending Estimates and to offer us the necessary explanations in the hope that we will give him concurrence in those estimates. But I am sure, Mr. Chairman, that we would not be able to do this until we've had an opportunity to examine the various appropriations in detail and to ask questions on those appropriations.

I understand now what the Minister meant in the very beginning when he said, he felt a little like a relative of his who went over the top in the First World War. The Minister did go over the top in this one with his bayonet fixed and he was about to impale the opposition and I assume that he liked going over the top better than staying in the trenches where some arguments have been going on amongst his own people. However, Mr. Chairman, I'm sure that during the next hours and days we will have a frank exchange and there will be an opportunity to really examine in detail whether or not the positions that have been from time to time outlined by the Minister are in fact part of the policy and programs of his department.

If I may just leave a specific question with him, as I conclude, I would remind him of the fact that we have in the past asked when the new Public Schools Act would be brought to this Legislature in the form of legislation. It's known that the Department has had members working on this since 1970. A revision has been under way since 1970 and when I asked the Minister last year, why, after six years we had not seen this revision, he said, "Well you know we can't do these things overnight." So I would put the question again to the Minister. Are we likely to see a revision of the Public Schools Act in this session, as was indicated by his predecessor in the office of the Minister of Education?

MR. AXWORTHY: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to welcome the Minister to his new portfolio. We have looked forward with some expectation — (Interjection) — that's right — to the assessment of these Estimates. It was getting to be somewhat bothersome dealing with the silent sphinx-like predecessor of his who seemed to feel that the best defence was no offence or defence at all. I would say that, certainly, considering the analogies and metaphors and the nostalgic reminiscences of the present Minister about going over the top and fixing bayonets that we are obviously in for a very different kind of approach, one that I suppose will be far more aggressive. I just hope that no one in this Chamber will be "gassed" out of their position by the activity of the Minister.

I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, in this question of assessing the administration of the Department two or three things that come to mind.

The first does go back to an issue that was raised in the last session and that deals with the problem that has been discussed in the press by a variety of commentators, by members of this House concerning problems of morale; problems of maladministration; problems of lack of direction; problems with no goals and no purposes and so on. It strikes me, Mr. Chairman, that it does go back to the issue that we raised last year — the same one — and that is that what was generally needed in the area of education was a good cleansing; a good open refreshing look at the whole purpose of education and at the purpose of the Department of Education, because, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that the root of the problem is that the Department of Education no longer fulfills any function. It certainly doesn't fulfil the function that it used to fulfil.

The problem that we really have, Mr. Chairman, right now is that the traditional role of a Ministry of Education, which is to provide a degree of supervision and inspection and assessment of the ongoing of local school boards has, in fact, been eliminated and that they have not redefined any new role for their administrative capacity and, therefore, what has resulted is a series of dabbling enterprises each trying to redefine something to do that would be useful in the overall field of education. I'm not

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saying that necessarily as a criticism of the Department of Education because it may mean that in fact they've been partially successful in achieving the objective of decentralizing the accountability and responsibility for making decisions and administering those decisions. . . the local school boards, which I happen to think is a good thing, but in so doing, like many other organizations, what they've succeeded in decentralizing themselves in effect out of business, they refuse to go out of business. I suppose maybe if the Member from Brandon West is right if there is all these internecine fights and eye-scratching and clawing between different members. It may be that they just have too much time on their hands and simply because they no longer have a well defined instructive purpose to fulfil that they are engaged in that kind of internal warfare simply for lack of anything better to do. I say that somewhat facetiously because I'm sure there is a lot of "make work" things to do and one of the criticisms of our particular group about education is that there has been far too much "make work" and far too little in the way of very consistent direction in policy in the field of education.

I would like to suggest, Mr. Chairman, in the question of administration, I think this is well worth an examination. I would suggest to the Minister that when we look at it that the old traditional services are gone and therefore what he should be doing as his first priority is redefining the new services that the administration of the Department of Education should be providing.

I would suggest, for example, there are number of service functions that they should be providing. For example, the availability of computer services to school boards, which as individual jurisdictions would find it far too expensive to provide themselves but in their own account if the Department of Education became a service department providing that direct service then they would be able to provide a very useful function in the Department of Education and members here would then be able to have something to judge about rather than all this kind of rhetorical stuff about the philosophy on education. I think part of our problem in this House as well is that we become far too mesmerized by our own rhetoric and far too little engaged in the down to earth examination of what is the Department really doing and what's it accomplishing. So I'd say in provision of direct services, like a computer service; direct management services that many school boards, again for lack of resources, are unable to provide — many rural school divisions, for example, can't afford the training and upgrading of their secretary-treasurers, their internal staff — and if the service was provided by the Department of Education then you may have a much better management service being provided than there is now. Then the Department has a very useful role to play. Because I think that is certainly one of the major considerations in the field of education, is the one of cost, control of cost and accounting and while that doesn't have the same magic and the same iomantic attachment of talking of how they've changed mathematics programs, it has an awful lot more sense, I think to a lot of people, getting good management in the schools. Again, the Department could be providing that service but does not provide it as it now stands.

I think that there are many areas for example in the field of child development and guidance clinics and so forth where, again, individual departments are not able to provide that direct service but the provincial department might be able to. Again, those structures — I can think of one rural school division which, for every mill it has raises something like six dollars of tax money compared the 150 or 200 dollars that are being raised in the wealthier divisions — they obviously cannot provide that kind of specialized service in child development programs and so the department should be fulfilling that role.

So, I would suggest that one of the problems, Mr. Chairman, and this is why I would really like to raise it with the Minister — he challenged us, on the opposite side of the House, to give him suggestions on changes in curriculum and program — I would put an opposite charge to him and that is to examine whether the present administrative framework and organization of his Department is in fact the wrong kind of administration to provide these kinds of services. Maybe what he should be doing is initiating an immediate rebuilding of the Department of Education to give far more of a direct service organization; providing these direct services so that it would really begin to take on a new role in the field of education. So, I would say, that is one major issue about the administration of the Department of Education that should be examined.

I would also suggest, Mr. Chairman, that a second new role that the Department of Education, particularly through the Minister, should be providing is a Bureau of Assessment and Evaluation, that there is no question that one of the basic criticisms and complaints that is expressed about the Department or the whole educational system in this province is a worry that in fact the standards are not up to what they should be — but I know — the fact of the matter is that no one really that there really isn't any good, objective criteria that are being applied from school division to school division to determine. Now, there are a couple that undertake their own testing: St. Boniface has used the Canadian Basic Skills Test, School Division No. 1 has just finished a mathematics test for its grade seven students, and other standards. But generally, most school divisions cannot afford that kind of evaluation assessment service, which is so critical to determining the competence and the outcome of their schools.

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It would seem to me that in this time, when there is so many questions being raised, that again that is a proper and necessary role for the administration of the department to be providing, and yet it's not really providing it. I think the Minister could avoid an awful lot of argument, an awful lot of grief, in fact again he went back to look at the role of his Department of Education and discovered that in fact maybe he has got to rebuild the department so it could provide that kind of bureau, or task force, or office for evaluation and assessment, to come up with the kind of service that would be delivered on request to individual school divisions that would want to measure the outcomes of their teaching and the impact upon students and the performance of their pupils. And I think in fact the assessment and evaluation could go beyond purely the one of providing standard tests of competency but also could go into the question of assessing things on the effectiveness of the physical construction programs, the different specialized programs: phys. ed., guidance, home economics, and so on, which again are not an exam in any way.

We are flying blind in so many ways in the field of education. You know, I agree, in part, with the Chairman. I would like to state very honestly, I get very upset at some of my colleagues of the University of Winnipeg, and Manitoba, who so blithely and easily condemn the public school system for their lack of performance; I think that the universities have a lot to answer for, too, frankly. I carry no truck-or-trade with that particular kind of criticism. I think it is wrong. I think that they are simply passing the buck. But the reason comes back to my original point, Mr. Chairman, that is that no one really knows. So you've got some guys teaching Frenchmen English and one of your universities saying, I don't think kids write essays as well as they used to, he does a quick survey and comes up with some conclusions.

One thing I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, though is that one assessment that the universities have provided, which I think is an honest one, and that is the disparity between the performance of urban-rural students is growing greater in our school systems. That the longer that students stay in school the disparity between rural and urban grows wider and wider. And that is no reflection on the rural school divisions, they simply do not have the wherewithall or the means to maintain parity with the urban school divisions. Now I know that sounds somewhat ironic coming from a member who represents a down-town riding, I will certainly have something to be saying about inner city schools later on.

But if there is any one major problem in the question of performance and standards in the Province of Manitoba, it is that growing disparity. And, again, Mr. Chairman, I think it comes back to the role of the department. They have not been sufficiently quick or able to pick up on those disparities or respond to them and come up with the kind of support remedial services that are required. I think a large part of it is financial and we'll have much opportunity later on to talk about financial questions.

But I would simply say, Mr. Chairman, going back to a statement that was made by one of the professionals working in a school division, that there should be three different telephone numbers at the Department of Education. One to get basic services, one to get some accountability and evaluation, and one is to find out what the regulations of the Department of Education are all about. I've had many people in the school system tell me — principals, school superintendents, and teachers say when they pick up the phone and ask the Department of Education, "What does the regulation mean?", you're going to have said, "Sorry, we don't know." There isn't a solicitor or an interpreter of those kinds of basic questions about what do these regulations mean. So it again comes back to the role of the department. Again, I think that when we have the tremendous morass of regulations that we keep landing on day after day . . . You know, talking about Bill 58, which again we'll have a great opportunity to talk about, and you start asking people in the school divisions how they interpret it and what they mean, and they say that they, you know, look for some advice or some guidance from the department and it's not very readily forthcoming. So giving an administrative point of view I would really say that I think, again, that's another role that should be provided, is simply to be properly and clearly interpreting what the education Acts of Manitoba require, what is available, and what is it the school divisions should be doing.

So, Mr. Chairman, I think it is that kind of concern that I have in the administration of the department is that having lost its older traditional role it hasn't yet defined a new one, therefore there is confusion not only in the minds of the public about what the department should be doing, there is an equal confusion in the minds of many members of the Legislature, and certainly appears confusion in the minds of the people working in the Department of Education. We can still talk in fairly grandiose terms about equality of education, and excellence in education, but those are only terms until you provide a meaningful program and administrative structure to serve those goals.

I would say that from a fairly critical eye evaluating the match-up between the goals and the means at hand to deliver them, that there is a mismatch. And if the department doesn't, at this particular point in it's history, define it's own activities in a way that would achieve the purposes that are set out for it by this Minister, and the Minister before him, and predecessors going all the way back for the last fifty years, so that would really be one of our major concerns. And I, frankly, would

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like to go back to again a recommendation that was made to the previous Minister of Education and that is that what should really have happened last year is that the Minister should have had a white paper on education that would have clearly defined the role and function of the Department of Education and its relationship to the school divisions, that then could have been debated, there would have been something of substance, something of concrete recommendation to deal with, that it could have been examined by those in the educational field; could be examined by parents; they would have something to react to and therefore any changes that would have to be made could be done in a full process of public consultation.

As it is, what we have now is a kind of a constant badgering of partial evidence, half-truths, borrowed inside leaks, private conversations in the darkness inner chambers of a late night meeting in a restaurant. There are more deep-throats probably in the Department of Education running wild now than we can count. I think that that kind of atmosphere is not conducive to a good educational system in the Province of Manitoba. And I want to get rid of that. I am, frankly, tired and I certainly know that people I know very closely, who are related to me in fact, who are in the field of education, are also tired of being subject to the kind of criticism and badgering and harassment based upon oftentimes facts that are ill-founded, or which do not relate to what, in fact, is going on. And I put the full blame and onus, in fact, on the government for that because they haven't cleared the air. They've been so far prepared to either kind of close up in a fetal position to protect themselves or have been engaged in a kind of a gorilla warfare, where they sort of take chip shots at one another back and forth across the pages of one of the daily newspapers, or in estimates committee, but the whole thing has never been opened up, the whole thing has never been examined; as a result we are dealing in an area of greyness and twilight shadows. There is no real clarification on either what education should be doing and how the Department of Education fits into that.

And I would say that perhaps because we are now getting ourselves into that period where even more danger exists from that kind of shadowy boxing about education, that we are turning education into a political football. That we are beginning to kick the educational system around as a way of making political points. I think that there is nothing more damaging in education than that particular kind of tactic, there would be nothing well-served by that particular use of education.

I have no complaints about the kind of questioning enquiry from the Member for Brandon West because I think it's been a very legitimate exercise, but when I see the executive director of his party stating in the last session of the Legislature that, boy they really had a great time in education, they sure got a lot of political points by their attacks on education, and they had all kinds of people . . . then that is wrong, Mr. Chairman. That is the most eroding kind of divisive tactic, and I would say that in many cases it went against the very legitimate and effective positions taken by the Member from Brandon West to have his kind of political bosses using that to maladvantage.

That's the kind of thing we've got to get rid of, and I would simply say to this Minister that if we're going to get rid of it, you've got to open the system up. And maybe it's too late to do the white paper thing, that was okay last year but certainly what we need now is some form of an inquiry. I think we should have that inquiry before the election. I think it should be in the Legislature and if the Minister wanted to really open the whole question of what's going on in the Department of Education, then let's have a legislative inquiry right now; let's have the people come forward and state their concerns. Let's have the teachers, and the superintendents, and the pupils, and the parents who have got complaints, come before a legislative committee and say, "Here's what we think is wrong. Here's what we would like to know about it." And let's have the Department of Education also prepared to defend it's role. And let's get that done before the election so that we've got something clear and open to state and so we can eliminate that particular area because I think if it simply becomes part of the battering-ram tactics, which are obviously going to be part and parcel of the forthcoming campaign, then there is only going to be one group of people who will suffer, and that's the kids in the school. And the teachers who are involved in teaching them.

I agree with the Member from Brandon West. Morale is not good now. Not just in the Department of Education. You talk to teachers in the public schools, I have to talk to them, I don't have a choice, I see one of them every night — at least almost every night I should say, if the government doesn't keep me here too long — but the fact of the matter is the morale is being affected right throughout the system, and it is being eroded. I think that can only be clarified by a full and complete disclosure of what's taking place; with full and complete participation of those who are directly involved and interested in the concerns of education. I would simply say, Mr. Chairman, that in terms of the position that we take on this issue, that there is still enough time in the life of this particular session to do that kind of open discussion and inquiry that we ask for, and to get education off the political hot-seat and into the area where we're getting good sound honest facts and discussion so we can move a little bit out of the shadows into somewhat more of a clear light of day. And then we can argue legitimately over what is, not what we suspect should be, what we think used to be, or what someone told us ought to be. That's the kind of unhealthy debate that is going on right now. And I think that we can only improve it if we provide for clear honest facts, in an open way.

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So, Mr. Chairman, from our position that would be the kind of questions that we would have. One is that we are concerned that there has not been a clear definition of the Department of Education, that the only way to come to that clear definition is to open up a legislative inquiry on the educational system, at which time the Department of Education could make its case, and that we can then go on to define a proper role for education in the years ahead.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, it was indeed interesting to hear the Member for Fort Rouge make the contribution. He leapt to his feet rather quickly there, I was about to get up and make much the same comments. That it's perhaps time that education in this province stops being used as a political football, it was about time that instead of using education to score political points, as the Conservative Party executive has done in the past, that we should be talking about policy in education. We should be talking about what should be in the core curriculum. We should be talking about discipline in the schools. We should be talking about compulsory education and attendance in school. In other words, I believe, and did admonish the members yesterday, that the issues we should be discussing in this Legislature are the major issues, rather than whether the Deputy Minister and the Assistant Deputy Ministers have exchanged memo's which are not the exchange of a bunch of 'Yes-men./ /yes-men I frankly do not want in the Department of Education. I don't think any government should want them. Perhaps the members opposite when they/ were in government did have that kind of civil servant. I don't want them. I want the strongest, and the brightest, and the best, in the Department of Education.

And I have heard in the speeches that I have made around the province, in the appearances that I have put in with teachers in staff rooms in places like Killarney, in places like Souris, in places like St. Anne, and St. Pierre, and Beausejour, and Selkirk, in St. James-Assiniboia, and River East and Winnipeg, I have heard from those teachers in the field that they are, indeed, pleased and satisfied with the work that is done by some of the consultant staff and staff from the child development and support services. I have heard that repeatedly, not only from teachers but from superintendents and, on occasion, from knowledgeable trustees. I do not think that the staff of the department has ignored providing that kind of support service to the teachers in the field, it has been done. It is certainly correct, though, that the department in the last while, the last few months or years, has been going through a period of transition. It has moved from a department which had a role, a major role, of actually getting into the schools and supervising the teachers and making sure that those teachers came up to certain standards, whatever they were.

There were misuses of that system as well. Back in the mid 60s that inspectorial function began to be phased out. Back in the mid or late 60s the system of departmental supervision to departmental examinations began to be phased out, as I think members opposite do know. This transition has been occurring over the last ten years, or 20 years or 50 years because the department reflects what is going on in education and education itself reflects what society demands and I think that society does not now demand that an inspector or that a staff person from a central agency go into every classroom once or twice or three times a year to see how the teachers are performing. Those divisions now have fully qualified professional staff in the rolls of superintendents, assistant superintendents and in some divisions, as supervisors of various particular subject areas, so certainly there has been a period of transition and I think that is good. The world changes and so should the department.

I think that in the last few months, though, there has been need for consolidation; for taking stock of where the department is; for the formulation of policy. I'm rather interested that the member who last year suggested and made a very strong pitch for a white paper, is now suggesting that well, we don't need that anymore, what we should have is an open debate somehow, through some mechanism and I suggest to him that, well, I tell him, I don't suggest to him, I tell him that the department is doing both. The departmental staff are now working on a number of position papers, that these position papers are being developed and they will, in time, be published as a body, as a group of papers. In addition to that, the department has been going out into the field through what are known as feed-back workshops, to talk to people who are involved in the field in education in our schools and through those feed-back workshops, the department both provides information and, as the name implies, gets feed-back from the staff in the field about what they feel their needs are, about what the department should do, about the course that education should take.

So, although the member for Fort Rouge has changed his position from last year, he has moved from the idea that we should have a White Paper, to the idea that we should have a form of open debate, I can tell him that although he has changed his position somewhat, we have been doing both. He seems to think that I should open up more than I can the Department of Education. Well, Sir, I didn't think that the Department of Education was in any way, shape or form a closed shop. Indeed he made reference to pipelines from the department to various people and rather than open it up, it seems that perhaps there is need to close it up a little bit because I get reports also from people in the field about various things that staff say or don't say and I may allude to these in more detail later, which are not departmental policy, or in fact are not the kinds of position that the Minister and the

senior executives have taken. But one cannot expect that everybody in a department this size, after the changes that it has gone through, will be totally and perfectly happy with cultivating their garden.

It's obvious that there are people in the department who are not satisfied with the course of education in the department and will say anything at all and the member for Fort Rouge alluded to it. Rumour, innuendo, the kind of half truths and mistruths that will be stated; anything to get the kind of attack that will occur in the House.

However, I want to give him and the Member for Brandon West the assurance that to the extent practicable I assume that this Estimates Review, which I also assume will go on for weeks, and I do hope goes on for weeks, will be as open and as freewheeling as possible because I really do want a debate on education, on its principles, on the administration of the department, on the decentralized structure of education in the province and in the method of funding as well as on the direction that the department should take with regard to administrative and policy matters. That is what this legislative session is all about, that is what the Estimates process is all about and I hope, indeed, that we are able as a group to accomplish that.

The Member for Fort Rouge mentioned that there should be in the department an assessment bureau, or bureau of assessment, well I don't know where that came from, if it didn't come from page 20 of the Estimate book which, Sir, is not really the item we're on but it's Evaluation, Research, and Policy Analysis. There is a group there that is engaged in the assessment of schools throughout the province and I think that they are doing as reasonable a job as can be expected with the resources and staff that they do have.

In terms of evaluation, I have made every effort in the last few months to determine what system of evaluation is being used in our schools and when we get to the appropriate section I will deal with evaluation in more detail. This particular item, Sir, I do not think is the one.

There was, though, some reference made to the administration of the department and its provision, that is the administration section of the department, and its provision of services to the field. That is precisely what the department, this section of administration does. There are field officers here and I'll indicate to the member the external administrative support unit which contains six SMYs and these people are providing administrative support to the divisions in the field. I found it amusing, Mr. Chairman, that the Member for Fort Rouge seem to think there should be three Departments of Education; one for evaluation, one for basic education and one for explaining regulations. I suppose, if I took his advice and the advice of the Member for Brandon West, I would have six departments. There would be the three I just mentioned, plus the Minister's Department, the Deputy Minister's department and the Assistant Deputy Minister's department.

I can tell you that there are provisions made in the department for not only the external support unit to provide support in the field but for the various divisions to obtain interpretation of the regulations and the name and phone number for questions on these are available in the Administrative handbook for Manitoba schools, which the Member for Fort Rouge and the Member for Brandon West, if he will give me his attention, may see and recognize as the book that is now being used by people in the field.

So although there has been some suggestion that the department be somehow opened up, I think perhaps it has been opened up just about enough. I think that quite the contrary is the interpretation I'm getting from the public. The interpretation I'm getting from the public is, indeed it is a good thing that finally the Minister is speaking for the department and not everybody else. That's the feed-back I'm getting and to open it up further and to have a free-for-all within the department I don't think would improve the department's delivery of services through its consultative staff and through its external administration section and through CDSS and other sections of the department that provide services to the field. But again I do want to say that this Estimates process, I hope, will be as open and as freewheeling as possible so that we can indeed have a debate on what education should be, where it is and where it should go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 48(b)1. The Honourable Member for Brandon-West.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, I know perhaps the Minister would have picked up the question I left him with a moment ago but again remind him of the assurances of his predecessor that we would probably get a revision of the Public Schools Act in this session of the Legislature. I wonder if he could indicate now whether that is likely to occur.

MR. TURNBULL: I am sure, Mr. Chairman, that the Member for Brandon-West noted in the Throne Speech that there is no reference to an amendment to the Public Schools Act and indeed, I do not think that there will be a major amendment — that is a major revision of the Act — this session. There may be need for some administrative changes but a major re-assessment of the Public Schools Act, I think, should reflect education as it is today in this province and education as it should be in the future. I think that that kind of direction is needed and should be embodied in a new Public Schools Act but that direction can only come once there is some position papers put out by the Department of

Education for public discussion and once there has been the kind of public discussion that will occur as a result of the program development committees work through the province in developing new curriculum. And there are, of course, other matters in curriculum responsibility for which should be contained in the Public Schools Act but these two will be clarified as a result of the publication of position papers.

MR. MCGILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, again after all it is six or going on seven years since this work was begun and I am wondering really what is the problem. At some time in the life of this department it has to come up with a revision based upon the current situation and what they see to be the proper way in which to overcome the difficulties of that time.

Now I ask the Minister, is there a difficulty in finding someone who wants to take the responsibility for finishing this job, is that why the revisions have not been done? Mr. Chairman, I would ask him too, are there decisions that have to be made concerning policy that no one really wants to make? I can't think of any other reason why this would go on for six or seven years; surely the department is adequately staffed to deal with revision of the Public Schools Act. There are knowledgeable people in your department, I am sure, that are able to assess the needs of the educational system. Is it because no one in your department really wants to make the firm decisions that are necessary in order to bring this revision to the Legislature?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I have to answer to the — I think it was the first question — is there not someone in the department who is willing to take the responsibility for the amendments, I have to answer that indeed there is someone, his sitting right in front of me and has been doing all of the work, charing committees that has been working on the revisions of the Public Schools Act. My only point is that apart from administrative changes which may have to be introduced, may be necessary this session, my only point is that I believe education today is in a position where it needs the revision of an Act which will be a support for education and will, in fact, demarcate or delineate the functions of the department as compared to the functions of the School divisions and districts; and that to draw an Act with that purpose in mind, is extraordinarily difficult because if the Member for Brandon-West will think for a minute, there are a range of topics that the department is involved in. I don't need to reiterate them for him. On any one of those topics, revisions may be more or less involved, have more or less administrative responsibility and I think that the 'more or lessness' has to be decided and that is the reason that I think a major revision of the Act — that is a totally new Act, is not something that I, being in this portfolio for five months, am willing to bring forward to this Legislature.

I remind the Member for Brandon-West the revision to the Corporations Act in this province which I did bring to the Legislature last session when I was in my previous ministry, took some ten years to revise and involved not merely experts in this field, experts in corporate law both inside and outside the government, but experts that came from other jurisdictions including the federal government. The kind of legislation we're talking about is not simple legislation; it is not legislation that should be drawn up for the short term. It is legislation, if it's going to be a major revision, that should be drawn up and should be able to stand the test of time and that is what I am looking for and that is why I will not be introducing such a major and sweeping revision to the Public Schools Act this session.

MR. MCGILL: Well, I thank the Minister for that explanation and I note, too, that he doesn't make any predictions as to whether this revision will appear in the next session of the Legislature and I think he is being prudent in that respect.

The Member for Fort Rouge did bring to the attention of the Committee a point that I think is worth noting and that was the fact that as the department directs itself as rapidly as possible in a policy of decentralization, the real aims and objectives of the department are less clear than they ever have been in previous times; so it may well be that some of the difficulties, some of the confusion that is developing in the administrative branch of the department is due to the fact that you are busy divesting yourselves of authority and direct connection in the field of education by shifting as you have indicated you are endeavouring to do in almost a complete sense, the responsibility for curriculum and for various other functions into the classroom.

There is some evidence to suggest, Mr. Chairman, beyond that which we have stated in general terms, that the Department of Education is in a state of confusion. I would like to bring to the attention of the committee an exchange here between a mother of school children in Manitoba who resides in rural Manitoba. She wrote to the Minister of Education asking under what circumstances parents are permitted to teach their own children at home and not be liable under the School Attendance Act. She wrote to the Minister and asked that. This is a mother of school children in Manitoba. The woman's enquiry was turned over to a departmental official for reply and his reply was written on January 24th, 1977. He says, "In answering the questions raised in your letter, may I for the purposes of clarification answer your letter by referring to certain sections of the School Attendance Act." Mr. Chairman, I am endeavouring to read this letter exactly as it was written.

"There are various conditions in the School Attendance Act that excuse a pupil from attending a public school. The conditions that would appear to apply in the case of your letter would be as follows:

Section 6. (1) (a) If the child is in regular attendance at a private school in respect of which (i) a report has been made within one year previous under Section 5, the private school affords an education equal to the standard of the Public schools in the province, and (ii) a report has been made regularly each month by Section 19.

(b) If the parent can produce a certificate of the school inspector that in his opinion the child is being educated at home or elsewhere in a manner equal to the standards of the public schools in the Province."

Now, there follows a paragraph written by the Administrative Officer and he says, "The alternatives listed above enable children to be taught at home if, however, the education given them is in a manner equal to the standard of the public schools in the province and this determination must be of a school inspector." That is a non-stop sentence to there, Sir. "It would be necessary if you let this alternative that you request of the Minister of Education to provide the evaluation referred to." Mr. Chairman, I put this on the record because this letter was written within the previous month and it tells this woman that she will have to produce a certificate of the school inspector in order to avoid any penalties under the Public School Act for the non-attendance of her child. Surely,

Well, surely, Mr. Chairman, the administration of the Department of Education should be aware that Field Service Branch is no longer functioning in the Department. I think we dealt with that last year in the Debates. And so ten months after the elimination of the school inspectors this woman is being advised to get a certificate from a school inspector in order to meet the requirements of her desire to teach her child out of the public school system. I bring this to the attention of the Minister and ask him if this is indicative of the kind of responses that are being given to the people who write to your Department requesting specific direction in matters of this type.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. TURNBULL: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that what I could say as fair comment here is that is the kind of communication that goes from bureaucrats to members of the public that I try to prevent and often have to redraft if the letter is for my signature. It is the kind of gobbledegook that I don't think any member of the public should receive from the Civil Service and I am just praying right now, Sir, that I did not sign this letter. I did not, the Member for Brandon West says. That kind of run-on sentence and kind of detail is not really what I think members of the public are entitled to and, if necessary, I will send two books that I find quite useful to the staff in the department. One is Gower's Plain English, which I think is a good administrative guide for Civil Servants in their writing of memos, reports and other things. So, if he is saying that it is indicative, I have to answer him that it is an example of bureaucrats. It is the kind of thing that I am trying to prune from the correspondence of the department. It is not a task that is easy but it is one that I am attempting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister has replied to the query in reasonable style. Could he just indicate if there are many people in the Department who do not now know that there are no school inspectors in the Department of Education.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Speaker, I anticipated that question when the Member first read the letter. I don't imagine, to answer his question, that there are, I hope, many, other than the writer of that letter who is under the impression that there are school inspectors entitled as such operating in the department. But they do have people, although not called school inspectors, who do go into schools to conduct examinations of one kind or another of the school function.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 48(b)(1) — pass. The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. PATRICK: I just have a few points, under general administration. I have a couple of questions for the Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On which item, (b) (1) or (b)(2)?

MR. PATRICK: (b) (1).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Proceed.

MR. PATRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question to the Minister is, and that has been posed to me on several occasions from not only some school teachers but a school principal as well, and that is to do with students that are required to stay in school by law and some of these students, according to the teachers, very little can be done for them in the high school system, and perhaps they should be in vocational training and still there is no way they can get them into vocational training because they are required to stay in high school and the point that was raised to me is that they're not doing very much for themselves in the way of learning anything and are still being a bad influence on some of the other students. The point I'm trying to raise: Has the Minister had any complaints? Has he been able to assess this area? And if there is such a situation it may be better for that school to get that student in some vocational training and not to waste his time for another year before he is age sixteen and could leave the high school.

But I would also like to make a point, Mr. Chairman, at this time that I believe it would be right to say that teachers today are much better qualified, much more experienced than they used to be years

ago. We have much better equipment and much better facilities in the way of schools to teach the children than we had years ago and I think that our teaching profession today is a very fine and a true profession. You may find like in any other association or any other profession that there is a few that maybe don't take their work as seriously or don't do as good a job, but from the experience that I've had in a close association with a couple of schools in the St. James area I cannot be but very much impressed with the kind of work that they are doing. I think that teachers work extremely hard. I'd say most teachers work extremely hard in trying to do a good job. In fact I think they are doing a good job. I think our students today have much more knowledge and education that perhaps at the time when most of us went to school.

I think it has been pointed out by the Manitoba Association of School Trustees as well in some of the surveys that they have done. Only a year ago, I believe, on the Grade 4 students they have done a survey with the parents, and I think that something like over 75 percent of the parents were most satisfied with the kind of job that the teachers in the schools were doing for their students.

I believe there was also a survey made, I believe in Canada, with most business people, and the business people were also extremely happy with the kind of students they are getting in their businesses except for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce who were just the opposite. That's the only one and I think that sometimes we should take lightly what the Chamber of Commerce have to indicate — I'm a member of the Chamber as well myself. There were times they had made statements that I could not accept. I know that not too many years ago they said well, when the minimum wage in Manitoba was 75 cents and they took a very strong position then. You know, the wage would have been something like \$30 a week and they said, "Well you can't increase it," and that's not more than ten years ago so I would find that I couldn't accept their remarks.

But I do want to say that sometimes what we get in the media and alarm, I believe we should be proud of the kind of work that is happening in our school system. I know that there is some concern. Many teachers are quite concerned about the kind of things they get in in the papers; the kind of debates. Everybody is saying "Well, the children now — we don't have to learn the reading and writing," and as far as you talk to teachers they'll say it's not true.

I know there is some concern among some of the teachers that perhaps there are too many optional courses which — even it has come to my attention that a teacher may only have a few in a class when there is so many optional courses that the students see.

The other point that was made to me as well that maybe some of the students have too much spare time and instead of looking for a job — they're only taking one subject in half a day — they seem to be wasting a lot of their time and perhaps not doing as well at school as they would have, or as some that are taking two or three subjects in the afternoon. So I would like to raise those points with the Minister on this item. And perhaps he can answer about the students that are required by law I believe to stay in school till age 16. The communication that I had with some teachers and some school principals indicated very little is being done for these students. They would be much better if they were able to transfer them to say Red River College and them in some kind of vocational course.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Education.

TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, it would have been more helpful if the Member of Assiniboia had given me the geographic location that he was speaking of when he mentioned students who are required to stay in school to the age of 16 and in a predominantly academic program even though the student is not in that academic program. The reason I ask for that is because there is every likelihood that in the urban areas, anyway, such students would be in a position through their division of getting into an occasional educational regional comprehensive secondary school someplace in the Winnipeg urban area and indeed in other places such as Selkirk. That kind of movement of students into vocational programs is taking place and indeed I believe there needs to be more emphasis on vocational education. We'll get to that later on.

The students who are not in the fortuitous position of being able to move out of their particular academic program and into a vocational program do have other options. It is my understanding that there is provision that a school leaving certificate can be obtained by the parents of the child under the age of 16 down to the age of 14. That certificate would enable, of course, the child to become engaged in productive work. Of course, as many of us in this House know, some of our best learning experiences came from working either during the summer while we're at school or indeed after we left school. There's nothing like work experience to improve one's understand

There is also the occupational entrance course program which is available, I understand, in a number of school divisions throughout Manitoba and in the rural areas in particular. The question of too many options is one that I think the Department needs to address itself to. There are many individuals who would like to see certain courses be added to the core curriculum. The core curriculum which I mentioned yesterday is one that the department does require. The optional courses perhaps in those areas where there are indeed too few students, and perhaps the school division administration there should look into the number of optional courses that they are offering because that is not an efficient use of resources. But let us not forget that optional courses are provided for a purpose and that purpose is to enable the children to find some meaningful courses in the school and I don't think that that factor should be overlooked in the desire to provide a core curriculum which is taught well to everybody.

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I am sure the member for Assiniboia's question and perhaps he might raise this under my Estimates relative to what happens after they leave school because there is some interesting things happen over in that other area.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to ask the Minister in his response to the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, he mentioned feed-back sessions and this device I believe was described as a way in which the Department gets feed-back from the divisions themselves. Does this properly come under this heading of 1.(b) General Administration. If so, —(Interjection)— well, I see no objection from the Minister.

MR. TURNBULL: I did not mean to, by sitting still, let the Member run on, if he did indeed want an answer to his question right away. This matter of feed-back workshops I believe would be more appropriately discussed under the program development section of the Estimate. Is that satisfactory?

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, going back to a somewhat different line of questioning on this area of administration. Can the Minister tell us whether the Department has been providing any service or consulting to the school divisions concerning the changes in school boundaries, particularly in relation to the changing nature of the student population and the kind of alterations, drastic alterations in many cases, of the numbers of children in the elementary schools going down drastically. What is being done to provide them with the kind of re-organization that may be have to take place in the definition of school divisions and boundaries, particularly in many of the small divisions where there is a very serious drop-off in the number of students?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, that is indeed a major question. The member well knows, and I know the member representing Rock Lake and some of the other rural members will know full well what the changes in school boundaries, divisional boundaries mean for this province. I can tell the Member for Fort Rouge that the Department to my knowledge has had no requests from school divisions to change divisional boundaries, therefore, I have not asked my staff, nor do I think have any staff taken the initiative to go to school divisions and suggest a change in the boundary. I can tell the Member for Fort Rouge that that issue, although it's a major one, is not one that should be tampered with, I think it's one that we best leave alone and through the funding program of the department provide financial support for those divisions that are experiencing declining enrolments. We will when we get to that section of my Estimates on financial support for public schools be able to debate and I can give you some information about the program for this year for schools with declining enrolment. I believe that answers the member's question.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, it doesn't quite answer the question because I detect a certain contradiction in the answer of the Minister; the contradiction being his admission that it is a major issue but saying that being a major issue, he's not prepared to deal with it. Now it seems to me that if it is a major issue —(Interjection)— No, no wait a minute, by dealing with it does not necessarily mean that you end up undertaking an arbitrary changing of boundaries but the last major revision of those took place — 15 years ago? — I guess when the Michener Commission — 16 years ago? — well, it began that long ago — but the fact of the matter is that there is major alterations in the population profiles of students; certainly there have been major changes in the growth factors of certain towns; some places go up, some go down, some divisions are much larger than they were — was it '68? Now, being a major issue, is it not, therefore, incumbent that at least some of the preliminary work be done to begin examining what those shifts mean, what might be the alternatives that should be considered and some of the courses of action that should be then contemplated in order to face up to that major issue, that at some point in time, we're going to wake up some morning and say we have a totally unacceptable condition in terms of divisions and boundaries and everything else but have had no preparation as to how to cope with it. It goes back to the original point I raised in considering the role the Department of Education, that I think that that is its role, not to be making decisions, not to be coming in in a hammer-fisted way deciding for people, but to be providing the kind of information and the kind of background service — consulting, if you like — to enable school divisions to begin raising these issues and that's why I again would suggest that why — I don't think my position has changed, just simply that it has progressed from the area of wanting a White Paper to one of wanting

a more deliberate inquiry by this Legislature so that we can start getting at some objective facts. And that's what I really am concerned about that we are missing a lot of serious issues which means they concede they're serious because they are politically too explosive but I think the way to defuse a volatile situation is through good information that is acceptably credible and genuine; you defuse a volatile situation by engaging in a series of discussions and examinations with the parties involved to a point where eventually some consensus and understanding can be arranged but if we are simply going to avoid it, then we are going to end up five years from now with a very major problem on our hands with no previous preparation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, the question raised by the honourable colleague from Fort Rouge is one that is, you know it's a pretty serious one. All right, I would remind the House members that it has been, I suppose since about the period of 1968 that the major school division geographic boundaries were established and they were established without a considerable amount of pang and anguish and anxiety throughout the communities as that took place. The question that I really have for the Honourable Minister, I would tend to think that by and large it has taken this past decade to have the dust settled and sorted out and have not received from, certainly the divisions that I am familiar with in the Interlake, any great amount of agitation or concern about the current boundaries.

I think what the Member for Fort Rouge is trying to draw the Minister's attention to is the kind of shifting swings that take place in populations, particularly in the last few years, certainly within the periphery of 40, 50 miles from Winnipeg there have been pretty substantial changes in school populations both up and down and in most instances up. That could, I suppose, call for an ongoing kind of look at redefining or the possibility of redefining these boundaries. However, certainly my experience in rural Manitoba leads me to believe that, tends to share the Minister's view, that where angels fear to tread, let's tread very lightly and it does take, it does take awhile after all for a new interest to develop after new boundaries have taken place and, even though it is ten years, that isn't that long a period of time when you're changing social patterns, when you're changing patterns of centres in the rural areas.

The question I have for the Minister while he wishes to answer the other members on this subject matter is, there are from time to time relatively minor changes requested or re-adjustments in some of these boundaries and I'm not so sure whether I'm speaking on the right occasion here, on the right part of the Estimates. These changes are sometimes for very specific reasons; either for particular courses that are available in one division and not available in another division. Sometimes it involves the question of language instruction, French courses availability or not availability or other such matters. Some instances it's a question of transportation, very nuts and bolts economical matters having little to do with the education aspect of it. But to sort out an anomaly or to help with inconvenient transportation policy requests have come in from time to time to make minor adjustments. I would prefer to consider them adjustments of common sense, that people in the area have grappled with over the past period of time. What is the mechanism within the Department of Education, that can handle this. What particular board, or what is the process that the divisions go through if that request is made to the department?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. TURNBULL: A point of order. I have no problem in answering these questions from the Member for Fort Rouge and the Member for Lakeside. . . the Member for La Verendrye is up, he may be talking on the same issue of changing boundaries and that item really comes in the next appropriation (c) Statutory Boards and Commissions, then we can discuss minor amendments to divisions at that point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 48(b)(1) — pass; 48(b)(2) Other Expenditures — pass; Resolution 48(c) Statutory Boards and Commissions \$24,000. The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. BOB BANMAN: Mr. Chairman, further to the questions that the Member for Lakeside asked, I would also like to ask the Minister more directly if the department is formulating any policy with regards to the individual land transfers which are taking place right now? In other words, the land transfers from one school division to another, this is causing certain problems and I think the outstanding one right now that comes to mind right away is the St. Norbert one, but I wonder if the department is formulating any policy with regard to that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. TURNBULL: You know, Mr. Chairman, there are mechanisms for making minor changes to school division boundaries. The mechanism is the Board of Reference. The Board of Reference is a board which I activate when someone in the various divisions writes to the Minister and asks for boundary alteration, usually by the transfer of their own property; unless it's on the divisional boundary line, this mechanism, this board, makes these decisions on the basis of public hearing and the recommendations are usually accepted by the Minister. I think that they have been made with regard to both urban and rural divisions in the last while. The board seems to have done quite a good job, a relatively good job on this.

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The other major matter of divisional changes, certainly the department, the Finance section in particular, is well aware of population shifts in school population within divisions but I don't think that that in itself is any reason to start ultimating major alterations in school divisions. However, if there is any request that comes to the department from a division or divisions to make a major change in their coterminous school division boundaries then naturally the division would respond but, like the Member for Lakeside in recalling the history of the introduction of unitary school divisions in the province first initiated in 1947 by the then government on a referendum basis, I don't think it's the kind of thing that the department should initiate, rather we should wait to see what the public in those particular divisions want. This is a particular problem, I think, in rural areas, where many areas of great and long standing debate about where a school will be located in the division, never mind whether the boundary will be altered or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member of for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: I could be moved to, in ringing terms, talk about the time that you had a courageous Department of Education that in fact initiated a great deal of change in those years that he referred to, the 1960s, with or without referendums and I happen to represent the Interlake country where no referendum was held, it was done by the initiation of the Department of Education. However, Mr. Chairman, that is not my intention. Simply, perhaps to give the Minister an occasion to indicate to us whether or not how close we came to doing things right back in 1960, can he simply indicate, does he have to activate this board of reference for the purpose of changing boundaries very often? With the help of his staff, can he give us some indication — is the department inundated with requests for changes of boundary, which would seem to denote that the original boundaries were not that well drawn up, or is this in fact a fairly rare happening — you know, just with not a great deal of accuracy, but can he indicate how often, or how many changes does the department receive for substantive changes in the boundaries?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, with the careful planning that the Administrative section of the department goes through in preparing for the Estimates, they do have here some information which I can read to the member and I do hope it is totally accurate.

“During the year 1976 the Board of Reference had 16 hearings, with 56 sittings, 90 percent of which were outside of urban Winnipeg, extending from Churchill in the north to Sprague in the south.”

MR. ENNS: How many actual boundary changes were made?

MR. TURNBULL: I do not have that precise information before me, but certainly if the member wants it, I can attempt to get it. Do you want me to get it for you?

MR. ENNS: No, it's all right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister for La Verendrye.

MR. BANMAN: . . . to some statistical information, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could inform us how many of those hearings involved either the Hanover School Division or the Seine River School Division?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I'm sure the Member for La Verendrye wants an answer to that question. I will get it for him but I'm afraid he will have to wait until this evening or tomorrow, it is now almost 4:30.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, this is just to get clarification seeing as we don't have the report in front of us. I assume that the Teacher's Retirement Fund comes under this part of the Minister's consideration of it?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if he's speaking about the fund itself, or various boards in relation to it. This is not the appropriation for the fund.

MR. AXWORTHY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I just have one question that I'll have to raise because I won't be available tomorrow to raise it when the division comes up. I think he can perhaps take notice and provide the answer to one of my colleagues, and that is really what kind of policy guidelines are now working for that retirement fund in terms of the investment patterns of the fund itself. Have the investment funds a particularly homegrown quality to them, or are they used for investment purposes in Manitoba and for socially productive, economically productive enterprises in Manitoba, or are they simply whistling down to the stock market in New York?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. In accordance with our House Rule 19(2), I'm interrupting the proceedings of the Committee for Private Members' Hour and shall return to the Chair at 8 p.m. this evening.

IN SESSION

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Logan. I'm sorry, we'll proceed to Private Members Hour. The Honourable House Leader.

TABLING OF REPORTS

MR. PAULLEY: I wonder whether I may have the indulgence of the House before we go into the Private Members Hour to table three reports which I should have done at 2:30.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table **The Second Annual Report of the Pension Commission of Manitoba** for the period ending 31st December, 1976; **The Annual Report of the Manitoba Labour-Management Review Committee** and also **The Annual Report of the Department of Labour**. Copies of the reports will be made available to members just as quickly as possible.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR

MR. SPEAKER: Since we have no public bills, private members' bills or private bills, we will proceed to The first one is the Honourable private members' resolutions. Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Stand, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The second one is the Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. PATRICK: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move

WHEREAS the cost of living has risen significantly in the last year in Manitoba and those citizens who are 65 years of age or over, living on fixed incomes, have no way of making their income meet the rising cost of living and,

WHEREAS more than half of Canada's senior citizens are living at or below the poverty line,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the government consider the advisability of amending immediately the present Income Supplement Program for senior citizens 65 years and over whereby their income would be guaranteed at \$300 per month per person, or \$500 per month per couple and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House request the federal government to share in the cost of this supplement program.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member didn't name a seconder. —(Interjection)— Moved by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia, seconded by the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, the Resolution as read. The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. PATRICK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is very timely to introduce this resolution because we know what has happened and what the consequences and the results of inflation has been in this province. I think that many of our senior citizens are really in dire need of some assistance or further assistance because many of them live on just their social allowance or pensions and I think it's important that some assistance be given to them. I know that some of the other provinces have already done this. So, Mr. Speaker, the point that I'm trying to make is that this will be more critical as years go on — by 2000 we will have some 12 percent of the total population of Manitoba that will be senior citizens and at the present time we have 58 percent of the singles and some 39 percent of the elderly who only receive nothing else but the social security and we are told the statistics are indicating that 75 percent of the elderly live in poverty. If that is true, Mr. Speaker, then surely this government should give some consideration to increasing the provincial supplement.

I am looking at a chart here from the Manitoba Supplement for the Elderly and at the present time the total pension for a senior citizen in this province, for a married couple where both pensioners receive pensions, is in the neighborhood of \$229.37 plus \$25.29 quarterly in provincial supplements which comes to approximately \$235 per person. That's not very much, Mr. Speaker.

I have and I could table this, a couple of items here: what kind of rent some of these senior citizen people have to pay who are not fortunate to get into a senior citizen housing. I have two homes that are renting at \$295, just a small fourroom bungalow with no basement and perhaps not insulated too well and the rent that those people have to pay is \$295. That's more than the total revenue or pension for one pensioner. I could show that to my friend, the Minister of Corrections, if he — he's shaking his head — doesn't believe it. But that's a fact. I have another one here, it is also a house that perhaps should be demolished and again the rent on this one is \$270 and the reason they are paying that kind of rent is because they are not able to get into senior citizens housing because at the present time there is a shortage and still not only do they have to pay rent but they have to pay the other — the utilities, the groceries, food and everything else. —(Interjection)— Well, one member says couldn't Patrick Agencies help. Well I'm afraid we're not in that kind of business that offers accommodation to people who are in such drastic need and I say that these people are in drastic need.

I feel that shelter, health and social services, certainly should be something that should be looked at and it's government's responsibility to be able to offer these people some assistance. I would say that in the last two years, perhaps at no time before but in the last two years, the costs have gone up so drastically that something should be done. I know that I have introduced this resolution I believe last year but I think that it's of greater need today than it was a year ago. I know that there has been studies — there was a study done by the Provincial government of Saskatchewan; there is a study that I have, the International Conference on Social Security that I have in my hand indicates the same thing and every study that has been done in the last couple of years has indicated that there has to be some

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assistance more than the present social security that we have not only in this province but in Canada.

I would like to recommend to the House that some action be taken. I see the Minister's in his seat now and perhaps we will hear from him.

Perhaps there's another area that we can look at as well and this is something different. I question the concept of the mandatory retirement age of 65 and perhaps if people want to work longer, it should be at their discretion that they should and still receive some income. —(Interjection)— Well, somebody just mentioned to my right there, he said, "It would outdo the socialists." Well, I think my friend from Pembina feels that somebody who's receiving a pension of \$239 and has to pay a rent of \$270, well he should starve because, not only hasn't he got enough to pay for the rent but he hasn't got any money to pay for utilities and what about his grocery bill as well? It's not as simple. Now surely unless the statistics lie, that 70 percent of the senior citizens live in poverty, or the Member for Pembina doubts all the statistics that are available.

I am quoting and I am stating to the House the studies that have been done in Saskatchewan; the study that has been done which I have here, the Conference on International Social Security, and I believe there was a study done just recently in Ottawa so this is something that I don't believe is a socialist philosophy or socialist matter; I believe that it doesn't matter what side of the house you're on, this is something that I believe most members are concerned and would be concerned. I do indicate to the House that in the last perhaps 15 or 16 months since the utility bills, the heating bills have gone up so drastically and sure, we can talk about other care facilities such as home care facilities which are in sufficient number but this is not what the resolution calls for — it calls for an increase in the provincial supplement and I hope the Minister can make some kind of an arrangement with the federal government where this supplement can be shared. I would like to indicate for the Member for Pembina again — I'm not asking for very much, in fact, I'm being so conservative that anyone that I talk to will say, "Look, you might as well not have presented this to the House." At the present time, I'm saying that the supplement of the senior citizens pension is \$235 and some cents and I'm indicating to the House that the least we can do is perhaps increase it to \$250 per person so I'm looking at \$15 per person. That's a very very small measure, Mr. Speaker, and I'm again saying that it doesn't have to be universal and as we know the supplement isn't a universal program either; it's only to the ones who are in

So need. So I would hope that the government would look at it very carefully and give some consideration because there are people and I can point out to the Minister — I know that the Minister was not in the House when I started and I have a picture in my hand here that I can give to him, where this house is renting for \$295 that they have to pay and it's just a small two-bedroom, four-room home with part basement. Really, I don't think this is something that I am introducing that we're not all concerned.

The other point is, again this is something that because of increased expectations and improved health facilities and better resources, Canadians now are enjoying a longer life life, much longer than perhaps they did many years ago when they didn't live as long. I think it is the responsibility of this society, largely it has to be through government that we have to share in some of the costs in the basic goods that are required for our senior citizens. —(Interjection)— Well, the Minister says some are living too long. I wouldn't say that and I have not said that. I feel that many of our senior citizens have made great sacrifices for many years to perhaps try and retire in some dignity, to be able to retire in their own homes and so on, and even when they have their homes paid for, just in order to pay the utilities, pay for their food, and nowadays you don't buy very much for thirty-five or forty dollars when you go to the grocery store. Everybody knows that and for thirty dollars you can bring one small bag of groceries. So, what I'm asking is really, Mr. Speaker, not something of great magnitude. I'm saying again, I'm talking about fifteen dollars per person and, if anything, I should be chastised in this House for bringing a resolution with such small measure of support for these people. But we're doing it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do hope that the members of the House will give consideration to this resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Now are you ready for the question? All those in favour please state . . . The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK, Q.C.: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry that I was slow in rising. It's only because I did want to participate in this debate but I did not know that honourable members opposite, that is the movers of the proposed resolutions too, before this one, would not be ready to proceed with their resolutions in spite of the time that they had to do so. But one has to recognize that, although I thought they would not be having this debate for some little time, nevertheless because of the inability or reluctance to proceed with the . . . that's the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge. Well, whatever the reason, I'm not critical. Of course, I'm not critical of the Member for Fort Rouge for not proceeding with the resolution. All I'm trying to explain is why it was that I was slow in rising, Mr. Speaker, because I was trying to gather some of the material that I knew I had.

One of the interesting documents that I knew I had in my desk was last year's budget address and the attached papers. I was glad that I could find what I wanted here and actually it was part of the

material that I had had ready for the contribution I wanted to make on The Throne Speech, and didn't get around to doing because of some interruptions that occurred during that time, which sort of slowed up the progress of my contribution at that time.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that the problems of many of the people of this country who are disadvantaged, for whatever reason, be it lack of education, be it because of illness, be it because of geographic location, or be it because of age, are matters of national significance and national importance. My suggestion that that is the case is supported by the fact that when old age pensions were brought into this country, they were brought in on a national basis. I do not feel that it is right to think in terms of, and let's speak about the aged because these are the people that this resolution deals with, that the aged in any part of Canada should be more poorly treated than in any other part of Canada. That is why I think that the New Democratic Party, nationally and in Manitoba, is federalist in intent and in thrust. I think we have always felt the need to recognize that all parts of Canada should participate in dealing with the problems of any segment of Canadians. That's why I was pleased that the Liberal Party of Manitoba is taking such a deep and intense interest in problems of a selected group of people who are in the lower income categories, because one would hope that at least they intend, if they can't elect members from Manitoba, that at least they must attend national conventions where they meet with federal members of parliament and the federal Cabinet to deal with matters of national importance. I do believe that this resolution is a matter of national significance, and that is indicated by the resolution in its final paragraph, that this House request the federal government to share the costs of this supplement program.

Mr. Speaker, to me it is rather inconsistent to find the Liberal Party in Manitoba asking this House to request the federal government to participate in a shared cost program, when the federal government has declared its intentions loudly and clearly to withdraw from the previous level of support on cost shared programs.

I have had the opportunity, as Assistant to the Minister of Finance, to appear at meetings of federal-provincial nature and to hear repeated again and again the intention of the federal government to pull out of, not completely, but to put a limit to the federal contribution to these shared cost programs. An effort that started a number of years ago, not with Donald MacDonald, not with John Turner, but back in the days of Benson do I recall meetings that we held with various Ministers of the federal government where they told us that they were going to put artificial ceilings on shared cost programs, as far as the federal government was concerned, and now we're dealing with people who are in that area, as described by the honourable member who spoke before me, of the lower than average — and many below the poverty line — income group. It is clear from the record of the federal government that they are going to go statistically in their approaches to sharing in cost, and that statistical approach could be related to cost-of-living increases or they could be related to gross national product and have no relation to the real needs of the people. It is therefore left to the provinces each to worry about their own people, because I believe that the federal government today has turned into a calculating machine or a machine which knows how to add and subtract and works by averages and by statistics and by almost any other way than by the approach of concern for the human condition.

Mr. Speaker, a province of the nature of Manitoba, which is about the average of Canada, may be fractionally below that in terms of its productivity and its ability to pay, is hardpressed to meet the demands that the Liberal opposition in this House would like to make on it, and it has to be recognized that the wealthy provinces are the ones that, of course, have the greater ability and opportunity to do so. We heard our Premier in his response to the opposition's speeches on The Throne Speech make the valid point that in the last eight years there has been great progress to increase the ability of this province in terms of productivity and in terms of redistribution of wealth, much greater progress than has been the situation in a relative way prior to the New Democratic Party assuming the responsibility of government, this is true.

The ability of the province has improved. The fiscal opportunities are greater for those people in lower income groups, and the efforts we have made in the field of taxation, itself, to redistribute income have been substantial and are still substantial, in a relative way, and that's important. It's peculiar that members opposite do not like to see comparisons between the efforts of other provinces and that of our province. Their measuring, their yardstick is a very peculiar, rather insensitive one. Their yardstick is, "How can we run down what is being done by this government in order to improve our opportunities to mislead the people into voting for Conservatives at the next election, rather than supporting the NDP."

But if they would only accept the debate on the basis of what can be done, and what has been done, and the relative comparisons between provinces, then of course, they would be embarrassed by the fact that the progress that has been made by this government is pretty substantial. referred 1976 Budget Address and the Appendices and I think that they are relevant to this resolution — Well I'm sure they are — and I would like to bring forth some of the tables giving this comparative program that has been developed in recent years.

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I'm looking now at Table 1 which appears on page 92 of the Budget Address documents of 1976 where they deal with a comparison of annual personal income taxes and health insurance premium taxes for Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. In other words, they have taken Ontario and all provinces west of Ontario, and have done a comparison of income taxes and health insurance premium taxes and it's relevant to this resolution because the people we speak of in the main do not pay taxes. But because in other provinces they are forced to pay taxes by way of health insurance premiums, a policy which was being carried on by the Conservative Government of Manitoba until the election which showed them how wrong they were, and which I believe was still acceptable to them until a couple of weeks ago when their Leader stood up and told them that really the party no longer would support the principle of health premiums which I think came as a surprise to many of the members opposite as it did to members on this side of the house. That Table that I am referring to is of great relevance because one finds that a married taxed father with two dependents under 16, 0 which is usually taken as the average, with a gross income of \$4,000, in Manitoba had a net negative tax; that is the net payment a receipt of \$491. For the same person with the same income in Ontario — I don't mean the same person I mean a person with the same income and the same responsibilities and dependents but living in another province, if living in Ontario, received a net rebate of \$75; in Saskatchewan of no dollars; in Alberta a net rebate of \$200 and in British Columbia a net rebate of \$88.

So where Alberta' oil rich Alberta which doesn't have sales taxes, it does have tremendous revenues of an earrassing nature from oil, has given a net rebate of \$200 to such a person as I describe whereas in Manitoba that person as received \$491 based on the 1976 Budget calculations.

A person of \$5,000 income with two dependents; married; two dependents under 16, will have received in Manitoba a net rebate of \$489, having paid an income tax of one dollar. In Ontario a net rebate of \$74; in Alberta a net rebate of \$128; in British Columbia a net of \$22. It is only, and I mention this in passing, that those of our people who are over 65, and under 65, whose income is \$100,000 will find that in Manitoba the tax they pay is higher than they would have paid in any other of these provinces that I've described, and that I've always said with pride and not with any apology. I do believe that that is the basic difference between the Conservative Party of Manitoba and that of the New Democratic Party of Manitoba, and frankly I have no idea as to what position the Liberal Party in Manitoba has in relation to the tax policies of this government.

But I would point out that it is at the \$25,000 income mark that the difference shows itself. Below \$25,000 the rebate, or the net taxation is less in Manitoba — I mean the rebate is greater or the tax is less — net tax is less in Manitoba than in any of the other provinces except in the case of Alberta where it remains both the rebate is less and the tax is less. But after the \$25,000 mark there is clearly a distinction which is less attractive to those people who are Manitobans.

It is of greater interest, I think, for me to discuss. . . Mind you, Mr. Speaker, I can't fail but again look at the Table which appears on 88 which deals with a comparison of yearly provincial tax liabilities between the spring of 1969 government and the government of 1976 in Manitoba, to point out that the differential when one takes into account personal income tax, health insurance premiums, and property tax credits, the differences are that a person earning — and I think the figure used by the honourable member was \$4,000 - \$5,000 — a person with a yearly gross income, married tax filer, spouse and two children under 16 earning \$4,000 in 1969 was called upon to pay in taxes by the Conservative government \$254, and by the present government would get a rebate of \$491; a tax saving over those eight years of \$745.

Now dealing more specifically I draw the honourable members attention to the Table dealing with availability of benefits under the 1976 Manitoba Cost of Living Tax Credit Plan' and one sees there — and that's on page 79 of this document — a table which shows that the people over 65 who are tax filers, those earning under \$5,000 gross income, are 60 percent of the people over 65 which confirms roughly the figures given by the Mover of the resolution, they have received an average credit of \$113.71. Those earning — in the 65's — between \$5,000 and \$10,000 consist of 25 percent of that group which means that close to 86 percent of the people over 65 — tax filers — have earned under \$10,000 and they have received an average credit under the Cost of Living Tax Credit Plan of about \$114 for the year.

If we look at the Property Tax Credit Plan and that appears on page 76, again we find about 86 percent of the tax filers being under the \$10,000 income but 60 percent being under \$5,000 and under the Manitoba Property Tax Credit Plan they have received between \$320 and \$345 in Property Tax Credit Rebates. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a very substantial contribution in recognition of the needs of those people of lower income and especially those over 65 who get a special calculation under the application forms, and therefore get a greater consideration. It is an indication of the efforts not only the good intentions but the actual efforts of this government to recognize need.

Now, the honourable member in his resolution wants more and I want more, Mr. Speaker, but it is easier when you're on the opposition and I think I've still spent a little more time on the opposition side than I have on this side, although it is getting about the fifty-fifty mark. I know and I remember

well with a certain amount of nostalgia how pleasant it is to sit on the opposition benches and make demands one after the other. Let's take one group after another group after another group for whom there is inadequate provision and let's ask on their behalf.

The government with the responsibility of management of the income of the taxpayers and the ability of the government to redistribute wealth has to set priorities and has to recognize need across the board. And, Mr. Speaker, this government has recognized the needs of the people over 65 to an extent greater, I believe, than any other government in Canada and certainly to an extent greater than any of its predecessor governments.

The concentration on behalf of people over 65 has been tremendous, in the elderly persons housing, in the assistance to improve the family home, in the assistance through the Property Tax Credit Plan and through the Cost of Living Tax Credit Plan, but mainly in elderly persons homes where a person over 65 is able to go into a home — and we don't have enough yet in spite of the tremendous growth, the tremendous increase in beds and space available for these people — to be able to go in without any worry of the financial concerns of being able to stay in that home because the province pays everything over and above the minimal requirement which now, I believe is somewhere around \$6.75 a day or whatever it is — (Interjection) — \$6.25 a day which is less than the receive monies that they as a guaranteed income minimally — the minimum that they receive guaranteed — in the province is of tremendous advantage.

Do I have a minute or — up completely, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this resolution I would comment first briefly on the claim by the Member for St. Johns that the contributions of this government to citizens over the age of 65 is greater than any government that preceded it or any government with any record for examination and I say, Sir, that that claim is just unacceptable. The arguments that the Member for St. Johns mustered in examining and dissecting the proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for Assiniboia are clinically very good and very worthwhile considering but he weakens his whole case when he winds up on a note of self-congratulation and attempts to re-emphasize and reinforce the tired old claim from the New Democratic benches that they are the only persons and the only government in the history of this province with compassion and with consideration for senior citizens, for the elderly, be they over 65 years of age or not. That is absolute nonsense and it simply cannot be left on the record without being described as nonsense because we all in our constituencies — and I no less than anyone in this House — have senior citizens, elderly persons who are in dire danger of losing their homes and their livelihoods at the present time and have been for the past five years, Mr. Speaker, because of the insensitivity of this government to the problems that they face in the cycle of rising costs and rising taxes. That is the fact of the matter. I have more complaints, I have more constituents come to me on this question, this problem of maintaining their homes and their lives against the rising tide of taxes and costs on which plain of battle this government has refused to fight; on which plain of battle this government has refused to inaugurate or initiate anything of practical and tangible and realistic help to them than any other complaints that I get, and I do not say that, Sir, for emphasis, I say that for the record because I want the Member for St. Johns to know that although I respect his faith in his own propaganda, and I expect it to be repeated over and over again, that it simply doesn't wash and it is falling on deaf ears all across this province and throughout my constituency most of those ears are around or above the age of 65 which is precisely the people he's talking about. Let us congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Johns for a clinical exposition of the weaknesses in the resolution brought forward by the Member for Assiniboia but do not let us wind up with that tired cliché from New Democratic propaganda that these are the people who have done so much to help elderly and to help persons age 65 and over because you simply will not get that response or that reaction or that agreement from that age group. Not in my constituency, anyway.

Sir, let me say that the resolution itself is one of certainly high motive; no one can quarrel with the objectives and the motive of the resolution — in that respect it runs very similar to and is very compatible with most resolutions and proposals that are brought forward in this House by the Members of the Liberal Party and reflects the position that that party is in, which is the position of a party that neither has the responsibility to govern now nor will have the responsibility to govern later this year. There is a question, Sir, I'm sure not in any of our minds in a partisan way, as to who will be the government of Manitoba after the next election. I have my views; the honourable gentleman opposite have theirs; but there is no question that it will either be the Progressive Conservative Party or the New Democratic Party. As a consequence, members like the Honourable Member for St. Johns who has just spoken and members on our side have to approach this kind of concept with a degree of responsibility that is not incumbent upon members of the Liberal Party. It may become incumbent again but at the present time they do not have to approach this question with the responsibility that the Honourable Member for St. Johns and his colleagues have to approach it or the responsibility that any party seeking to replace them as the government of this province have to approach it and all

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one can say for the proposal, the resolution of the Honourable Member for Assiniboia, much as I admire his tenacity and his persistence in pursuing these lines of argument session after session, is that it is great in concept and it incorporates a concept that no one can argue with but somewhere along the line, all of us in this House have to mesh goals with capacity; mesh the dreams and the concepts that we would like to see introduced in our society with the capacity and the ability to pay for them and support them. I suggest also that what has to be examined at the same time is the degree to which that concept will really be effective and will really be helpful to the persons it purports to help. I think the Honourable Member for Assiniboia would be advised to re-examine the degree to which this kind of resolution would be helpful to those he seeks to help.

In the first place, Mr. Speaker, he has remonstrated with himself for having proposed a very small increase and he says he should be chastised for not making it much larger. Well, I think that's a criticism that he can underscore for himself in thinking about this resolution because if it's as small as he describes it as being, then by the time you've paid for the administration costs that will be involved in any changes to a program such as are envisioned here, there would be very little that would filter down to the recipients so that I would suggest if the Member for Assiniboia is sincere about developing some real help and he believes that this is the way to go about it, then he's correct in criticising himself for approaching it from the point of view of a minimal kind of assistance. It should either be worthwhile so that there's something there for the beneficiaries that he and all of us would like to see benefit from this kind of measure, or it's not worth applying. It's not worth invoking. Sir, the Member for Assiniboia says that the kind of additional assistance that he proposes in this resolution is going to relieve citizens of a certain age group of the burden of the increase in the cost of living and the burden of maintaining themselves on their fixed incomes. The fact of the matter, Sir, is that this kind of program is in trouble all over the country right now — universal programs of this kind ranging from the Canada Pension Plan to Unemployment Insurance to Medicare are in trouble from one coast of this country to the other because the productivity of this nation and the capacity of this nation is not great enough to support them on the basis of the premium involvement on which they are based and more and more support is being drained from the general treasury and the general revenues to support programs of this type and I think that we reach a point where we have to ask ourselves whether we really are helping ourselves through programs of this kind. If, in fact, we are putting the country and the taxpayers deeper and deeper into debt and thus creating a situation in the market place which results in greater taxes and greater costs for the supposed beneficiary.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

A MEMBER: Let us know when you get to the end.

MR. SHERMAN: The Member for Assiniboia and the Member for St. Johns had some difference of opinion as to whether it was the people simply who were not paying taxes who are involved in consideration here. It doesn't really matter whether they're not paying taxes or not; they're all members of a community and a marketplace which is dominated by people who do pay taxes and when taxes and the burden of the cost of programs of this kind go up, it doesn't matter whether that individual is not paying taxes at that point, he's paying those taxes indirectly in another way through the additional costs in the market place in which he lives that are imposed by those who are bearing the burden of the taxes. There is no escape from this kind of cyclical handout. It touches off, or has a potential for touching off an additional spiral of cost and burden for the very people that the Member for Assiniboia would like to help.

Sir, I think one has to ask and the Member for Assiniboia also has to ask himself, who precisely is going to be helped by this? Is this a proposal that reaches across the entire spectrum of the citizens 65 years of age and older or does it just help those who are in the direst of need? The people who should be concerning themselves with the burden that senior citizens and elderly people are carrying at this time, Mr. Speaker, are the people on those benches who have the opportunity to reduce the burden of the education tax on property owners and reduce burdens of that kind that affect the ability of a person to maintain his own home and to live on his fixed income and that is not going to be solved by additional handouts in which we are asking participation from a government that has embarked on a very well defined program of opting out of shared cost financial arrangements. —(Interjection)— The federal one, the federal one. This government had an opportunity to help people who were having difficulty maintaining themselves against these rising costs by dealing with property taxes, and especially the education tax burden of that tax, and by addressing themselves to the fact that the fixed income has no protection under the policies and programs of this government against the rise in the cost of living. I suggest, Sir, that the attack must start there.

We have advocated repeatedly in this House that attention be given to the question of education taxes and the possibility of relieving the old age pensioner from the burden of the local education tax. We have seen no proposals from the New Democratic side of the House come forward in support of that view or in any form which would make that concept applicable and we believe, Sir, that this is

where the fight has to start with a direct attack by this government on the plight of the person on fixed income and the plight of the person over age 65 who is fighting to retain his life and his home and retain a degree of respectability and a reasonable standard of living on that pension or fixed income into which he or she is locked and, Sir, I think that this kind of concept and this kind of proposal begs the greater question. It's a knee-jerk reaction to a problem which will result in a disappearance of the funds and a burden to the taxpayer without any tangible benefit for the recipient. We've seen enough of this type of program in this country.

I think that the old age pensioner is just as sick of that kind of pie-in-the-sky legislation as people at all age groups are. I believe there's a real disposition in the country now on the part of all persons to try to get the country and the economy back on a realistic housekeeping basis where dollars are spent for good value and the amount that goes out is based on the amount of money coming in. For too long, we've deluded ourselves in Canada, indeed throughout the Western World, for decades now with the thought that all a government had to do was enter into a give-away program, and if you could get a shared cost program, you only had to bear half the burden of it, so much the better, without consideration of the fact that it's the same taxpayer all down the line, but if you could get some kind of program of that nature going, well then you'd be putting a few more dollar bills into the pockets of a few more people and all the problems would be solved.

Well it doesn't work that way; we've seen that in almost every universal program in this country that it isn't working that way. It just leads to greater and greater bureaucracy; it leads to a greater spiral in the market place of increased costs and increased taxes and the so-called beneficiary, the recipient of the goods, winds up in exactly the same position he or she was before; after six months there is no tangible benefit from it.

So, Sir, I say to the Honourable Member for Assiniboia, I respect his motives and his high and lofty principles and I would like to see some miraculous form of help for these troubled citizens myself but I would prefer to see a practical form of help. I don't believe that there's any miracle solution. The practical form of help could be inaugurated by this government tomorrow by relieving senior citizens of education taxes. If this government had not completely junked the foundation program of education financing, if this government had not started engaging in mathematical flim-flam where that foundation program is concerned, so that nobody now can get at the actual figures; if we were still at the 80 percent, 20 percent ratio, Mr. Speaker, there would be the amount of support necessary for education in this province which would relieve the property owner of that heavy and ever-increasing education tax burden. The person at the top end of that scale in age is the one who needs that relief most and, Sir, I say this is where this program can start. Let's endorse and enshrine the dream put forward by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia; I subscribe to that dream. I want to help the senior citizen and the person on fixed income as much or more than he does. I don't believe you can do it with pie-in-the-sky motherhood resolutions like this. I believe you can do it by getting this government up off its chairs and having them recognize the fact that they are killing and crushing the old age pensioner. They are doing it through property taxes — that's where it's happening. The taxes on their own homes and their own property, the biggest component of which is the increasing education tax, is the factor that is squeezing these people out of their homes. If this government really wants to help those people and the Honourable Member for Point Douglas shakes his head, or Fort Douglas or Fort Pitt or whatever it is shakes his head, I say come out to Fort Garry and talk to my constituents, age 55 and over because, Sir, they blame this on you. You have not moved to relieve them of that education tax. If you want to help them, take the education tax off the shoulders of the old age pensioner, the old age property owner. That's the way to start, not with a motherhood concept like this.

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

MR. WALLY JOHANNSON: Thank you Mr. Speaker. —(Interjection)— No, not 5:30. I want my kick at the cat. Do you have a question?

MR. MILLER: No, I was going to suggest that it's close to 5:30, perhaps we call it 5:30.

MR. JOHANNSON: Mr. Speaker, I would prefer to talk.

A MEMBER: Hear hear.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. JOHANNSON: Mr. Speaker, perhaps under the circumstances of today, we can understand why the Honourable Member for Fort Garry made such a ridiculous speech. He obviously was crossed up by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia who brought forth that resolution that was not supposed to come up in the ordinary course of events for a couple of days and it is very obvious, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member for Fort Garry was so intent on avoiding taking any position that he impaled himself upon the fence on which he was straddling —(Interjection)— But, Mr. Speaker, the honourable member made what I could only characterize as idiotic statements. He said that we were crushing and killing senior citizens, particularly through our property tax program and that, Mr. Speaker, is errant nonsense. It is simply stupid. There is no other way to describe the statements.

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Mr. Speaker, one could excuse the member slightly if we didn't know that he was a member of the administration that governed this province prior to 1969. — (Interjection) — He was not? Oh, I'm sorry then. That particular accusation cannot be made against that member. His ignorance can be excused, Mr. Speaker, somewhat. But I would like to remind him of what his former government did for senior citizens of this province. You know what they did, Mr. Speaker, they were so niggardly that they couldn't even pass an enabling piece of legislation to allow senior citizens to have a ten cent bus fare. They were so miserably niggardly that they could not even pass that little piece of assistance for senior citizens. This was the administration, Mr. Speaker, that levied the highest medicare premium in this country on the senior citizens in this province, the highest medicare premium. They were going to help senior citizens so they forced every one of them, no matter how poor they were, to pay if they were a couple, \$204 a year. This was the government, Mr. Speaker, this was the government that was so miserably niggardly, so miserably niggardly toward senior citizens. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. JOHANNSON: This was the government, Mr. Speaker, that was so niggardly toward senior citizens that they imposed a tax upon the fuel, the fuel that the senior citizens had to buy. They withdrew it eventually — (Interjection) — after they imposed the five percent sales tax. Speaker, the senior citizens of this province are intelligent people. They're not fooled by speeches that the Honourable Member for Fort Garry may make. The senior citizens of this province realize that this is a government that has respect for senior citizens, that our party, traditionally, has had a far greater respect for senior citizens than any other party and we have worked for programs that would assist senior citizens. And, Mr. Speaker, as a result of that realization they support this party. They support this party in very large measure. And I know that in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, I know that in my constituency the vast majority of senior citizens vote for the NDP. The vast majority of senior citizens in my constituency will take Ed Schreyer over Sterling Lyon any day. In fact the name of the Leader of the Opposition does not raise any spark of hope in the hearts of senior citizens in my constituency. Quite the opposite, they remember what he did to them when he was a member of the Roblin government. They remember because senior citizens have lived for awhile. They're not going to be fooled by some new Tory policies that renounce what Tories have been doing for the last seven years and what Tories did for over a decade while they were in office. — (Interjection) — Yes, I know a good number of my constituents for example at Lion's Manor who remember the scandal involving Sir Rodmond Roblin when there was misappropriation of funds back in 1916.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hour being 5:30, I am now leaving the Chair. The House will resume in Committee of Supply with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair at 8:00 p.m.