

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 2, 1978

Time: 2:30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell): Before we proceed I should like to draw the attention of the members to the gallery where we have 24 students of Grade 5 standing of the Stonewall School under the direction of Miss Donna Rice. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Gimli, the Minister of Education.

We have 35 students of Grade 11 standing of the Elm Creek Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Don Woods. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Morris, the Government House Leader. And now comes the toughie.

We have 55 students of Grade 6 standing from Precious Blood School. I understand that 28 of these students are on a student exchange program from Helene-Boulle School in Sherbrooke, Quebec. These students are under the direction of Mr. Raymond Bisson of Precious Blood and Jean Jacques Begin of Sherbrooke.

On behalf of all the members, we welcome you here today.

For the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Boniface, I forgot to mention that this school is located in the constituency of St. Boniface.

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 . . .

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Monsieur l'Orateur, je pense que c'est necessaire . . . dire bienvenue aux invites du Quebec en l'autre langue officiel de notre Canada, notre pays.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, to direct a question to the Minister of Finance, in the absence of the Minister to whom the Manitoba Development Corporation reports, with respect to Tantalum Mines. I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, whether Hudson's Bay Company has been given any reason to believe, by the Government of Manitoba, that they can safely bid for the shares of Tantalum Mines that are now being offered for public sale on the basis that the public of Manitoba, which is a one-quarter owner in this company, which rescued this company and which caused the company to improve under public ownership as distinct from private ownership, whether the Hudson's Bay Company has been given reason to believe that they can safely bid and that the public will not exercise their right of first refusal for the purchase of these shares?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. DONALD W. CRAIK (Riel): Mr. Speaker, I'll have to take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Industry and Commerce.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is taking the question as notice, I would like . . . Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may repeat the question because I'm interested in an answer this afternoon and the Minister is now present.

I would like to direct a question to the Minister to whom the Manitoba Development Corporation reports. I would like to know whether the Hudson Bay Company has been given any reason to believe that it can safely bid on the 50 percent interest in Tantalum shares which are being offered for sale by the Receiver on the basis that the public of Manitoba is ideologically opposed to exercising its right of first refusal with respect to those shares.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce.

HON. ROBERT (Bob) BANMAN (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the Manitoba Development Corporation is dealing with this particular subject matter. As the member is aware, the Manitoba government has the option, I understand, along with another partner, Kaweck Berylco, to exercise an option if they should so deem. I should like to assure the member opposite that I'm sure that the MDC board will take every precaution to make sure that Manitoba's interests are best served.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, then may I understand that the Manitoba Development Corporation board has it fully within their discretion and is not being told by the government that they are philosophically opposed to further public ownership of that mine, that the Manitoba Development Corporation board has it in its full discretion to add to its present shareholding of the Tantalum Mining Corporation.

MR. BANMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member can assume what he wants but we have asked that there is a moratorium placed as far as any further loans with regard to MDC.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, we're not discussing loans; we're discussing shareholdings in the operation and is the Minister now saying that the Manitoba Development Corporation, because of its moratorium, isn't permitted by the government to exercise its right of first refusal with regard to an offer made by another party?

MR. BANMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, the MDC is perfectly at their own choosing if they want to make a recommendation to the government with regard to that.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the honourable member whether the Manitoba Development Corporation has a full discretion to consider the commercial desirability of this acquisition and is entitled, by virtue of the authority of the Manitoba Development Corporation, to purchase the balance of the 50 percent of this company which was failing miserably in private hands and which the public became a partner in, resulting in success of the company.

MR. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'll restate again that if the Manitoba Development Corporation in their wisdom feel that they want to, and feel that it would be in the best interests of the province to exercise the option, I'm sure they'd make that recommendation to us and we'd have to look at it.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, then I would like the member to confirm, if I understand him correctly, two things: One, that the Manitoba Development Corporation cannot make the acquisition without the authority of the government, that it is the government who will make the decision in this case and I want the member to confirm that the Hudson Bay Mining Company has not been told that they could go ahead and make the acquisition and not worry about a public partner because the public is intent on getting out of the 25 percent that it now has.

MR. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that particular statement, the latter one. The member will appreciate that the negotiations are continuing and part of the arguments that he is putting forward are part and parcel of the negotiation process that is being conducted at present.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. LLOYD AXWORTHY: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer Affairs in respect to the guidelines that were established on the rent control measure. Can he tell me what steps he is taking to ensure that owners of apartment units will not raise the rents which are presently below the \$400 limit above the \$400 limit in order to escape the restraint program? By example, if someone is presently renting an apartment at \$350, what is preventing them from putting a \$60.00 addition on it and therefore escape any restraint program and say that they don't have to recognize any form of guidelines. Can he tell us what measures he is taking to prevent that particular kind of arrangement from being established?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

HON. EDWARD MCGILL (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Fort Rouge. First of all there are no changes in the program as it exists until September 30th. It is also a regulation under the Rent Stabilization Act that only one increase in a year is permitted. It is not likely, Mr. Speaker, that a landlord would have the ability under the Act to make any change in rents just prior to the date of the phasing out of apartments \$400 a month and above.

MR. AXWORTHY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Let me raise this kind of question to the Minister then. What is to prevent a landlord who are now submitting new leases that will fall due, say on June 1st or July 30th or in August, to total the rent increases in those new leases that will have effect beyond the cut-off date of September 30th above the \$400 limit so that they can then sort of escape the restraining limit of \$400 and then charge what they will and, in particular, to add up extraneous costs such as parking and other elements to add up to that \$400.00? Can he tell us whether he will be taking measures to prevent that particular kind of evasion of the regulations to be prohibitive?

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the member that any new leases negotiated July 1, as he suggests, are under the present guidelines and must remain under those guidelines.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is playing games, frankly. The Minister knows full well that any lease that is submitted at this particular point in time can put forward rent increases beyond the September 30th guidelines so we're suggesting to him, what happens if those leases carry forward rent portions that go over the \$400 and may add up to a 15 or 20 percent increase as a result, does that make them free of the \$400 limit restraining factor?

MR. MCGILL: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member has introduced a certain number of suppositions that

are not necessarily true, but I can only repeat the statement that any increases now negotiated or now contained in new leases would have to meet the guidelines and be approved by the Rent Review Agency if in fact there was a complaint by any of the tenants that they did not remain within the guidelines. And any separation of units from the control measures would depend upon a decontrol order being issued by the Review Agency. This would not be done if they in any way exceeded the guidelines that had been laid down.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could reply to a question that was placed yesterday by the Member for Inkster, and I think earlier by the Member for St. Vital, with regard to the CCIL plant. As of April 22 the plant employed 489 people and as a result of the refinancing it's the intention of the plant to get back into full production, and they do intend to employ at least that many people and more. There will apparently be, in the short run, some layoffs while there is stocking of materials and re-tooling and preparation, but when that is completed the employment level will resume and probably exceed the level of the 489 people as of April 22.

With regard to a further question on the matter of the principal interest behind the CCIL, which are basically the co-ops and credit unions and pools, increased their interest in CCIL by 8.75 million by way of preferred shares, which rank after the interests of the governments that became involved in the refinancing or the guarantees associated with the company.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. WILSON PARASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Rent Control Program. I'd like to ask him, how will the government program of rent decontrol deal with the proportion of the 50,000 or so post-secondary students in Winnipeg and Brandon who rent apartments and who voluntarily vacate them for the four or five months of the summer break?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, if the member is referring to the current summer break, I would expect that the students would be back in their accommodations prior to October 1, and of course there's no change in any of these units in respect to the rent stabilization program until October 1.

MR. PARASIUK: A Supplementary. Given the fact that often apartments are rented out one or two months in advance, will the Minister be able to assure these students who are now embarking on their summer break that they will be assured of getting into rent controlled apartments in the fall when the university and community college terms begin?

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, it's not intended that I would be able to assure anybody of obtaining an apartment in the fall, providing they are leaving an apartment in the spring. What I am assuring the member is that there will be no change in the relationship and the control of the rents in those apartments until October 1.

I would assume that students who are going to university, post-secondary institutions, on or before mid-September, would have made their living accommodation arrangements by that time.

MR. PARASIUK: A final supplementary to the Minister of Education. If in fact, students in the fall have to pay between \$50 and \$75 a month more for rental accommodation, will the Minister of Education make allowance for this in the government student bursary and student loan programs, which are presently being discussed in his Estimates?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. KEITH A. COSENS (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I think there is a certain element of "if" in this particular question and I would say to the Member for Transcona that if the situation arises that we will deal with it at that time.

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

MR. LAURENT L. DESJARDINS: Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Honourable, the Minister of Health, the question that his Leader took as noticed yesterday. I understand that the Federal Government has indexed the Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. My question sir, is what is the policy of the government? Will it pass this on to the recipient of the supplement for the elderly, or will this be considered as an added revenue?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L.R. (Bud) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, there is some confusion in the question

although I can answer it, I hope, satisfactorily for my honourable friend. The situation with respect to the Supplement for the Elderly, Manitoba Supplement the Elderly, has not changed in any way, it remains the same. The question, I believe the Honourable for St. Boniface raises, is a question relative to certain social allowances recipients, elderly social allowance recipients, who have been receiving social allowance and also OAS, GIS and possibly also the Manitoba Supplement for the Elderly. The answer to his question, is that there is no change in policy. The index increase in the OAS, GIS is being passed on to those Manitobans.

MR. DESJARDINS: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I thought it was a very clear question and I'm satisfied with the answer. I would like to ask the Minister how many people in Manitoba now have the Medicare card, how many as of this day?

MR. SHERMAN: Does the Honourable Member mean mean the Social Allowances Health Services card?

Well, Mr. Speaker, there were or are about 2700 people as has been indicated earlier in that particular category. Those cards, as I've attempted to explain, are being reviewed for eligibility purposes. Individual holders of those cards are being reviewed for eligibility purposes, and the procedure is going ahead without difficulty with the co-operation, and insofar as I've been able to determine both in this region and the Westman region, with complete understanding on the part of the cardholders themselves. I can't give my Honourable friend the precise number today. It would be somewhere within that 2700 range. I'll attempt to find that out, but I suspect that he's interested in knowing whether any difficulty or any hardship is ensuing, and I want to assure him that I am monitoring the situation very closely. I want to guarantee him that no hardship will be permitted to develop and that none so far has developed sir.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ildonan.

MR. PETER FOX: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Labour and ask whether any further conciliation has taken place since the weekend in respect to the construction industry dispute.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. NORMA L. PRICE (Assiniboia): No, there hasn't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. J.R. (Bud) BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour. In light of the latest figures released the cost of food went up 2.65 percentage points last month, which annualized comes pretty close to 12 percent, will the Minister try and convince her colleagues that the minimum wage in Manitoba has to rise?

MRS. PRICE: I believe, Mr. Speaker, we'll be dealing with the minimum wage in short order.

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, short order has been several months now. Will the Minister shorten that short order, at least try and convince her colleagues that the people at the bottom of the scale are entitled to at least as much as the doctors are, and perhaps the Minister will review the situation where it is actually becoming much better to be on welfare than it is to work on minimum wage.

MRS. PRICE: Mr. Speaker, when I mentioned it would be dealt with, I was referring to the Member for Logan would be bringing it up and we would be discussing it at that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry and Commerce, who piqued my fancy, my interest, rather —(Interjection)—

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

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry and Commerce who caught my interest when he was discussing with the Member for Inkster, the offer for the sale of Tantalum shares by the Receiver in bankruptcy. I don't quite follow what matter there could be up for negotiation by the Development Corporation. Could he just clarify what they could be negotiating, and with whom?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce.

MR. BANMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, without getting into too many of the details, because the matter is right now in negotiation stages, as the Member for Inkster mentioned in his few remarks, the Manitoba Development Corporation and Kawecky Berylco do have an option on the shares which the

Receiver is looking at, in other words, the option of first refusal. Negotiations are going on right now, and I should tell the member that, without getting into all kinds of specific details, I would say that those are of a confidential nature at this moment and are being carried out.

MR. CHERNIACK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I don't want any confidential information to be given, but I think we're entitled to know what is being negotiated. Is the sale of MDC shares being negotiated? Is the opportunity to buy shares, which is by contract, being investigated? How could that be negotiated? Either one does or one does not exercise an option to purchase, which is available too. So that I think what is important for Manitobans to know is, are they trying to sell shares or are they trying to buy shares, which is different from exercising an option to purchase, which is apparently their legal right?

MR. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, all I'm going to say is that the MDC is negotiating, we have another partner, the Kawecki Berylco who is also involved in the option, and the matter is being looked at. As soon as there is anything to report, I will do so to the House.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, then the only assurance that I think that I would need on this basis is that they are not negotiating the sale of the shares of their Tantalum stock.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago the Member for St. Vital addressed a question with regard to the insurance on government buildings, and I indicated that I would undertake to find the statement that was made at that time, and my apologies for the delay but I'll table the statement for the member.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Labour. In light of the answer that she gave the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre, is my proposed introduction of the resolution dealing with the minimum wage preventing the Minister from making an announcement in this House dealing with the minimum wage?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MRS. PRICE: I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the topic of the minimum wage is going to be coming up today, later on today, by the Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: That is not the question that I asked the Honourable Minister. The question I asked the Honourable Minister' and the reply to the question that the Member for Winnipeg Centre addressed to her, and said that she referred to the resolution that I have on the Order Paper. And the thing that I want to know from the Minister is, is this preventing her from dealing with the minimum wage and announcing an increase? If it is, I'll be prepared to withdraw it and let the Minister make her announcement to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. HARVEY BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Northern Affairs and Renewable Resources. With respect to the Norway House road which is the only surface link to the community of Norway House, I wonder if the Minister could give us an indication when the road will be open for travel this spring, given that it is necessary to commence the ferry operation, cable ferry operation across the Nelson, or to open up the road for traffic.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. KEN MacMASTER (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give you a specific answer, but I'll get it for you.

MR. BOSTROM: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister has the information yet about the question I asked last week regarding the ferry service for Bloodvein and Princess Harbour? I might just point out by way of information to the Minister, that both of these are urgent, since in each case the fishermen begin their operations June 1st and must make plans for transportation of their fish.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the Member for Rupertsland has said, and I have assured him that there will be freight service of a nature into those areas this summer. The method, and who is doing it, and how it's being done, has not been firmed up yet.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Mines and Resources, to whom the Manitoba Forestry Resources Limited reports. Can the Minister advise me whether the government is considering a closing down of the Manitoba Forestry Resources Limited in which the people of Manitoba have invested four to five times as much as they invested in Saunders Aircraft, and which, over the past three years, has lost \$40 million or more?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines and Natural Resources.

HON. BRIAN RANSOM (Souris-Killarney): No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, can the Honourable Minister advise whether it is the policy of the Conservative government that they will indefinitely support, by public funds, a company which has lost \$40 million over the last three years, by accounting principles, which, if they were changed, would be \$60 million.

MR. RANSOM: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, on the basis of the fact that the Minister says it is not the policy of the Conservative government to continue to support that company, can you tell me when is the Conservative government going to close down that corporation?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines.

MR. RANSOM: The Honourable Member for Inkster, Mr. Speaker, asked whether it was the policy to indefinitely prolong or continue support. The question of the operation of Manitoba Forestry Resources Limited is being reviewed at the moment. As I said in my first answer, we are not considering, at the moment, in any way closing down that operation. That is not to say that there will be an indefinite period of losses such as it has sustained in the past.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Tourism and Recreation. Yesterday I asked him whether his department intends to substantially cut back on the lifeguard and life safety services at provincial parks. He said he would check on that. I wonder if the Minister can now report publicly as to what he intends to do on the question of life safety in the provincial park system.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Tourism.

MR. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the question asked of me yesterday, I am informed that there were something like 60 individuals who were carrying out beach control duties across the province in areas — swimming areas — which were supervised and received very little use and really did not warrant a full-time daily supervisor. Those beaches and swimming areas which are heavily used and have dangerous conditions, such as unpredictable high waves or areas where there are dangerous bottom conditions, will continue to receive beach patrol supervision.

This summer we anticipate on hiring a little short of 40 people. These services will be provided in such areas as Birds Hill, St. Malo, Falcon Beach, West Hawk, Grand Beach to mention a few, and all the other formal beach areas will suitably sign indicating that swimming is allowed, however the parents will have to watch and there will have to be supervision provided for by adults.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister to perhaps clarify. Does he say that the some-60 beach control people will no longer be in service in beaches that are not being used? And does he also indicate that there will be a cutback in services in heavily used parks throughout the province, such as St. Malo and Birds Hill, and Grand Beach, and others, or is the complement of life safety patrols going to remain the same in those areas or in fact improve, considering the increased volume of the people who use those facilities?

MR. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding from my department officials that there will be something like 20 fewer beach patrols and total complement, and that will be made up of certain areas where there was very little use of particular public facilities and were not heavily used, and those areas will be signed now instead.

MR. AXWORTHY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would really ask the Minister if he would be prepared to provide better information to the House as to what he means by better used, or heavily used. Could we, in fact, determine what the volume of use of those parks were and perhaps have an independent body, like the Manitoba Safety Council, determine whether there is going to be a safety problem by the cutback in these services. It would seem to me to be pretty drastic, and the question is: Is the Minister prepared to present to this House the kind of criteria and assessment made by his department in order to determine that there will not be any erosion of the safety features in these public facilities?

MR. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member will have every opportunity and will, during the debate of the Estimates, to deal with this particular matter.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. LEONARD S. EVANS: I would like to address a question to the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. It is reported that 35 people have already been laid off at the Brandon General Hospital, and up to 60 positions may be eliminated, and also other services are being reduced. I'd like to ask the Minister, in the event that the hospital cannot find further savings because it is only half-way through its budget-cutting process, in the event that they cannot find further savings, would the government be prepared to reconsider its position and prepare supplemental . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I'm sorry that question is hypothetical. The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: I have another question then, Mr. Speaker. Reference is made to a government decision not to provide depreciation allowances in the funding of hospitals. Can the Honourable Minister indicate if — this is for the Brandon General Hospital — can the Honourable Minister indicate whether this is a general policy universal for all hospitals in Manitoba — that is the lack of depreciation allowances in the budget?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the honourable member's second question, I would advise that it's not necessarily a general policy. It's a situation that is being discussed between my department officials and the Manitoba Health Services Commission, and various hospital boards and administrations. There might be different applications of the principle. I would expect to be able to advise my honourable friend more fully on that point as soon as I am into my departmental Estimates.

On the answer to his first question, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I just returned from Brandon where I had the opportunity to pass on the regards of the Honourable Member for Brandon East to many of his friends, and I want to advise him that references in the media to 60 positions at the Brandon General Hospital are, to my knowledge and in my familiarity with the subject to date, totally without foundation. The figure is approximately 35. All of them are positions that would be retired as a result of attrition, as a result of persons leaving the hospital under the attrition process. And in my meetings with members of the board and the administration at the Brandon General Hospital yesterday I was advised that they are succeeding within the limitations of their budget and they feel they are going to be able to maintain quality and service at its existing level without the cost of jobs to anybody at the hospital. **MR. EVANS:** I thank the Honourable Minister for that information. I appreciate the process of attrition, but my information has it that there will be a possibility of actual layoffs if the board cannot fulfil the \$900,000 cut.

On my second question of depreciation allowances, in the case of hospitals such as the Brandon General Hospital that are not, for one reason or other, including depreciation allowances in their budget, will the government be urging such hospitals to rely on private donations for such equipment, and also could the Honourable Minister indicate what kind of hospital equipment we are talking about? Electrocardiogram machines, respirators or just what kind of equipment are we talking about in this case?

MR. SHEAN: I can't answer that question in detail at this point, Mr. Speaker. I advise my honourable friend that that's under discussion between officials of my department and the commission, and I will answer it more fully on my Estimates.

In response to his first question, again, Mr. Speaker, I repeat that reports of loss of jobs are highly speculative. I am not responsible for what is proposed or suggested in the public arena through the media. I am reporting to him on the basis of a meeting that I held yesterday with the administrator and the chief officials of the board of the hospital and they are very positive and very optimistic.

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

MR. D. JAMES WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Honourable Minister of Finance for tabling the information on government insurance today.

My question is for the Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce. Would the Minister of Industry and Commerce be prepared to table the proposal bids received for the MS Lord Selkirk and its related assets?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce.

MR. BANMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, I think we mentioned before that the highest bid was received and that's the one that was accepted.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The Minister did take the

question as notice before and had not answered the House on it. Can the Minister explain to the House why the government would be prepared to make tendered bids available to members of the House in one area and not in another area?

MR. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, that's a matter of policy.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure whether the question should go to the same Minister or to the Acting Premier. When can the House expect to hear what the government's policy is on making public tendered bids?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. A. R. (Pete) ADAM: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. I would like to ask him when does he intend to introduce legislation on the proposed beef checkoff?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JAMES E. DOWNEY (Arthur): Mr. Speaker, soon.

MR. ADAM: A supplementary to the same Minister. Is the Minister waiting for seeding to get under way in order that farmers would not be in a position to come into Winnipeg and oppose the bill in Law Amendments?

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

MR. CHERNIACK: I just want to follow up the response by the Minister of Industry and Commerce dealing with the production of the bids in connection with the Lord Selkirk. I would have to look through Hansard if he doesn't remember but I have the impression that he undertook to table in the House copies of all the information and specifications made available to prospective purchasers of the Lord Selkirk. Now, if he doesn't remember it, if he wants me to find it in Hansard, I'll look but he may recall that he did give that undertaking.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce.

MR. BANMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think the Member for St. Johns' memory is right, if mine is right, that I promised to file the documents dealing with the MS Lord Selkirk and dealing with the Lady Selkirk, the material that was presented to prospective people who wanted to bid. But as far as the question from the Member for St. Vital, as I understand it, is that he would like to know what all the offers were and that's something that I'm not prepared to give him.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Speaker, for the bids I suppose we'll file an Order for Return and have a debate on it, but the information that the Minister promised to present, can we assume that it will come? It has not yet been filed has it?

MR. BANMAN: No.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, then I would hope that it will come. I don't know, now it's a race between the Jarmoc information and this other, so maybe there's a challenge for the Minister.

While I'm on my feet, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, and point out to him that his Acting Minister and the First Minister accepted some questions on his behalf which I asked for certain information. I'm wondering if he would ascertain what they are and let us know when the information will be available.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could indicate which particular ones. There are a number of questions regarding the sales tax which I think will be dealt with probably openly under Bill 14 which we'll be into in a day and maybe he could indicate what other questions it was in particular.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to go back and check on whether there are more than the two that remain in my mind. One is the information as to the number of pensioners, the proportion of pensioners, in various income groups who had their education tax paid in full under the existing law, that is the law that was in existence previous to the proposed changes.

The other question was a much more pressing one and that was a report on the status as of November 1 and the present status of the various loan acts which were not drawn down and which were not allocated but are still available for Capital Supply. Those are the two that I recall as being of some urgency. I'll have to look to see if there are any others outstanding.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the senior citizens, I know that that information was given to the House, unless there is something different than the way it was posed by the Member for St. Johns. When the Budget Speech was made and there was some debate on it, it was indicated at that time that as far as accommodation was concerned, that those under rental accommodation there were 95 percent, roughly, approximately, who were covered entirely in their school taxes, property taxes, as a result of school taxes, and about 57 percent of those that lived in their own homes. With the changes that we made, it moved the number in their own homes from about 57 percent to roughly 75 percent.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns have a question of clarification?

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, just in clarification, the Acting Minister of Finance gave more information than the Minister of Finance appears to know. He gave information broken down as to income groups and percentages that are expected to benefit under the new legislation. What I asked for was a comparable statement of those who did benefit under the old legislation and that has not yet been produced although it was promised that it would be. The reason is obvious: I suspect that very few people in low income groups have received any benefit from this proposal but let's get the facts.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day. The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill No. 2.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS — SECOND READING

BILL NO. 2 — AN ACT TO AMEND THE DISTRESS ACT

MR. SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Attorney-General, Bill No. 2, An Act to amend The Distress Act. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I am proposing to deal with The Distress Act and I must express my distress, my personal distress, at the failure to hear a response to my question, but I think that my last question is one where my distress will be relieved when the Minister of Finance does produce the information which I believe he has available and can do.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. The Honourable Government House Leader on a point of order.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The honourable member is supposed to be discussing Bill No. 2 and what he's attempting to do now is a continuation of the Question Period. I wish you'd call him to order, Sir.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the intervention of the House Leader and point out to him that Bill No. 2 is An Act to amend The Distress Act and I just thought I'd elaborate on my aspect of The Distress Act.

But, Mr. Speaker, having made the statement I did —(Interjection)— and if the Honourable the House Leader would learn to keep his seat and be less petulant, we'd get along much more quickly on the business before us.

MR. JORGENSEN: Well why don't you observe the rules?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

MR. JORGENSEN: Rules are there for a purpose; why don't you observe them?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I would hope that we could carry on debate in a gentlemanly manner in this Chamber. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, may I say to the Honourable the House Leader, that it's in observing him in the last eight years that I've benefited from his knowledge of the rules.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. May I ask the Honourable Member for St. Johns to stick to the subject matter of the Bill.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I have another point that deals with what went on during the debate

under Bill No. 2. I listened to the Honourable, the Member for Selkirk, I thought I listened very carefully to what he said in order to decide whether or not I wished to add to his comments, but I was brought up short, Mr. Speaker, when you intervened. You intervened at the end of the Member for Selkirk and suggested that he may have been using unparliamentary language. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I've just read the Hansard which came through, and I can't find the slightest support for that suggestion. I'm wondering whether you have dealt with this already, since you have suggested there's that possibility. Possibly this would be a time to ascertain whether, Mr. Speaker, you have already dealt with that, or whether you're not going to, in which case I'll go on.

MR. SPEAKER: May I point out to the Honourable Member for St. Johns that it is highly improper for any member to direct a direct question to the Speaker of the Chamber. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now know that having had an opportunity to examine the record, and not made a comment, that the reason I adjourned debate from yesterday to today has proven that there's no criticism available yet to the Member for Selkirk.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw to the attention of the Attorney-General, that I made some inquiries from Legislative Counsel to ascertain what precedent there is for the Executive Council to become involved in determining fees to be set by one private party and payable by another private party, and Legislative Counsel was not able at the time to draw my attention to any precedent. Since I'm not aware of any such precedent, I am rather concerned that the Cabinet of the Conservative Party wants to get involved in private decisions, private discussion, in camera confidential discussions dealing with the tariff of fees chargeable by a bailiff to a person on whom distress is launched. I must say that I'm very apprehensive about that because we all as politicians are subject to lobbies, lobby pressure, lobby groups, and I don't think that the Cabinet should expose itself to being involved with the possibilities of a lobby about a matter which is not a matter that affects taxpayers' dollars, or affects government policy, or affects the administration of government. And for it to arrogate to itself that right I think is dangerous and, therefore, I have very very serious concerns about this proposal.

The Member for Selkirk, justifiably I think, indicated that he thought that it was a pretty peculiar set of priorities that the government has that its first bit of legislation should deal with this distress matter which is really of the most remote concern I should think of the people of Manitoba. As a matter of fact, I think it should have been a Private Member's Bill, if anything, because it affected a Private Member's income.

Be that as it may, I'm not suggesting that a schedule like this must necessarily be in an Act. I don't think it has to be debated in the Legislature, but I would rather it was debated in the Legislature than debated in the confines of the confidentiality of the Cabinet room. And that's where I think it's wrong, and that's where I think it's dangerous. Mr. Speaker, I think that there are various delegated bodies to whom this responsibility can be given where they will have an open discussion and an open hearing, if necessary.

I suppose the most obvious may well be the Public Utilities Board, but if the member wants to set up any other kind of a Board that I think would be a much more acceptable proposal. Look at the concern for the price charged for milk, a matter that's tentatively receiving public attention and public review, and the same applies to rates charged by various utilities. Well, if in this case — and I understand the reason that a fee should be established rather than permit the bailiffs to charge what they want to charge, since they are charging the fee not to a person who sought out the bailiff but rather to a person who's probably been running away or not wanting to see the bailiff — it's a very serious concern that Cabinet in private should be making the decisions that the Attorney-General wants to refer to it. On that basis I think, as far as I can see, it is a dangerous precedent. If I knew of another precedent, then of course I might change my mind.

I spoke to the two senior Legislative Counsel and neither could come up with, in their recollection, a similar right which is now being requested by the Attorney-General on behalf of his Cabinet. I would hope that he would explain to us and justify his reasons for taking away from public debate and public concern a matter and referring it directly to the confines of the secret room of the Cabinet.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be very brief. The Member for St. Johns has set forth the main objection to him is a matter of precedent. But, Mr. Speaker, we have seen several precedents in policies and in intended legislation where this group that is currently in government in the Province of Manitoba intends to have as much as possible done by edict of the Executive Council, and my remarks just to underline that, you know the Minister of Education in his tightening up of the educational system to give more direction to the Cabinet on educational philosophy, policy, dollars, programs, curriculum and all the rest of it, is comparable in this regard. But, Mr. Speaker, the essence of what I would say — I'll be very brief — is it's just bad law.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I enter this brief discussion, I won't even call it a debate, on the insistence of my / friend the Member for St. Johns who indicates that there was one point that he thought was

very pertinent to his position which he wanted to bring to the attention of the Attorney-General, and I think that it is. I think that the Member for St. Johns indicated the dissatisfaction of having this done by regulation while at the same time saying that there is a possibility that it's not a matter that should have to come to the Legislature every time it's changed, and suggested as a possible alternative, the Public Utilities Board. The Member for St. Johns has asked me to convey to the Minister that perhaps it's an appropriate matter for the rules of court which are done by the judges first, and then I think are passed by regulation, by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. I believe that many of the other fees which are dealt with by court, and although this is a distress which need not be a judicial proceeding, still there are judicial distresses. And it seems to me that perhaps if it was done in the same way as the rules of court fees it would satisfy the Minister who wants some flexibility and also alleviate some of the concerns that have been raised by members who participated in this debate, who feel that it's not something that should be subject to Cabinet action on the basis of representation by one particular group.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General will be closing debate. The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. GERALD W.J. MERCIER (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I first of all want to make it very clear that I don't feel I have to justify any bill before this House to a member of the Legislature, specifically the Member for St. Johns, who in his particular comments, attempts to make suggestions about the conduct of another member of this House.

I think, Mr. Speaker, those remarks are demeaning and lower very substantially the level of debate in this House.

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

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, on a matter of privilege, I am not aware that I made any adverse comments about any member of the House. I would like him to name whom I named and in what manner I did. The only person I alluded to was the House Leader, to whom I gave credit for having taught me how to deal with the Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Johns suggested very clearly that this bill should have been a Private Member's Bill brought in by the Member for Wolseley, because it is to his personal advantage.

MR. CHERNIACK: I never referred to the Member for Wolseley directly or by indirection. I said that it is not a matter that I thought should be for the Attorney-General but could possibly have been Private Member's. I never referred to the Member for Wolseley, and I would ask the Attorney-General if his memory is poor to check the record and then to apologize tomorrow for suggesting that I made such insinuations or allegations.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Johns made insinuations throughout all of his remarks, but I would be very happy to look at Hansard tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, the suggestion has been made by the Member for St. Johns that this is an unique situation. I point out to him that in Alberta, under their Seizures Act, the tariff of fees is prescribed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, the Cabinet, and in the same way in Ontario those fees are determined by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is not something new for this kind of procedure for the setting of these kinds of fees. I wish to indicate there has been no proposal laid before me for any increase in fees at this time. But fees, Mr. Speaker, under The Law Fees Act, under the Real Property Act are set by Order-in-Council. They have been increased substantially through the past eight years by the previous government.

Mr. Speaker, those fees, for example, were revenue producing in the Attorney-General's Department. And they worry, Mr. Speaker, about the the poor judgment debtor, Mr. Speaker, in many cases those fees in the Attorney-General's Department were increased substantially for revenue producing purposes and were a burden upon people, for example, who purchased houses for the first time, to have substantial fees paid at the Land Titles Office for registration of their transfers.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, they cried about the cost of housing. They cried about the cost of housing when the largest burden of those fees was on young people buying their first home.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated, there is no new schedule of fees that has been laid before me which would be passed as a result of changing this from a fee set by statute to a fee fixed by regulation. So let's remember the kind of matters that can be dealt with by distress and that are dealt with by distress.

In the City of Winnipeg arrears of taxes can be collected under The Distress Act. Mr. Speaker, is it reasonable that the fees that are set out in the current Act are the only costs that can be recoverable by municipalities for the collection of arrears of taxes? The costs, Mr. Speaker, that are borne by the City of Winnipeg in attempting to collect those costs can't be collected against the judgment debtor, and become a burden on the taxpayer of the City of Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker. So it's only fair, Mr.

Speaker, it's only fair that they should be entitled to collect a greater proportion of costs if they can.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's very fair and rational and reasonable to be able to set these fees by regulation rather than in statute. It was a procedure that was very clearly adopted and carried on by the previous government in many, many areas. Mr. Speaker, we're not dealing here with an increase in fees; we are dealing here with a change in the manner in which fees are to be set.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

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

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, with the Honourable Member for Radisson in the Chair for the Department of Education and the Honourable Member for Crescentwood in the Chair for the Department of Highways.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

SUPPLY — HIGHWAYS

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Warren Steen: Perhaps some of you have been informed that we've had a lot of discussion as to how to deal with this particular Minister and his salary; whether we would deal with it under Highways, and whether we would let Autopac discussion be brought into the subject, or Public Works as well. It's been decided, or recommended to me, that we deal with the Minister of Highways' Salary now, as Highways and the Minister responsible for the Public Insurance Corporation, and then when we go into Public Works there is an item for Salary even though there are no dollars there, that we will still permit the Committee members the usual comments under the Minister's Salary, even though there are no dollar figures there, and it's been agreed upon by the two House Leaders.

The Member for Ste. Rose on the Minister of Highways' Salary.

MR. A.R. (Pete) ADAM: . . . The Minister of Highways' salary, and I intend to make some comments on the Manitoba Insurance, The Department on Public Works, that's not my prerogative; we have a member of our caucus who will be leading off on that particular issue.

I want to thank the Minister for attempting to answer our questions on the Estimates of Highways. I do want to say, however, that we do have to question what we believe is some misleading of the public in regard to the Highways budget when it was first introduced, and in particular the comments made by the Minister of Finance. I know that the Minister has attempted to answer all our questions to the best of his ability, and which I say was fairly well done, except with one exception, and that is, as to why the carry-overs on Capital were allowed to lapse in one department and not in another department. That, of course, is a broader question.

We do have to question why the Minister of Finance would make the following statements when he issued the News Service Bulletin, and I quote, "Highways spending as shown in the printed Estimates is up by one-third, from \$120 million in 1977-78 to \$160.5 million in 1978-79, a \$40.5 million increase. Within this departmental figure, Highways and Road Construction, up from \$41.5 million to \$75 million accounts for the bulk of the increase. Mr. Craik noted that last year, some Capital" — and I emphasize that he puts in the word "some", "Capital carry-over from previous years was expended as well." He indicates that it wasn't all spent by his news bulletin here. We find it odd that nothing was done to change the impression that was given to the people of Manitoba in that there was a very extensive increase in the Highways Budget. Now, it took three weeks, on April 21st, before the Minister of Highways — I believe because there was some backlash throughout the province as to why there was such a ballooning of the Highways Department Estimates when we were cutting back in practically every other department — the Minister then had to come out on April 21st to indicate and to try and get the heat off, take the heat off, in that the expenditures were, after all, not one-third or higher than the previous year but rather only about a 7 percent increase.

Well, I believe the Minister was correct because after giving an in-depth look at the Estimates, we find that in order to maintain, in my opinion, the same amount of work as had taken place in 1977-78, that it would have required approximately \$14 million more in order to maintain the same level of construction. This is what it appears to me. So in that respect, I do offer, in a good spirit and I'm not mad at the Minister or angry in any way, I say that we are critical in this area for the way this was handled. I believe the impression in the beginning was to give the impression that there was going to be a lot of roadwork undertaken this year, and then later on when the heat came on there was a change of heart, we had to start making excuses because it wasn't as good as what had been portrayed by the Minister of Finance. I know that my colleagues will be questioning the Minister of Finance when we get into Finance in regard to what really was happening and I don't think that the Estimates did portray a true picture of really what was going on in that department.

I just want to, Mr. Chairman, perhaps make a few comments before I conclude. I don't want to labour the point but I am concerned about what is happening insofar as the Manitoba Insurance Corporation and Autopac is concerned. I'm concerned that the two cents a gallon tax was removed and transferred into General Revenues. I feel that that tax should have been — (Interjection) — Well, it

wasn't a tax but it was a gas tax, the tax was a purpose for a premium to allow situations where you would have two identical vehicles, where one driver would maybe drive 50,000 miles a year and another similar vehicle with the same premium would drive maybe 10,000 miles a year and I think the two cents a gallon would overcome that higher risk of the vehicle that would be driving the 50,000 miles. I think that is the intent of the way that was set up. I believe that if you were going to divert, I believe, approximately \$7 million from revenues, of the Corporation, from Autopac, that should have been either given back to those who are paying the premiums, in the way of lower premiums for their automobile insurance, or that they should have been given a higher coverage on their automobiles, or on the injuries, or death benefits, or whatever. I believe that the premium rates will increase because of this, and this has already been indicated by the manager of Autopac, that this will no doubt be required before too long. Therefore, we have to question what is happening in this area. I am concerned that the next step that the Minister is going to take is to remove the insurance premiums from driver licenses, and if he does that, well then, it will again remove considerable revenues to Autopac and will necessitate, without any doubt, an increase in premiums, which will then allow the private insurance companies to come in and compete with Autopac, because at the present time there is no doubt that they can't compete under this arrangement.

I know that —(Interjection)— No, it's part of the premium, so that premium will have to be transferred on to the premium. It is a premium, it's no subsidy. The Member for St. James is trying to leave the impression that that portion of the insurance premium that's on the drivers' licenses is a subsidy. Well, that's all hogwash — we don't accept that, and I would ask the Member for Minnedosa if he wants to talk, that he should put his name in, and when I'm finished, then he can go ahead.

But, Sir, in event, and I expect that it will happen — I hope it doesn't, but in event that the Minister does remove the insurance premium from drivers' licenses, that will be the indication, that the intent is to undermine the public auto insurance, and I think that would be a sad day for Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. AMUEL USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I wanted to deal with the question of the Auto Insurance Program and this is rather awkward, Mr. Chairman, because we're now on the question of the Minister's salary, and therefore there isn't the opportunity to solicit information in the way that we would if we were in Committee dealing with the questions item by item . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Highways.

MR. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I can interject at this point to remind the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, as well as all other Committee members, that opportunity to examine in detail the operations of MPIC will, of course, be given to them when MPIC reports to the Committee of the Legislature, as do the other Crown corporations, Telephones and Hydro. I just make that comment .

MR. USKIW: Well Mr. Chairman, the awkward part of it is, that that comes after we vote for the Minister's salary, and therefore it might not be possible to reduce the Minister's salary if we are not happy with the way in which the Autopac program is being administered . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Highways on a point of order.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, I again want to make it very clear that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation does not pay my salary.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the point that was made by the Member for Ste. Rose to do with the 2 cents a gallon gasoline levy, that was a levy for insurance purposes. The intent of the government, as I understand it, is to introduce legislation that would transfer those moneys over to consolidated revenues, in essence imposing new taxation on the Province of Manitoba and the people of Manitoba, while not at the same time, reducing the obligations, financial obligations of the automobile driver. So it's an added load, it's an added load, Mr. Chairman, of several million dollars, and it's done in such a way as to — at least, it appears to be done in such a way as not to be noticed, or at least the hope was that it wouldn't be noticeable, in the way this money will be transferred over.

If the Minister is moving in that direction, on the basis of a recommendation of the Board of Autopac, that they in effect wanted a reduction of revenue, that their premiums were too high, that they were to be generating surpluses in excess of what they wanted or required, then that is fine, then let's lay the cards on the table and let's indicate that, Mr. Chairman, if that's a recommendation from the Board of the Public Insurance Corporation. If, on the other hand, we are taking away from them several million dollars in a the given year, only to add several million dollars of additional premium load, or more, in the following year, then, of course, it is not an honest presentation on the part of the government in terms of the actuarial position of Autopac and certainly not entirely honest with respect to the perception of the people of Manitoba, on the fact that there are new taxes being imposed by way of a 2-cent levy on gasoline on motorists in Manitoba.

I would like to know, if the Minister has an opportunity to respond today, just what the intent is, and is the transfer of several million dollars based on a recommendation by the Autopac Board on the assumption that they had been building up surpluses in excess of what they wanted to hedge future

inflationary pressures and the need for raising premiums. This is a very important and critical part of this whole discussion, Mr. Chairman, so I'm going to leave it at that point, and hope that the Minister is in a position to respond to it.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, responding firstly to the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, I can't help him with difficulties that he and his party find themselves in with respect to having first of all gone on public record by statements by the Leader of their party when it was opportune to do so, in front of demonstrating university students, for instance, to decry the fact that Highways was spending some money on roads. I find it somewhat ironic that he is now telling me that we are not spending enough money on roads; that's a political problem that honourable members opposite will have and will have to deal with in their own way.

But I think more specifically, his comments relating to the Autopac and MPIC operations in general, as along with those comments made by the Member for Lac du Bonnet, I would want to make it very clear that the imposition of the two cent premium on gasoline sales, and with that revenue being directed towards the Crown Corporation involved in insurance in the province, there never was a decision to make or not to make by the board of MPIC. That is a taxing decision made by the Department of Finance, it's the Department of Finance and the government of the day, as was it the actions of the government of the day when the two cent a gallon tax was imposed, or premium was imposed. I won't quibble with the use of the word. That imposition was objected to strenuously by the members of the then opposition for various specific reasons: (a) that it tended to cloud the true and accurate picture of what insurance costs actually were in this province and secondly, that it was not, as the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose would like to point out, a means of levelling out the heavy user towards the lighter user in terms of contribution to his insurance premium.

We do that fairly well through the various classes of insurances, in the first place that the Crown Corporation offers but, more importantly, it's recognized with the manner and way in which vehicles get registered in this province, with the heavy semi-trailer truck units paying many thousands of dollars for the privilege of driving on and using the highways facilities in this province. The graduating steps of the private pleasure use vehicle to the commercial driver to the heavy tandem or 70 foot rig drivers; there's a very wide range in the licencing and the registration of those vehicles which were designed in principle to recognize the fact that the more you use the more you pay kind of principle.

Now, with respect to the philosophical difficulty that I've had with the two cent impost on gasoline, I have always found it very difficult that my 82-year old mother living in a senior citizens home on a fixed income should in any way contribute to subsidizing the auto insurance rate for Jim Richardson. I don't think that a senior citizen couple living in Wabowden or Thompson should have to pay more for their bread, for their butter, and for the clothes that they require so that Mr. Jim Richardson can afford a cheaper insurance policy. These are people that have never driven a car; never intend to drive a car. In a province like Manitoba freight is a major component in the cost of living in this province. Every pound of butter, every quart of milk, every bit of goods, particularly in such remote areas as the northern communities, are trucked up there by one means or another. The cost of operating that unit, the cost of transporting freight of any kind, any goods and services, is added on to the consumer who has to use them, and to the consumer who has never had a car, who never intends to drive a car is, in an indirect way, being asked to provide this revenue for an insurance scheme of which they are no beneficiaries, of which they are no beneficiaries.

Now, I admit that it's a slight degree but my honourable friends like to argue on matters of principle of this nature and I have no difficulty in arguing them back on this particular score. The question of not having transferred the two cent back to the end user is one that might have been considered by the government had the delivery of the retail selling of gasoline been sold in a more regulated manner in the province, whereby through either a government regulatory board or body we can impose and ensure, in fact, that the two cent reduction would in fact be passed on to the consumer, that might have been considered. The attitude of the government was that in reviewing the general tax structure for gasolines of all provinces in Canada — with the notable exception of Alberta — that our tax structure, even with the rise of two cents making it from 17 cents to 19 cents, is within the lower range of gasoline taxes imposed in other jurisdictions. They range in general from 18 cents to 22 cents. Our tax situation on gasoline at the moment is 19 cents.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I don't feel that there is any difficulty in explaining and accepting the correctness of reducing that particular source of revenue from the corporation. I am advised by the chairman and the board that they expect no serious consequences in terms of imposition of, or reconsideration of having to increase premium rates as a result of this move. I am pleased — and the members are aware of this — that the corporation has recorded a good operating year. That kind of detailed information can be solicited directly from the chairman of the board when he appears before the committee — and no doubt will. This change forecasts no other changes about to be made with respect to the corporation. The statement has been made by myself in the House that the government to date has not, and will only after very careful deliberation, consider any changes in the operations of the Crown corporation that's presently charged with the responsibility of delivering insurance to Manitobans.

That changes can and will take place is inevitable. The insurance business, like any other business, is a constantly changing operation. Different jurisdictions have entered into different kinds of schemes. I think it would only be prudent on the part of the government and the corporation to constantly examine their position and their delivery of service. Basic questions are raised from time

to time as to whether or not the government or the Crown agency should be in a particular aspect of insurance coverage, whether some parts of the present package program should or should not be altered. The question that provides some difficulty for the management at Autopac at the moment is the compulsory purchase of collision insurance on particularly vehicles with some age that are, in most instances, under valued. Then if it comes to repair work, in other words, a vehicle that is worth \$200 or \$300 on the market, we compel them to buy a degree of collision insurance which, when an actual accident happens, it simply doesn't pay to fix up and the vehicle is discarded. There are possible changes that would be undertaken in concert with the recommendations from the board but I want to assure the committee that at the moment none are being contemplated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I apparently entered the meeting room in a very opportune time in order to hear my friend, the Minister of Highways, expound on some of his philosophical principles. I am very concerned with his 82 year old mother who doesn't want to pay insurance premiums and who doesn't drive a car.

I wonder, Mr. Chairman, and the Minister has given me no reason to believe that he has done so, whether he has examined whether the freight rates go up with the gas tax but don't go up with an increased automobile insurance premium. The fact is, Mr. Chairman, that exactly the same applies in terms of a freight company figuring its costs and charging its rates, when they pay insurance premiums, as when they pay gas premiums. And I have had occasion to examine it, Mr. Chairman. I've examined it with one of the major trucking companies in the Province of Manitoba, and I'd be prepared, if my honourable friend wishes me to give the name, to give it to him, and he said the that the most efficient form, and the cheapest, and the one that would cost his grandmother the least money in terms of freight rates, if all the insurance was paid for as part of the gas tax, that it would immediately eliminate \$3 million worth of administration, and if my honourable friends are interested in restraint, there would be no such thing as the purchase of policies, there would be no such thing as the line-ups, there would be no problems with writing the insurance. The only people that you would have to deal with is the people who have been involved in accidents, which comes out, Mr. Chairman, to between 5 and 10 percent of the population of the Province of Manitoba, whom you would have to rate, and have special provisions for, because you would have to deal with those things.

But for the large majority of drivers it would provide an automatic financing system, that instead of paying \$200 a year for automobile insurance, you would pay 20 cents a gallon, every time you bought a gallon of gas, and that gallonage over the years would be less than you are now paying for automobile insurance. For the total province it would certainly be less, because the entire administrative costs would be wiped out. And here is a government that is interested in restraint, interested in laying off people, interested in having things run more efficiently. What the previous government was doing was starting in a direction of having more paid on gasoline premiums, and they were premiums — it was not a subsidy, it was not charged to my honourable friend's grandmother and any different way that what was charged to my honourable friend's grandmother, was the insurance premium, that the same truckers were paying. And to suggest that that is the reason, Mr. Chairman — I can see a reason for my honourable friends to move in the direction that they are moving. They say that they want the people of Manitoba — who they say are ignorant — to be clear about what they are paying in automobile insurance premiums. We do not say that the people of Manitoba are ignorant; we say that the people of Manitoba knew that they were paying the premium that they had to send in with their registration; that there was part put on the license fee and that there was 2-cents a gallon in taxes. And my understanding, and my discussions with the people of this province, is that they were not stupid, and they don't need the Conservative party to educate them, and that they knew that that's what they were paying.

Now, my honourable friend says that we wanted the people to know what they were paying, and we believe, that is, we, the Conservative party, think that the people are ignorant and unless we charged it in premiums, they didn't understand it. We disagree with that, Mr. Chairman, and we made it a position — and in my view, it was our policy to gradually have the premiums changed with a greater emphasis on gasoline taxes and a lesser emphasis on the premium that you pay into the Motor Vehicle Branch, with the view to having the most efficient, the least costly, and the least expensive to your grandmother, premium in Canada. And it would have been — (Interjection) — It's his mother? I'm sorry. The least expensive premium in Canada, because, Mr. Chairman, what everybody can see, and if the automobile insurance companies could do it, if they had the public power behind them to say that premiums will be paid by gas and we will get our share in accordance with the number of people who apply for insurance between us, they would do it. The reason that they can't do it is that they are not set up for either the taking in, or distribution of public revenues. And that's why public automobile insurance is such an efficient system of operation.

Now, Mr. Chairman, therefore, on this point, on the question that the Conservative party says that the people of the Province of Manitoba are ignorant and didn't know what they were paying, and we say that they were not ignorant, that they knew what they were paying, and that they knew it was more efficient, we will fight that out when the time comes.

There was a second point that my honourable friend made which he called a philosophical point, which just escapes me for a moment, when I was dealing with the question of automobile insurance. And I wonder — (Interjection) — No, he won't help me. There was a second point, which was a philosophical point, Mr. Chairman, which escapes me, which will come back, and then I will ask for your attention. — (Interjection) — No, it had not to do, Mr. Chairman, with the gasoline insurance. It

had to do with —(Interjection)— Pardon me? I'll think about it, and then I'll come back to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item 1.(a)—pass — The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: The Minister did not indicate to us just what the position of Autopac is going to be with respect to its revenues, and whether or not it is going to be in a position of having to raise a direct premium levy to replace the loss of revenue. That's the big question. Because in essence, if they end up doing that, Mr. Chairman, it will be not the actuarial position of Autopac that has caused them to do that, but the action and intervention of the Crown, by bleeding off several millions of dollars from that corporation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have now recovered my recollection. The Minister was giving his rationale, his rationale for charging 2-cents a gallon for every Manitoban who goes up to the pump, in order to make it possible for millionaires to inherit money without paying any estate taxes. His rationale, Mr. Chairman, was a condemnation of the free enterprise system. What he said is that the free enterprise system doesn't work, that competition will not result in a reduced price. He says we are now paying an amount for gas which includes 2 cents in taxes, which were a premium to Autopac. If we took that 2 cents off, the free enterprisers, who are determined to give us the lowest price in accordance with competition, would not take it off their price. Now, he said that. I don't believe it. I think that to the extent that my honourable friend is talking, that free enterprise did work; it's worked in the gas wars that we've seen in the Province of Manitoba, and would work particularly with regard to this 2 cents. —(Interjection)— Well, he doesn't trust them, Mr. Chairman, because he says that competition and free enterprise doesn't work.

You know, I happen to think that in this area, that it would work. That the companies, if the government took 2 cents off, that the companies would be in an unconscionable position to add 2 cents. So what we have is that in order to save the Richardson family, or the MacAulay family, or other families — my learned friend was the one who referred to them — in order that they be able to — I mean, they are in trouble; they're liable to inherit a million dollars, and this is a situation that cries out for relief. The people of Manitoba have gotten eight million in estate taxes; they have given it up, and the Conservative government needs \$8 million. So there are two cents a gallon on gas taxes which equal \$8 million and every time a citizen of the Province of Manitoba pays that two cents . . . My honourable friend's mother, as well as everybody else in this province, is paying two cents in order to enable these families that my honourable friend has referred to to have their estates untaxed, to receive this . . . you know, this is the work ethic, that a person who has done nothing all his life, who has been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, will receive a benefit of \$2 million and not have to pay any tax on it. Now this is the Conservative encouragement of the work ethic. This is how you encourage people to work diligently and to be rewarded for terrible efforts and we are the ones who will pay every time we pay two cents a gallon.

Now my honourable friend says that if I gave that away the gas companies, those terrible monopolized, non-competitive, cartel gas companies, we're going to take it. If we had a system of not enabling them to take it, maybe we would think about it. I say, Mr. Chairman, two things. One, that they couldn't take it with impunity, that it would be unconscionable for them to take money which they never said reflected the price of gas previously and, secondly, there is a way and it was used by the government. The government went, Mr. Chairman, when the government of Ontario did it first, froze the price of gas, and we asked the Public Utility Board in the Province of Manitoba to freeze the price of gas; the price of gas was frozen; it did work and the people of Manitoba got that savings. If my honourable friend says that there is needed a mechanism; the mechanism is there and it worked. So he could have given the two cents back to his mother and to all of us who have been asked to subsidize bequests to millionaires and frozen the price of gas at the figure that it was then being sold at to make sure, what he says, that what these greedy free-enterprise gasoline companies would have taken, would not be taken by them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Highways.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I will resist the temptation to bring into the debate at this time obviously those matters that are of great concern to the Honourable Member for Inkster. I am dismayed, the fact of the depth to which his party and his leader were prepared to stoop during the course of the election, when I realize the depth of feeling that the Honourable Member for Inkster obviously has on the subject matter of estate taxes and the helping out of the wealthy in this country, that during the course of the election in Gimli, Mr. Schreyer indicated that they would certainly have to consider doing precisely what the Conservative administration did in the short subsequent months.

I could also take some time of the committee and remind him that his socialist friends in Saskatchewan under the capable leadership of Mr. Blakeney did precisely the same thing. It's an indicator, I believe, that while the rhetoric sounds good, the true fact of the matter is, of course, that it is not a question of doing something for a group of people that are already well endowed and well protected in our society. It's a question of maintenance of family farms; it's a question of maintenance of jobs; it's a question of maintenance of job opportunities in this province in competition with other jurisdictions, ten other jurisdictions in the case of the federated state of Canada. It's a simple

pragmatic recognition of this fact, recognizing that under progressive tax measures that we have, generally speaking, in this country, those with wealth do contribute, perhaps not to the honourable member's liking in terms of fairness or total share, but they certainly, in Canada, as in other jurisdictions, are taxed in a progressive way that does, to some extent, give some recognition to the line that my honourable friend is so deeply impressed with that was uttered by one Karl Marx, I believe, some years ago — you know, from those with the ability to . . . to those with the ability . . . Well, he would know it better. .

MR. GREEN: From each as to their ability; to each as to their needs.

MR. ENNS: Yes, from each as to their ability; to each as to their needs. I suggest to you that the taxation system has . . .

MR. GREEN: It's more like Jesus Christ actually.

MR. ENNS: . . . has that built-in factor.

Well, Mr. Chairman, the honourable member presumes too much, too. The Conservative Party has never said to the people of Manitoba we're stupid or ignorant and let the record show that it was the Honourable Member for Inkster that is saying that. Let the record also show that the Honourable Member for Inkster is now talking about massive increases to the tax as an alternate means of providing the necessary revenues for the insurance program in the province; let the record also show that he is prepared to obviously vulcanize the province to an extent that would be unacceptable by most thinking Manitobans. The difficulties, the bureaucracy, the people . . . There's no savings involved here because the Motor Vehicle Branch does a great deal more than simply provide the registration for Autopac. It's involved in a whole host of regulatory actions that are required in terms of conducting reasonably safe and appropriate means of vehicles using our highways. There would be, therefore, no enforced or ensured savings of people, all I could see is a massive new bureaucracy building up because, after all, how do we deal with our tourist people that come up? How do we deal with people from sister jurisdictions that aren't in the same scheme? We would have double pricing of gasoline, rebate systems, going to all corners of the North American continent at least, as well as to countries abroad. Any visitor coming into the province and wishing to use and drive on our roadways that is, however, not covered by our insurance scheme, there would have to be the necessary governmental machinery set up to deal with the question. All of these things, of course, are of little or no concern to the Honourable Member for Inkster because, as the great centralizer that he is, he feels that all these things could be made so much simpler if we simply let government do everything.

Well, Mr. Chairman, we have strayed a long way from the immediate concerns of Autopac. I again indicate to the honourable members of the committee that they will have the opportunity to speak — and I encourage them to speak — along these lines with the members or the chairman of the corporation when he appears before the committee and that opportunity will, of course, afford an interesting debate on the subject matter.

On the other matter, the direction of the two cent levy to the Consolidated Revenue, that was a matter that was taken in keeping with a review of the level of taxation presently imposed, in concert with what level of taxation was being imposed in other jurisdictions. The same was done in this budget. We looked at the level of taxes imposed on such items as tobacco and liquor. These are items that the Department of Finance and those charged with the immediate responsibility of putting together the necessary revenue sources to operate the many programs that modern government needs to operate that are necessary. The level of taxation on gasoline in the province is, I repeat, at the lower end of the scale comparable to other provinces, with the one notable exception, of course, and Alberta being that exception.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Inkster, then the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was almost afraid that I wasn't going to draw my honourable friend into this discussion but I am very happy that I did. I think I will be able to be brief in dealing with the question of estate taxes.

First of all, the member is misquoting the previous First Minister. The Leader of the Opposition said that if we were the only one, we would have to reconsider the situation. That if it suddenly became the case that Ontario — Tory Ontario, which has every respect for wealth as Tory Manitoba does — went out of it, and Quebec went out of it, that certainly the subject would have to be considered.

I can tell my honourable friend that I would not be unhappy to be the only one. If he is concerned with my particular position, I say to you that the estate tax is a legitimate tax, it is an equitable tax, and that Manitoba should have an estate tax. And if other provinces did not follow us, then we would show leadership in that connection, and it would not hurt us financially. It would not hurt us financially. The amount of investment that would be necessary could be generated by the people of this province.

Let there be no mistake about it, Mr. Chairman, the previous Conservative Government said that we couldn't have a pulp mill in this province because we couldn't generate the revenue and that we needed private people to come in and do it. And private people came in to do it, with whose revenue? Our revenue, \$92 million worth. And the public of this province is wealthy enough to generate the wealth that's in this province. And if people who are in the position of having been amongst those who earned a great deal — and I have no objection to that; I am trying to earn as much as I can — and then

leave property to inheritors, that is a legitimate form of tax. So legitimate, Mr. Speaker, that every state in the United States — in the Marxist, Bolshevik, from each as to his ability, to each as to their needs — the country of the United States of America, the richest country in the world, every state save one has an estate tax and then, piled on top of that, a federal estate tax.

So, I do not have to go to communist countries or to communist theory for an evaluation of the equitability of estate taxes. I would be prepared to show the leadership in that area, Mr. Chairman. That's a personal opinion, but nevertheless I would do it and the Province of Manitoba would not suffer.

With regard to the two cents on gas, Mr. Chairman, there are numerous administrative problems with regard to the issuance of policies to people and to the registration under Autopac. I suggest to the Minister that if he asked the administration how much they would save if they eliminated the premium collection and did it on the basis of gas, that we would be talking about a figure of something like \$3 million, which is three percent, almost, of existing expenditure — maybe five percent.

Now, that's a big saving, Mr. Chairman. That's one-third of the entire hoo-hah that we got from the Great-West Life and the Restraint Program, which was \$10 million. That's one-third of that. Now, that's not entirely fair, because I'm taking \$3 million over a year and \$10 million over the balance of the period when these geniuses from Great-West Life, who can't balance their own expenditures, who can't keep them from rising 300 percent over a period of eight years, came to try to tell the public how to do it and weren't very damn successful. I don't see that that task farce has got any supporters amongst the Cabinet Ministers of the Conservative Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, again the Minister neglected to respond to the very important question, and that is, given the fact that Autopac has been bled, or is going to be bled, of several million dollars, is that based on the assumption that actuarially speaking the revenues were far in excess of what were desirable, or are they going to be in a position of having to recapture those revenues through very rapidly accelerating direct premiums to offset the loss of revenue because of the transfer of funds? And if that is so, if the sole purpose of this Minister and this government in not passing on that two cent reduction to the consumer is to protect the public interest so that the gasoline companies wouldn't absorb it into their own profit position, then surely the Minister could bank the moneys and whenever Autopac needs to draw on moneys because of their actuarial position from year to year, they could then draw on the several million dollars each year, or that have accumulated in each year, so o that that would act as a stabilization fund for premium rates.

If the Minister really believes and is sincere in telling us that the only logic in not passing that two cents a gallon to the people of Manitoba via a reduction in gas taxes is to protect the public interest, then put it into a fund and call it an Automobile Insurance Stabilization Fund, or a reserve, and whenever the need arises to raise the premiums, draw out of that fund. Otherwise, Mr. Chairman, it is cooking the books again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. James.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, I, changing the subject, would like to compliment the Minister on increasing the amounts of money that are available for Winnipeg street construction this year. I chose to speak under the Minister's Salary on this subject and I hope that there will be more forthcoming to the City of Winnipeg. If he has travelled on our main thoroughfares of late, he will realize how much they have deteriorated. I hope that we will see more money coming, and I give notice to the Minister that I expect great things of him and his department in the coming years, that there might have to be quite a large outlay of capital to upgrade the streets again. Because, as we all know, Winnipeg is the hub or centre of our transportation in the province and almost all vehicles that go through the province end up going through Winnipeg. So we hope that the Minister will continue in this area of increasing the funds in assisting Winnipeg in their street construction and particularly in their street maintenance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(a)—pass; 1. General Administration—pass; Resolution 66: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,113,600 for Highways—pass.

Gentlemen, in accordance with the Rule 19(2), the hour of 4:30 having arrived, I am interrupting the proceedings of the Committee for Private Members' Hour.

SUPPLY — EDUCATION

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Abe Kovnats: I would direct the honourable members to Page 26 under the Estimates — Education. We are on Clause 4. Program Development and Support Services, Resolution No. 44. 4.(a)(1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. SAUL A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, because of the change in format this year, I wonder whether the Minister could assist us, before we enter into this section, into Program Development and Support Services.

Some lines from last year have disappeared entirely and I think new ones have been added. It's unclear in my mind, if we go through one by one, whether we're going to be trapped in a position

where we have passed something and can't go back to it. So I'm just wondering, for example, running through — if I might, if it's in order with you, Mr. Chairman — just so we can identify how these things stand.

(a) is very clear. (b) refers to Curriculum Development and (c) to Curriculum Services. What do they now cover? What were they called last year? Were these the Program Development Secretariat and Consultant Services of last year? You know, it's that sort of explanation we'd want to get.

Measurement and Evaluation is new. What was this called last year? How can we measure it?

The Correspondence Branch, which is not shown this year, where was it last year? If we can get that sort of rationalization of these Estimates it might help.

I notice that Computer Services have disappeared. Special Programs and Projects, at least that was a line last year under (f), it disappeared. Small Schools disappeared. So perhaps if the Minister could help me in trying to reconcile this year's lines with last year's, it would help a great deal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, I will attempt to clarify the different headings for the Member for Seven Oaks.

Curriculum Development which is 4.(b), was formerly Program Development Secretariat and the new name, more or less, assigns the functional responsibility. The Program Review Structure continues in this section.

The 4.(c), Curriculum Services was formerly Consultant Services, and I believe the new title provides a sharper description of that section's functions and responsibility.

The Correspondence Branch, I understand, was formerly under Instructional Media. Some of the other items that the Member for Seven Oaks mentions, as we move through these I will mention the contents of the section and I hope that will clarify where these things now reside.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (a)(1)—pass; (2)—pass — the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, under Division Administration, last year's print indicated for Division Administration, \$205.6 for salaries and \$50,000 for Expenditures. I notice that the left-hand column for March 31st, 1978, is considerably less than the amount voted last year, as is, of course, the projection for the coming year. I'm wondering how the Minister can explain that, whether in fact there was an underexpenditure last year and this simply reflects the underexpenditure; or have there been people moved out of this and there's less staff and therefore less expenditures that will be involved.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, the latter is true. A number of people who were support-staff persons in this particular section have been moved to other activities within the Program section; and the staff in Division Administration has been reduced. I can give him the breakdown there. One administrative officer has been transferred to Curriculum Services, etc.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (a)(2)—pass; (a)—pass. (b)(1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Curriculum Development, Mr. Chairman, in this instance there's an increase in the left-hand column over what was voted last year and last year it was called Program Development Secretariat. This year it shows an increase in the left-hand column to \$421,600 and a slight increase, or almost just a holding of the line, really, because the wage settlements had to be distributed in the left-hand column. As I read it this is pretty well holding the line insofar as staffing is concerned, simply changing the name of the department to perhaps more clearly indicate to the Minister's satisfaction the nature of the work they're doing. But am I right in saying that the basic of this is a hold-the-line situation compared to last year?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, I would answer to the Member for Seven Oaks, that, yes, basically there has been some personnel transferred into this department, as I mentioned earlier, to give it better balance as opposed to Curriculum Services. But otherwise it's pretty well a stand-pat position in that department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (b)(1)—pass; (2)—pass; (3)—pass — the Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Chairman, we see in this item that last year there was \$8,500 and this year the item is deleted. There is no money in here for Assistance. Could the Honourable Minister tell us why this has come about and what this Assistance consisted of last year?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. COSENS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, to the Member for Logan. That particular Assistance was assigned to a Middle Years Project in certain schools and the project is now complete.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (3)—pass; (b)—pass. (c)(1) Salaries—pass; (2)—pass — the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on (c)(1), again I notice last year's print is different from what is shown in the left-hand column for 1978 under Salaries; a considerable spread of about \$150,000.00. This

year there's a drop from the print. Does this mean less people are going to be involved in this particular program? Does it mean a diminution in staff? Or is it the same staff and will they be doing pretty well the same service as before? I assume last year this was called Consultant Services, is that right? Therefore, in dealing with this — because I notice in every one of the (a), (b), (c) and (d), with the exception of (c) they're all down pretty well. Oh, no, (a) and (b) are certainly down. So I am wondering whether there is a diminution in program or in follow-up or whatever this particular Consultant Services were involved in. I believe they were involved with working in the field with various school divisions, with teachers, the Society, with superintendents and so on. Is there going to be less effort spent this year than last year, in this field?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, I can advise the Member for Seven Oaks that the same number of staff man years apply, 30 for both years. The difference in the Estimates can be accounted for by this matter of transferring in people with certain programs and certain transfers out. I can go into the details of those if he wishes. But certainly the function of this department, we would hope as he said, would be the same as last year. We would hope that we can even improve on it.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, the Minister says perhaps improve on it and yet there's a considerable decrease in the amount of funds. Does he expect that less people are going to do more work or they're simply going to be assigned less areas of responsibility? Because since the salaries are down and the Other Expenditures are down considerably — about \$150,000 — then I have to assume that they will be doing less than they did last year. I'm wondering how that can be explained or whether the Minister can give some details on the program.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, as I pointed out earlier, in some cases it's a matter of projects that have been completed or will be completed this school year, the type of projects that are short-term in nature accounts for some of the lessening in Expenditure in this area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (c)(1)—pass; (2)—pass; (3)—pass — the Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Chairman, just don't go quite so fast, because you've got your head down and you keep rapping them off and the first thing we know we miss the item. You should look around a bit and see if someone wishes to speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I would like to take the opportunity of thanking the Honourable Member for Logan for the advice. I do try to pick out the members that are standing to speak on the particular items and I will be most aware of the members that are standing. I do have a look around. Thank you very much. The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to deal with (c)(2), Other Expenditures. I see that again we have the Task Force Report here with Curriculum Development and Curriculum Services and again we see, lo and behold, here in Other Expenditures approximately \$140,000 of a decrease.

Now it seems almost ludicrous that as we go through these Estimates — and the Minister has stated on more than one occasion that he hasn't had any opportunity to look at the Task Force Report — but I'm beginning to wonder if he wrote this section on the Task Force Report, because here we find — and as we proceed through Resolution 44 we're going to find more — where it just seems to very nicely dovetail in with the recommendations of the Task Force. Now, the \$140,000 cutback in Other Expenditures, I would like to know what this entails? What other expenditures are involved besides office supplies and other things? I wish that the Minister would give us some explanation for this item.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, to the Member for Logan. I'll give him the explanation for the Expenditures. They are up from the printed Estimates Book of last year by some \$142.9 thousand. Last year their printed Estimates showed \$310.9; and they are down from the adjusted 1977-78 Vote in the printed Estimates Book of this year by \$140.1; and of course there are explanations for these and a number of variables. I'll go into these and try to proceed slowly.

Additional responsibilities explain the increase from the \$310.9 up to \$453. English as a second language has been added to this particular branch, it was formerly under ERPA, represents some \$12,000.00.

The Internal-External Evaluation has been transferred to this area, representing some \$35,000; from the Small Schools area, transfer into this particular branch some \$31.2 thousand; Parklands Project to June 30th, \$6.8 thousand; and from the area of Special Programs and Projects, Canadian Studies, some \$36.5 thousand; Women's Studies Bias and Prejudice, \$10,000; Artists in the Schools, \$12,000; Career Education, \$6.6 thousand; a completion of the Consumer Education, Youth and the Law, \$2.5 thousand; Association for Canadian Studies Conference, some \$8,000; a total of \$160.6 thousand there, Mr. Chairman.

And then the reductions as opposed to those additions: An operating cost for transferred personnel of some \$13.4 thousand; the finalization of certain projects associated with the Co-Operative Educational Services, 37.5 thousand; reduction in funds allocated to certain continuing projects 35 thousand; and special programs and projects activities that are not continued 59.4 thousand, for a total of 145.3. If you take the figure of the additions and the figure of the reductions,

that this is a difference then between the 310.9 that was in the printed estimates last year as opposed to the 453.8 that we find in the Estimates this year and expenditures. The adjusted expenditures of course, were 593.9 last year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister mentioned co-operative education services and law something, I forget, that this program was terminating. Was this just a one year program or was it set up for a period of years and has now been terminated, or is it something that is part of government policy that the department, that they are not going to continue with consumer education.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, these were projects that had a natural life of so many months or a year or a year and a half, and they have completed that natural span of months that were required to finish the project.

MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Perhaps the Honourable Minister could inform me, is this the item whereby we deal with looking at the Annual Report for 1976-77 Labour Education. Does this come under this item, or does it come under Instructional Media Services? That would be 44 (k)

MR. COSENS: I'm informed Mr. Chairman, that that is under special projects in 7.(d)(1).

MR. JENKINS: That would be in Continuing Education then, is that right, or Manpower and Development? Thank you, Mr Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (c)(2)—pass; (3)—pass; (4)—pass — the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Computer Services last year was \$376 thousand, that was the voted amount. I notice it shows \$360 thousand this year. Is there no intention to expand the computer services network through the high schools? I believe there was quite an increase in the number who availed themselves of the service. This is both for administrative purposes and for teaching in the high schools. Is it simply being frozen at this level because as I see it the dollars probably will not buy as much this year as they did last year.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, I would suggest to the Member for Seven Oaks that he may have changed the figures around. I stand to be corrected, but I believe that last year was \$360, thousand and this year it's \$367 thousand. There is an increase in that particular area of computer services. Perhaps that's what he intended, but he quoted the figures in the opposite mannei.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I was looking at last year's Estimates. It shows \$16 thousand for Salaries and \$360 thousand for Other Expenditures, a total of 376. That's where I got my 376 from, from last year's print. So I say there is a decrease, but even accepting that there is no salaries attached to it, although I'm not sure how there can be no salaries, but if there are no salaries attached to it because they may be somewhere else in one of the other previously discussed items, I'm still asking whether even 360 with an increase of \$7 thousand, whether that will allow for an increase in the number of high schools that can avail themselves of the computer services.

MR. COSENS: I can inform the Member for Seven Oaks, Mr. Chairman, that in fact there is one consultant, one secretary that takes care of this particular area, and there is an additional \$18 thousand in Program Development area that's used in this particular branch. As well, I should inform him that in fact the services have expanded this year to some 35 high schools. In 1976-77, this was a total of 27. So, we are looking at an expansion, and I've been informed by the personnel in this department that they will be able to carry on in much the same manner with the computer program as has been carried on in the past.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, the Minister says it was expanded to 35 high schools, I assume last year.

MR. COSENS: From last year.

MR. MILLER: I think it's 35 today. In the 1977-78 it is 35, That's right. 1977-78 it is 35. I'm wondering what projections the Minister has for the next school year which will overlap of course.

MR. COSENS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, 5 additional high schools.

MR. u, JENKINS: Thank yo Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, who do we contract these computer services out to? Is it through the Old Phoenix Data Centre, and has the contract been awarded to them to carry on since this Data Centre has been sold now to a private enterprise. Is it still contemplated to keep it with Phoenix Data?

MR. COSENS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, in answer to the Member for Logan's question, in September 1st, 1977, a 5 year plan included the signing of a 5 year contract with Cybershare for the computer resources and with the Manitoba Telephone System for the maintenance of that particular equipment.

MR. JENKINS: Then in other words, what the Minister is saying, that the private enterprise not only bought the plant facilities, but they also bought the contracts that Cybershare held, is that correct?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that that type of obligation is quite often carried on by companies that purchase other companies.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Well Mr. Chairman, on this same point, when the firm was put up for sale, I believe it was stated that in fact, there was no commitment by government to use the services. That was the statement made. I think by both the buyer and by the Minister in charge. Now we find that the commitment was not made at the time, but there was a previous commitment, a contract, which of course is going to be honoured, and so that in fact the firm that bought the Cybershare did in fact know that it had a contract which the government is going to honour and which guaranteed it a flow of funds from the Department of Education, certainly, for these computer services which are being tied into the various high schools and new terminals as I recall, were going to be added in some of these high schools so that this program is still carrying forward. However, instead of it being a Crown corporation it's now a privately owned corporation, but they have the contract which assures them of the flow of funds from government sources, which before went to a government owned operation.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of what the terms of the sale of this particular company was, but I am aware there was a contract signed as of September 1st, 1977, a 5-year plan with Cybershare, and the knowledge or lack of knowledge of that contract by the buyer would be pure speculation on my part. I would hesitate to speculate. I would imagine that the buyer would be well aware of any contracts, existing contracts, that the company may have.

MR. JENKINS: Before we let this item go Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few remarks on this. This is really something that we're finding out now, that the deal that the Minister of Industry and Commerce so proudly announced in this House, making a profit for the Crown, we find out now that the Crown is in turn perhaps over a period of years going to subsidize the payment of the sale of the Cybershare entity that was totally owned by the Crown, and it will be interesting to note as we examine other estimates where computer services are concerned to see if they also hold contracts with Cybershare, and maybe the deal that the Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce was so proudly announcing in this House, was not such a hot deal after all when we find out that the taxpayers of the Province of Manitoba maybe in the long run are subsidizing the payments for the sale of Cybershare to the private enterprise sector.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(c)—pass; (d)(1) Salaries—pass — The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. JAY COWAN: Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman. I would just ask the Minister if in this case he could explain what the reduction in salaries, what effect that would take within the program?

MR. COSENS: Perhaps Mr. Chairman, just while I am getting that information together here, someone else may wish to comment on this area. It will take me a minute to get that information for the Member for Churchill.

MR. JENKINS: Well Mr. Chairman, again we come to an item in the Task Force Report that the Native Education branch should be changed by eliminating field services and incorporate in the curriculum component and other components as part of the Program Development Branch, and lo and behold, what do we find here in native education, we find a reduction in salaries. Other expenditures are still the same as last year and like I say, and as I've repeated before Mr. Chairman, it seems to be a continuing theme all through these estimates that we find the Minister of Education who has said that he hasn't had time to study the task force report, yet we see — I can name three or four items already that we have passed in the Estimates that have been recommendations of the Task Force on education in the province of Manitoba. And, I find it ludicrous that the Minister gets up time and time again and says he hasn't had a chance to study the Task Force report, yet we do find within his estimates today, the recommendations made by the Task Force being implemented and it makes one wonder just who did write this Task Force report. Was it the Department of Education or was it the so-called Committee of the Task Force on Education that wrote the recommendations that we see here, because I can point out here at least five or six items of recommendations from the so-called Task Force report that have already been implemented in the Department of Education Estimates that we have before us here today.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman. First of all to the Member for Churchill, in the matter of salaries two contract positions not filled in 1977-78 were dropped from this particular request — one in the Curriculum section and one in the field, Special Projects section of the branch — I would repeat that they had not been filled in 1977-78; and one vacant secretarial and one vacant field worker position in the field section were not requested in 1978-79 because of a general reduction in field section activities that had been taking place over the last two years.

So, as well as that indication on the Salaries, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to remark on a couple of observations of the Member for Logan. I feel that he perhaps doesn't give me too much credit for

being associated with these Estimates in the early part of the process, long before any Task Force Report was being published or being put together; and I would advise him that some of these decisions were made long before those Task Force considerations had taken place. In fact, I would suggest to him that some of these directions were being contemplated by the former government and that certain trends in some of these departments towards a lessening of personnel, and different emphasis were recommendations and directions that were already underway at the time I came into office.

I either had to agree with these or to rationalize some particular change. But in some of the matters that he has remarked on as certainly showing that the Task Force had done this and the Task Force had done that I would suggest to him that decisions were made, in some cases, in many cases, prior to the time when the Task Force Report had been completed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. If I am to understand the Honourable Minister then, all the reductions were those of vacant positions for the full 1977-78 year. Is that correct?

MR. COSENS: Yes, that's correct. As I said, two contract positions not filled in 1977-78 were dropped; one vacant secretarial position and one vacant field worker position in the Field section were also not requested this year.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister indicated that he was accompanying some trends that had begun with the previous government. I wonder if he could elaborate on those and, in specific, going through the programs that are serviced under this item. I'm speaking now, the Traditional Individualized Education Program, the Headstart, the Curriculum Development, the Implementation Native Language into the Curriculum in remote communities, and indicate what he considered to be trends of the previous government and the reasons therefore, and indicate what initiations he considers his department to have implemented.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, to the Member for Churchill. I can inform him that there are no changes contemplated at this time in the Native Education Branch. The programs in place are being carried on. The only indication that we have followed here is that reduction in the Field Section activities that apparently had been taking place over the last two years. But as far as the programs he mentions, the Traditional Individualized Education programs of this nature, the Headstart Program, the Native Awareness Program and of course the different activities of the Field section, these are continuing.

MR. COWAN: But the Minister did indicate that he was following certain trends set by the previous government in the curtailment of services, if I'm correct. Could he elaborate on those, please?

MR. COSENS: Well, in the Field section, Mr. Chairman, as I've mentioned, there was apparently a trend to cut back in this area and we have followed along with that and not filled those two vacant positions.

The only other, perhaps, area of interest to the member here, is that we are reviewing the function, and so on, of the Branch in relation to its particular liaison and relationship to Frontier School Division. I have had some concern on the brief time that I have been associated with both the Native Education Branch and with Frontier, that in many cases their concerns are similar and that at times they are being engaged in activities where I think there should be closer liaison between the two, the Frontier School Division and its personnel and the Native Education Branch. That is one particular area that I am reviewing and I would hope that as we progress through the months and years ahead, that something can be done to improve that type of liaison and to prevent, in some cases, an overlapping of effort which perhaps is not necessary under the circumstances and probably not necessary to be duplicating expertise from one branch that already exists in another.

MR. COWAN: The Minister indicates, then, that there would be, essentially, no reduction in services. I'm wondering, at the same time, whether there would be any progress made in the delivery of service, will there be any more service delivered by this Branch under his government?

MR. COSENS: I don't think, as you can see from the Estimates, Mr. Chairman, that we are engaging any new far-reaching programs in this area, but rather a stabilizing, if you wish, of the programs that are there.

At the same time, I would suggest to the Member for Churchill, that in the short time that I have been associated with the Branch, I really haven't had a complete opportunity to sit down, with the people involved in the Branch, evaluate all of their activities. I would hesitate to act too quickly in any particular area, as far as the Native Education Branch is concerned, until I've had that opportunity and a chance to look at particular need areas.

I think I share with the Member for Churchill a very genuine interest in the education of Native people in this province; and I have had some concern about how well we have been doing in that particular area over the past number of years — not just with the previous government — I sometimes think that this has been an area that has been rather neglected. I really feel that it's an area that we have to focus on and an area that we have to look at most carefully. So I can assure the Member for

Churchill of my particular interest in this area.

MR. COWAN: Yes. Well, Mr. Chairman, I thank the Honourable Minister for that indication of his concern. I am sure that we do share the same concern. I never, at any one time, attempted or would have tried to indicate that we did not share that concern.

I agree with him that there has been neglect in this particular area — centuries of neglect — I don't think we can say that any one government or any one political party has been responsible for the neglect in the area of Native Education; and that is why I take this opportunity to stand for just a few brief moments before the House and indicate that I would hope that this stabilizing process that the Minister indicates they are going through for the purpose of acquainting himself with the program, I understand that it must be a necessary function for each new Minister to do and I do not begrudge him that period; but I would hope that while doing so that he look not on how to cut back or how to restrain, either financially or operationally, those programs; but that he look to the future and that he look to developing new programs, developing new processes, new methods of answering the need of the Native people in the educational field; a need that we both agree has been neglected for far too long now.

So, for that reason, I thank him for his concern. I am sure that we both share the same concerns. I am looking forward to, in the future, discussing in this House and discussing with the Honourable Minister, implementation, development and implementation of new programs to serve a very useful function in remote northern Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (d)(1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Honourable Minister give us how many people are employed in the Field section this year? How many people were employed in the Field section last year, and say the year previous? Does the Minister have those figures available?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. COSENS: I will certainly endeavour to get those figures for the Member for Logan, Mr. Chairman. As he can well realize it will take a minute or two. Perhaps he would like to proceed.

MR. JENKINS: Well, if the Honourable Minister is not able to get them today, they will be available; and if there is any further debate on it it can take place on the Minister's Salary. So there's not really that pressing an urgency right today, but as long as we get them before the Minister's Estimates are completed, that would be satisfactory.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, I am informed that there were four people in that section last year; three people this year. I believe the Honourable Member for Logan wanted the year previous — I don't have that readily available — I might have to bring that back to the House tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (d)(1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I have relates to the Task Force Report as well. I note that in the Task Force Report one of the recommendations regarding the Department of Education is that the head of the Frontier School Division be a Director, reporting to the Assistant Deputy Minister, Administration Division. Since we are on that area of Native Studies or Native Education — which would I assume contain a director's position — is it the Minister's intention to accept the Task Force Report of his government and to make the head of the Frontier School Division a Director rather than the arm's-length position that the head of the Frontier School Division now enjoys, and which over the years has developed into a better and better type of relationship with the communities and schools that the Frontier School Division deals with?

I must explain, Mr. Chairman, that there is a great deal of concern about this kind of recommendation by the Task Force because the direction the previous government was moving with respect to the Frontier School Division, was toward greater autonomy for the local schools that are within that division. That is, that as the communities desired it, they were able to work more and more towards local control and local autonomy over their school. And I believe over the last two years that particular kind of direction seems to have caught on and the communities do appreciate the opportunity to take advantage of that policy and I might say it was a conscious policy of the previous government. It was announced by the previous Minister that the communities had the option of going from absolute authority of the Frontier School Division — which is under the Department of Education — to completely local control or somewhere in-between on that continuum. Most of the schools within the Frontier School Division have taken that as a serious commitment on the part of the government and have been moving toward that goal, albeit on a rather conservative — small "c" — conservative scale; but nevertheless, since that opportunity is held out for them, I think that the communities are approaching it with caution, with careful consideration and they are not clammering so much for local control as they were, perhaps, two or three years ago before they were offered that complete opportunity of having it if they so desired it.

They have — in the process of working towards more local authority over their schools — developed a closer working relationship with the teachers, with the principals and with the area superintendents, and with the overall official trustee of the Frontier School Division. I would be very

concerned, Mr. Chairman, if the present government is considering this recommendation in any kind of serious light, because this would be a serious regressive backward step in the control and operation of the Frontier School Division. I would implore the Minister to throw this recommendation out and to continue the present policy, if he has indeed accepted the policy of the previous government and is continuing it, to continue the present policy of working toward local autonomy wherever it is possible to do so, and at the speed consistent with the desires and aspirations of the local communities and their school committees, and elected school officials at the local level.

I would like the Minister to comment on that. I wanted to bring it up last night when we were under the Frontier School Division Estimates. It does relate to this Native Education aspect, and if the Minister can't comment on it now, I give him notice that I would like him to comment on it on his Salary.

MR. COSENS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for Rupertsland for his comments in this regard. I had the distinct pleasure of travelling through Frontier School Division with the Superintendent and visiting many of the schools in the division. I didn't have as much time as I would like to have, and I intend to get back into that particular division as soon as we finish our business in this House, because I have, as I mentioned to the Member for Churchill, a particular interest in the education of native people.

I was impressed as we visited the different schools with the school committees, the Citizen Advisory Committees, if you would wish to call them that, who have been organized and who show a real pride and interest in their schools — I think a very healthy situation and one, of course, that we certainly would condone in all aspects of the educational system, not just in the north. But I was impressed to find the type of interest of the people, and also I was very impressed as we discussed with them their concerns to find that they were looking at their problems in a very sensible and down-to-earth fashion, and that in fact they did want a very good quality of education for their children, and were prepared to work along with the government, and to work as well as they could with their own resources to achieve that.

As far as the recommendation of the Task Force is concerned, I can give the same answer to the Member for Rupertsland that I have given to other members opposite. I have not had the time or the opportunity to study these recommendations. I would hope that in the few months that we have ahead, before we get back into the school session in the coming year, that I will have that opportunity to study and weigh these different recommendations as to how they would apply, not just to the government but also to the people in the area that are affected, and having done that then I would be prepared to either accept or not accept these recommendations. I can assure the Member for Rupertsland that the situation for the coming year, however, there are no particular changes anticipated.

MR. BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for his comments. I appreciate the problems the Minister is having in becoming familiar with a very large department, a complicated administrative structure, and I am happy to hear that he has already taken the opportunity of travelling around the Frontier School Division.

I might just by way of elaboration concur with the Minister's comments about the way in which the local communities look at the education within the Frontier School Division. Education is a No. 1 priority in most of the communities. The parents in those communities recognize that they have not had the opportunities that they might have desired for themselves in terms of educational opportunity and/or opportunities for various types of training which would have given them a wider scope in their own lives. It is obvious from all the discussions that I have had with northern peoples that they are very concerned about education, they want the best for their children, they want them to have all of those opportunities which they did not have, and which they, because of the education system in the past, were not able to partake in all the benefits of a first-class education.

I might say by way of elaboration that the Frontier School Division is very popular in the northern communities and has in fact improved its image over the last few years. The structure has not changed that much in that there is still an official trustee and that person is also the superintendent of the whole area, but the communication between the Frontier School Division head officers and the communities has improved considerably. I know just from travelling around my constituency as well as others in the north, the people have many fewer complaints today about the operation of the Frontier School Division than they had four or five years ago. I think that credit has to be given to the people who are attempting to build a better rapport throughout the system. There is a much better system of recruiting teachers because the way the Division has been operating, they have allowed and encouraged the local communities to get involved in the selection and recruitment of teachers, which is a major step forward, because before many of the teachers were hired without even a proper interview by the head officials of the Division themselves. Now the process may cost a bit more, but you are achieving a much better system of education, because No. 1; you are getting teachers who are acceptable to the local people, and at the same time you have teachers having had an opportunity to discuss their terms of reference of their job with the local community leaders, are able to decide for themselves that that is a place that they wanted to go to and teach, and thereby you are achieving a state of affairs where the teachers are staying much longer in the communities, and not turning over every year as they used to, which leads to a much better educational system in my estimation. I think all of these things put together — the better communication system between the senior people in the Frontier School Division. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. In accordance with Rule 19(2) I am interrupting the proceedings for Private Members' Hour and will return at the call of the Chair.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR

MR. SPEAKER: The adjourned debate on Second Reading Private Bill. On the proposed motion of Mr. Minaker, Bill No. 10 — An Act respecting the Royal Trust Company and Royal Trust Corporation of Canada — the Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Stand. (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: The adjourned debate on Second Reading of Public Bills. On the proposed motion of Mr. Driedger, Bill No. 5 — An Act to Amend The Liquor Control Act — the Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Stand. (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, Bill No. 6 — The Freedom of Information Act — the Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MR. FERGUSON: Stand. (Agreed)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' RESOLUTION NO. 1 — MINIMUM WAGE FORMULA

MR. SPEAKER: Private Members' Resolution — the Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, before I move the Resolution, I know it is a bit unorthodox, but I would like to find out from the Honourable Minister of Labour because I couldn't get an answer this afternoon, whether this Resolution inhibits her from proceeding with any effort on her behalf to do anything about the minimum wage in Manitoba, and if I could get an answer to that then I am prepared to do one of two things. Either to proceed with the motion or to withdraw it and allow the Honourable Minister to carry on with the minimum wage here in Manitoba. If I could get an answer to that then. . .

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the honourable member should proceed with his Resolution. It is on the Order Paper, it has been called and I think he should proceed as planned.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Well then, Mr. Speaker, I am going to have to ask the permission of the House, I am not going to proceed with the Bill. I am going to withdraw the motion and leave it up to the Minister of Labour. I am going to give her a couple of weeks and if not I will re-introduce the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan is withdrawing the Resolution. The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, then under the circumstances we will revert back to the Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

SUPPLY — DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Warren Steen: I would refer you to your Estimate Books, Page 70: General Administration 1.(a) — we'll deal with that later. 1.(b), The Minister of Public Works.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I commend the Estimates of Public Works for your perusal, and hopefully your safe journey and passage through this Committee. Public Works has not undergone any major changes in its area of operation; I will perhaps reflect a somewhat different attitude towards the affairs of Public Works than that of my immediate predecessor in the sense that we regard, and I regard the functions of the Department of Public Works as principally that of a service department to respond to the various requirements of other departments, rather than initiating programs of its own.

I will have for you, at the outset, a reconciliation of staff as it was on October of last year and as it stands as of March 31 this year, that will give you an indication that there have not been any major changes take place within the department in the preceding six months.

The slight reductions in the overall expenditures being asked for in the Department of Public Works by and large reflect a position that I want the department, and I myself will take, in that I expect

the client departments to initiate their requests, whether it's Health or the Attorney-General's department or Corrections or Agriculture, whoever, there are no provisions in these sets of Estimates that anticipate — other than those where firm policy decisions have been made, from which often flow the requirements of increased space and other facilities, whether it's in the area of vehicles, or furnishings, or renovations.

Principally, the budgets, the Estimates for the Department of Public Works, have been pared down to reflect that attitude, and that the user departments, in the coming years, will have to plead their case before the Management Committee of Cabinet for approval of the needs that they see as being legitimate to their programming needs, and what demands that places on the Department of Public Works.

The Reconciliation that you have on the bottom half of Page 69 of your Estimates tallies with the voted requests of the previous year, the year ending 1977-78, total voted request was for some \$57,734,000.00. If you note on the right-hand column at the bottom of the Reconciliation paragraph or box, that same figure of \$57,734,000 showing up, and an indication of how that figure was arrived at in the bringing together of the Capital and Current Accounts.

The balance of the Estimates reflects modest increases, as you would expect in the department. They reflect principally increases in salaries, and some of the costs associated with the operations of this department. I am advised that the department has in effect been operating under a self-imposed or — I shouldn't say that, I wasn't around to understand who imposed it — but a restraint program that has kept approximately a 10 per cent degree of vacancy within their staff man years' positions. The department has not in many instances maintained those staff man year positions, but has not allocated, necessarily, funds for them and that enabled a further reduction in the overall Estimates before us.

Mr. Chairman, I think there will be no questioning the fact that there will be considerable attention and interest paid with respect to the department's activities in responding to the recommendations of the Fire Commissioner's office. I would like to just briefly indicate to the Committee the approach that has been taken by the department in trying to respond to this particular area of concern. We have in the first instance, as a policy position, recognizing the limits to our capability of (a), physically undertaking the necessary renovations and changes, and (b), within the fiscal capacity that we have, the department has, in this set of Estimates, some \$5 million available on a cash flow basis for this year, with the emphasis being placed on life safety, with priority being given to those institutions where people are detained or bedridden. They are, principally, the Brandon Mental Hospital, Portage School for Retardates, Selkirk Mental Hospital, Headingley Correctional Facility, and the School for the Deaf. Our primary intent in providing or responding to the initial recommendations of the Fire Commissioner's Office is to provide for the safe evacuation in the case of fire, and thus the emphasis is on early warning, smoke activated alarm systems, and adequate fire separation or sprinklers, and adequate exits.

I can give you a brief indication of the current situation and where we're at in terms of these institutions that have just been mentioned. We'll deal with the situation at the Portage School for Retardates first. We are in a position of readiness to go to tender, and have been in that position, I might say I am advised by staff, for some time, for approximately a \$700,000 to \$750,000 renovation and improvement to the East Grove portion of that facility. There have been delays generated principally by staff at the school, and Health, who have requested — and I suppose this is nothing new — last minute changes and continuing changes, that have to some extent frustrated our people who have been prepared and ready to go to tender with this first major piece of work at Portage.

I make it very clear that while this in itself, and some of the work in itself, isn't totally directed to Fire Commissioner's recommendations, it does in the main afford the capacity of the facility there to depopulate from other areas and alleviate crowding conditions that were of particular concern to the Fire Commissioner's Office. I am also advised that these renovations and providing of these larger dorm facilities, even though that's not quite in keeping with what our professional people there would like to see us go in, we have no quarrel with them. They, of course, would like to de-institutionalize and get into smaller groupings, residential type settings for these persons housed at the school. But everybody recognizes that in order to carry on with the additional work that will be required at Portage, we need the capacity of housing people, even on a temporary basis, while these additional repairs and renovations, recommendations being asked for by the Fire Commissioner's Office, take place in other parts of the complex at Portage. Now, that's the update progress report with respect to what's happening by DPW at Portage.

We have further retained the firm of Green, Blankstein, Russell, is it, to provide us with the necessary design drawings and specifications to upgrade the entire Portage la Prairie complex. An April 5 meeting, 1978, was held with the consultants and architects advising them to start immediately with these design drawings. An appeal was made to the Fire Commissioner's Office re the South Grove building at Portage la Prairie, and this appeal was successful and was answered by the Fire Commissioner on April 14, 1978. The appeal and the reply have been passed on to the Green, Blankstein, Russell firm as a basis of the design work necessary to upgrade the building, and this principally involves installation of sprinklers and a total sprinkler system throughout the complex. I am advised that we are hopeful that that will be going to tender in several weeks.

At the Selkirk Mental Health Centre, authority has been granted to retain Pratt Lindgren Snider Tomcej — well, I don't know whether that's too close to that — Thomas? Tomcej. Well, it's obvious, Mr. Chairman, that I've yet to acquaint myself with some of the architectural people that have business dealings with this department but I will learn — Was also received on April 4 of this year.

They were retained on April 5; they are currently preparing specifications for the demolition of Building "C." Preliminary specifications have already been received and reviewed. They are also preparing plans to provide sprinkler systems to the patient-occupied buildings. Discussions have to be held with Health regarding further scheduling and priorities.

The fourth institution that is high on our priority list for attention in the current year is the Brandon Mental Health Centre, and in that instance authority has been granted to retain Smith, Carter Partners, and they have been retained as of April 14, 1978, at a meeting just recently concluded. They are currently preparing floor plans to provide sprinkler protection, although we have some further negotiations and appeals being made in this regard in this complex with the Fire Commissioner's office.

The situation at the Headingley Correctional Institute is providing us with some peculiar difficulties. This work is being done, the design work being done by in house staff, by the department, and again, the emphasis is on early warning and containment of any fire. Orderly evacuation and security must also be ensured because of the nature of the institution. Smoke detectors will be installed, and it is being proposed that sprinklers be introduced in lieu of fire walls, that could prove to be a security hazard endangering the lives of both inmates and the staff. All flammable materials, including paint, is being removed from the workshop and hobby shop, and an acceptable dust removal system will be installed in the workshop.

The situation that we have at Headingley that is providing us with some difficulty is that there is a request that we install electric locks, electrically activated locks, that are tied in with the sprinkler system, so that in the event of a fire, or a fire alarm situation, the sprinklers go off and all the doors automatically open. We envisage some difficulty with that one when some ingenious inmate stands up on the ladder and holds a match under the sprinkler system, and bingo! All the doors open in the thing and there's a mass evacuation takes place of prisoners amidst water and what-have-you. So, there is a difficulty that the department faces there. We would like to be able to put out the fires, but not necessarily spring open the doors at the same time. But on the other hand, there is of course a serious safety problem involved, that a means of safe and immediate evacuation of the inmate population at Headingley has to be of prime consideration in the event of fire.

Mr. Chairman, I indicate to you simply that these are some of the difficulties that have to be negotiated with by the departmental people and by the people who have the immediate responsibility of running the facility, in this case the Department of Corrections.

Mr. Chairman, those are, in brief, the outline with the further addition which I don't believe I mentioned, the School for the Deaf. This design work for this facility is also being done by in-house staff, that is departmental staff. Again, the emphasis is on early warning. Special systems will have to be developed that will take into account the fact that the children can't hear. So for each facility it provides a unique and somewhat different approach that the department has to consider in its attempt to comply with the recommendations of the Fire Commissioner's office.

Mr. Chairman, I am advised by staff, and this was the subject matter of some discussion during the time the Estimate review was on, that the \$5 million provided for this work is in fact a kind of moneys that we expect we can reasonably spend. I suppose it certainly isn't sufficient money to cover all the necessary work that will have to be done to bring these up to full compliance of the fire code but staff has indicated to me, and that was the question that was really put to us during the allotment of moneys available, what can we reasonably expect to do in any given year in terms of getting the necessary design and architectural work done, in terms of physically getting the contracts awarded and getting the work done. The determination was made that this was a reasonable figure that the department had the capacity to handle in any given year.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I won't go any further. Those are some of the major concerns within the Department of Public Works. I commend these Estimates to the committee and I hope for their speedy passage, say by 5:30 today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just one clarification to the Minister. Did you mention in the outset of your remarks that you were going to give all members of the committee a listing of staff man years for each branch?

MR. ENNS: Yes, I did. We can provide that to the committee if we wish to do that at this time. I'll have it in front of you shortly, in short order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, even though there is no dollar and cent figure for 1.(a), we will leave that item until the last and come back to it which is normal in dealing with Estimates and go to 1.(b)(1) Administration: Salaries — \$623,800.00. The Member for Elmwood and then the Member for St. Vital.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I would also ask if the Minister has a copy of his opening statement, whether we could have a copy of that, otherwise we'll wait a couple of days.

I think the first point that I would make in response to the opening statement is that one area that I intend to question the Minister on carefully is, in fact, his staff man years and I intend to also follow a procedure, Mr. Chairman, that you yourself initiated last year, asking for actual expenditures for each item in each resolution, actual expenditures in 1977-78 as opposed to Estimates and, secondly, a breakdown on SMYs in terms of permanent and term and vacant. So I'll just put that aside for the moment.

Another question which, of course, I will pursue and indicate to the Minister is that he mentioned

there is really no reduction in SMYs in the department and I'm happy to know that but at the same time one would have to raise other questions that in view of the inactivity of the Minister and the government in areas that are normally handled by Public Works, one of the questions is, of course, what is the staff doing in some of these departments since, for example, there is almost no activity in construction and renovations and so on, and so on?

Now, I intend to spend most of the time debating the Minister on his statement on fire safety and measures introduced by the department under his authority in regard to fire safety and protection under the item in the Estimates which I believe is near the end, a so-called \$5 million capital item. But I can see already, that the Minister is now aware of some of the complications in implementing the Fire Commissioner's recommendations and I wish to point out to him, in no uncertain terms, that the government, the department, and himself are in violation of the fire code of Manitoba, that in probably hundreds of instances, and in dozens of buildings they are, in fact, violating fire Fire Commissioner's reports and recommendations that are contained within them. Should it occur by an act of God, or a disaster, or an accident, or a case of arson, that a fire occurs and that there is a loss of life or there are people who are injured in that fire, that he will have some difficulty in justifying the situation. He tells us that now he is appointing — he gives us some recent indications of a whole series of appointments in April and in the last couple of months — now, recently, he is appointing consultants to make changes. Because, of course, it is a massive job, it is a complicated job and it is a costly job and I intend to make a few more comments in reference to my own Deputy Minister in this particular regard. But I simply reiterate what he said that in spite of a \$5 million expenditure that he is only going to be able to cover some of the requirements for fire protection. That means that there will be millions of dollars more required over a period of years to meet the further demands in this particular area. So I wish him well in the sense that he is in violation of the fire code as we, ourselves, were and I hope that he is more fortunate than my department in regard to a disaster.

I wanted to comment on the fact, Mr. Chairman, that the Department of Public Works and Highways is once more united. I regard this as a backward step. I regard this as an error in judgment, as false economy, that the two departments are now quite large and have grown significantly over the past ten years, that we, ourselves, started out in our administration with a Minister handling both portfolios and then split the departments in 1971 and operated on that basis until 1977. So now we see the two departments again, the same Deputy Minister who headed them previously and a Minister handling both. I say that the workload is too much, that the Minister will be hard-pressed to attempt to have a handle on both departments, that he can try, he can sit here for a week or ten days in Estimates, but I know what will happen to him or to anybody else who fills his shoes in a similar way. There will be some saving, a few thousand dollars. I mean, you know, it's an unimpressive item that there is no compensation for the Minister's salary and maybe one executive assistant. I don't know, maybe the Minister could tell us later whether he has one or two executive assistants, and a secretary or two is saved, so you add it all up and you get \$40,000 or \$50,000 but, Mr. Chairman, I say it isn't worth it; that it is false economy and that the Minister will do one of two things. He will either try to keep up and go under, or else he will do what most people will do, he will run one department and leave the other, and that his Deputy will do the same. His Deputy will focus on Highways and leave Public Works on the side to be run by the ADMs.

In one sense, I think this is very bad because it means, in effect, that one of the departments — undoubtedly Public Works — will be . . . There's two options: one, that it's rudderless, that there is no leadership or, secondly, that it is run by the senior civil servants and although I know all the people involved and have considerable regard for them on a personal basis and on a professional basis, I say that they cannot make policy the way an elected representative can, that they are not as closely in tune with the public pulse as the politicians and that is simply by the very nature of their position. So we're right back to where we were six or seven years ago, and I think that that is unfortunate.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to, in passing, pay tribute to Mr. Nordman who was the Deputy Minister of Public Works. I might tell you that I have just spoken to him lately and after about a year — it was about one year ago when he suffered a heart attack, that he is pretty well recovered at this time. He went through quite a bit; he went through, first of all, a heart attack, then a so-called trial at Portage la Prairie regarding a disaster in terms of a fire, and then he was summarily fired, summoned and fired, by the First Minister, so it was a very trying time for him but about a year has elapsed, six months, since he left the government and that he is in fairly good health and spirits at this particular time. He was an excellent Deputy Minister and I think when the record books are written, it will show that he was extremely good, conscientious and hard-working and gave seven or eight years of his life to the Department of Public Works and to the Manitoba Government.

I wanted to refer briefly to the Task Force Report because I read the pages regarding Public Works with some interest and found them a complete farce. If you read the section of Volume II which deals with the Department of Public Works, Page 128 to 135, seven pages, I think it really is incredible. I don't know how much input the Minister had; maybe he could make some comment on what role he played in terms of meeting with members of the Task Force and whether he embraces their recommendations because it really is a low-grade effort to this extent: that the last half consists of three and one-half pages, half of it is on the Land Acquisition Branch. Whoever wrote this has some familiarity with the Land Acquisition Branch. I don't know if it was an employee. I don't know whether it was somebody like the head of the LVAC who made some recommendations that were incorporated but that section more or less makes sense. It's understandable.

The section on ground transportation is completely ridiculous and I intend to deal with that. That raises the matter of the Provincial Garage. —(Interjection)— No, it's not mentioned in here. And the final part is the front which is just a series of loose recommendations, talking about changing the name to Government Services, and talking about making recommendations which are not backed up. Talking about using contract staff or eliminating employee housing — no background, no information, no logic; just a statement saying this should be done and that should be done, and so on.

So, you know, I looked forward to reading it, with some interest. But when I read it, it really wasn't worth the time of day.

But I would like to ask the Minister, again, if he could give us an update on the central provincial garage. The Minister hasn't had time to do very much, but probably his biggest. . . Well, he has had, I guess, a couple of little announcements in Public Works, but one of his major announcements was that he has a garage, that he just doesn't know what to do with that garage. And I wanted him to give us a current report, and I would also like him to answer some questions, because I put a series of questions to him earlier in the Budget Debate and I would like to ask him if he could give us a current report.

Since we are speaking of fire commissioner reports, I understand that there was a recent fire commissioner's report on the old garage; that there was an inspection somewhere in the last couple of months by Winnipeg fire inspectors, or the Provincial Fire Commissioner, whoever it was, went through there and indicated there were numerous infractions. One unofficial comment made by one of the inspectors was that if it was up to him he would close the facility.

So I would like to know whether the Minister has information concerning this inspection, and whether he would be prepared to make that available to the committee so that we can have some particular information.

The Minister also, in the last month or so, said that he has the provincial garage. He tells us that he is worried about using it; that it would require additional staff, and so on. I would like to know what his figures are in that department, because I believe that my figures were that there might only be three or four additional staff required. It was a very small figure that I had, and I have my notes on that somewhere.

So, could he bring us up-to-date, in terms of the fact that here is a facility that was built on the basis of a program, and the need, I think, was very clearly established. For example, in a paper that we submitted to management committee back in 1976 it was indicated that some of the problems were as follows: That the existing building was too small; that it was originally intended for operational storage; that the building is in fact, as it is now, cramped and contrary to the national building code; and that the space is needed for other purposes.

So the Minister says that he is stuck with a facility. He went down there and looked at it. And he concluded, in one portion, by saying that he might use it as a garage, which I think was a very logical deduction on his part. Since he examined the garage, looked at the garage, studied the garage, that he concluded that it was a garage and that he might even use it as a garage. He wasn't ruling that possibility out. So that was perceptive, on his part, and it was clear thinking, as well.

But I would like to know whether he also looked at the present set-up, the present central garage, which is only a block from here, and whether he spoke to the senior staff about the matter. Because I know that Mr. Carmichael, who is the head of the garage, was quoted in the Free Press as saying that the facility was needed and that the department would like to move into it.

The Minister also says that it's costing money. Well, I say that it's costing money not to use it. That money was well spent. The facility was designed to meet the needs of the department and I say that the Minister is, in effect, wasting \$3 million of taxpayers' money by not accessing that facility. He is also wasting \$3,500 a month in heat, light and security by not using that particular facility. And I would ask him what he is doing, other than wasting money and spending money, when what he should be doing is simply turning the key over to the department, letting them move in so they can work in a proper facility, and then acting accordingly.

So perhaps he could kick off his comments on those comments, and then I will pursue him after that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I'll desist in order that the Minister might reply to my colleague.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Public Works.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, let me do what I forgot to do in Highways, and I apologize to Highways staff for that, but there are new members of the committee that may not be acquainted with some of the officials with me today. I think Mr. Brako is probably known to all members of the committee. He is here in the capacity of Acting Deputy Minister for the Department of Public Works. Mr. Keith McMillan is the Assistant Deputy Minister, along with Mr. Neil Osler, also Assistant Deputy Minister.

Mr. Chairman, further to the remarks by the Member for Elmwood, let me indicate to him that I look forward to discussing the matter of the provincial garage under the appropriate item in the Estimates. It is set aside as a specific appropriation and I would think it is probably correct that we deal with items in that way.

The Honourable Member for Elmwood made some rather general remarks with which no one could take any quarrel. With the coming into force of Manitoba's new fire code, not only the

government but indeed I suppose all kinds of people in the public and the private sector find themselves in violation of the law. And I hope and pray that the kind of situation that could happen doesn't happen, particularly in the institutions that I referred to that I have indicated to the committee have the highest priority. I am pleased to note that the member did not take issue with the priority setting of the department. I don't really think that there is a matter of any partisan dispute with respect to the department responding to those particular areas where people are bedridden or institutionalized, and who themselves often are suffering some severe disabilities, ought to be the first area of attention by the department.

I can only say, in an equally general way, that the problems associated with overcoming these difficulties are real. I am experiencing them, as the former Minister has experienced them in his attempt to cope with it. I only indicate to him that he may have expected us to move with greater dispatch, but I make no apologies for the fact that in the short five or six months of the life of this government we have onstream dedicated substantial amounts of money to improve these situations.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable member makes some particular remarks and references to the comments of the report that was tabled by the Task Force and its relation to the Department of Public Works. I would like to indicate to the honourable member and to the members of the committee that within the thinking of the present government that there may well be some further reorganization and, indeed, a continuation of a program of reorganization that, in effect, was taking place during the previous administration.

I am not, I think, satisfied, nor is the department, that in the area of the Purchasing Bureau, for instance, we have sufficiently taken over the overall responsibility of all government purchasing by all departments of government. I think that in other areas of assuming and taking the lead and the responsibility for space allocation, that probably is coming along pretty well, with a few exceptions where other line departments are still sometimes putting the department in a position that they will secure space for themselves and then ask us to facilitate the renovations, or what have you. We feel that those requests, while generated and initiated by the client department, and indeed finding the necessary dollars, that initiation will transfer more directly to the client departments. But there is no question that the Department of Public Works should not be the managers of this space and in fact the Department charged with the responsibility of the maintenance and of the running of the space requirements by the government.

The member passes over rather lightly the fact, and I don't raise it as a major point, the rather minimal reductions in these Estimates with respect to the disappearance of a Minister. I acknowledge and thank him kindly for his expressions of concern as to my capability of being able to effectively manage and direct these two departments. Time will tell as to whether or not those concerns and solicitations, as expressed by the Member for Elmwood, are borne out.

But I would remind the members of the committee that it isn't just a matter of the Minister's salary, or \$30,000 or \$40,000.00. We are of course talking about a Minister's salary, a Deputy Minister's salary, an Executive Assistant's — I'm not so sure how many, possibly three — secretaries, a car and plus what really hurts me most and I expressed that at the time I took over office, relinquishing that rather spacious penthouse office that housed the former Minister, which now is housing required space for line functions of the Department of the Attorney-General and I think the Personal Property people are moving up into what once was his domain.

So I suspect that we are rather possibly looking at closer to \$200,000 in terms of total savings than the \$30,000 or \$40,000 that the honourable member refers to. I don't raise that as a point. Certainly, the admonition is taken. If the department suffers as a result of that move and of that savings, then it is money that, you know . . . Certainly that is not the reason for the bringing together of the two departments.

Well, Mr. Chairman, the member goes on to speculate on the effectiveness of the Task Force, or what possible recommendations the government will accept in the area of Task Force recommendations. I think the matter has been made fairly clear in the House on numerous occasions by different Ministers, being asked the same question. The Task Force recommendations are, of course, precisely that — recommendations. I'm not going to comment as to my acceptance or my feelings about some of the Task Force recommendations or whether I'm satisfied that sufficient, you know, a seven or eight page analysis of the department adequately reflects the true operations of the department, policy changes, changes within the structure of the department, whether it means a gathering in of some additional government services. I think that in purport the central theme of the Task Force recommendations, which I can concur with, is that the Department of Public Works become the Government Services Department. As such, I can see expansion for the role of the department rather than any contraction.

Mr. Chairman, those are the only comments that I would wish to make at this time. I recognize the honourable member has asked me some specific questions with respect to the Provincial Garage. I want to make it very clear that this is not a question of evading those answers at this time but we have a particular item on the Estimates dealing with the subject matter and I choose to deal with it at that time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: The Minister in his opening remarks made a statement on the Capital Program in relation to fire. That is also an item later on and I just want to elicit one answer from him in regard to the garage at this point in time and that is: when will he make a decision about using the garage. I have

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dozens of questions; I will defer those questions. I ask him this general question. The facility could have been used in January; it can be used — which is the only sensible thing — but the Minister has tossed off all sorts of ideas about renting it or leasing it, selling it, etc., etc. In the meantime, the facility sits idle and costs are incurred by the fact that there were capital moneys spent and that there are fees that are required in keeping the facility. Can he tell us what he intends to do with it and when he will make that decision? That's what I would like to know now.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I'm well aware of the situation the Honourable Member for Elmwood describes. I can indicate to him that that decision will be made soon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if I could just get your guidance and find out where I might discuss the Fire Commissioner's Report as it pertains to the Portage Home? Would that come under Fire Code Upgrading, under Appropriation 6 at the end? Or would it be more suitable under Government Buildings?

MR. ENNS: Yes, I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, that that would be the appropriate place to discuss the Fire Commissioner's Office recommendations as it applies to government buildings.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Might I ask the Minister also where I might discuss the matter of insurance on government buildings?

MR. ENNS: I would defer to some advice from my staff but I would suspect that the proper place to ask that question is through the Ministry of Finance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the Member for St. Vital, are you talking about insurance benefits or costs? If it's benefits, it . . .

MR. ENNS: We have no appropriation for it, we don't pay it.

MR. WALDING: I wonder then, Mr. Chairman, if you would not rule me out of order if I asked a question under maybe 2.(a) when we get to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2.(a)— Go ahead.

MR. WALDING: On the item that we're on at the moment, 1.(b)(1), Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the Minister if the salary of his Deputy is included in this appropriation or is it in the appropriation under Highways?

MR. ENNS: The salary of the Acting Deputy Minister of Public Works is included in the appropriations for the Department of Highways. It is not included here.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, can I ask the Minister if this appropriation covers the salary of his executive assistant or is that also found in Highways?

MR. ENNS: I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, that all appropriations covering the Ministerial office is located in the Estimates of the Department of Highways. There is no provision here for either the executive assistant or Deputy Minister or Minister's salary in Public Works.

MR. WALDING: Can I then ask the Minister if this reduction that we see here is accounted for only by the reduction from last year of the Minister's office staff?

MR. ENNS: Principally, that's correct, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps, unless the Member for St. Vital has a short question, I was going to call it 5:30 or does he have a short question?

MR. WALDING: I had several questions on a slightly different topic, Mr. Chairman. It would be most appropriate to call it 5:30.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. The hour of 5:30 having arrived, I'm leaving the Chair until 8 p.m. this evening.

SUPPLY — EDUCATION (Cont'd)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would direct the honourable members to page 26 under Education. We are on

Item (d)(1) Salaries — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was commenting before we were interrupted for the Private Members' Hour, I believe that the direction that the Frontier School Division has been moving has been a good one and the suggestion that the person who heads the Frontier School Division, the Director reporting to the Assistant Deputy Minister Administration Section, would be a very regressive step in the evolution of the Frontier School Division.

The Frontier School Division, I know, was incorporated and established under the previous Conservative administration in the 1960s. It was a great improvement over the old official trustee system that was in existence before that, and there has been a progression of improvements in that Division over the years. At the present time I must say that the Frontier School Division probably enjoys the best reputation that it has ever enjoyed in the northern communities. The communities, as I mentioned, are very much concerned with the quality of their education. They have appreciated the policy that was announced by the previous government that the opportunity was available to them to move toward complete local autonomy if they so desired.

I think they appreciate the fact that the person who heads up the Frontier School Division is someone who is a very senior person in the eyes of the government, that that person at the same time as he or she operates at arm's length from the administration of the Cabinet and the Ministry of Education, at the same time that person reports to none other than the Minister of Education. That gives that School Division a special status and one which the communities appreciate, that the head of their School Division has that kind of status as far as the government is concerned.

Now to take that position and demote it to one where it is a position reporting to an Assistant Deputy Minister, takes it out of that arm's length position and puts it into a category where that Division is a part of the Civil Service of Manitoba, that the Director then would be — the Director of the Frontier School Division or Superintendent, whatever he may be called — would be reporting not to a political figure, not to somebody who is setting policy and determining policy, but he would be reporting to a middle-level civil servant.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that that is a very retrogressive step, that the communities would object to this very strongly and it is also a regressive step as far as the opportunity for local autonomy is concerned. Because rather than having a divisional status, which reports ——— to the Minister, and thereby to the Cabinet, directly would have a step backward to where you would have a school division which would be reporting to the middle level of the Civil Service. I believe that the communities would see this, Mr. Chairman, as a regressive step and one which was taking back, pulling back on the option that was formerly offered to them of moving towards local autonomy.

Now I know the Minister has said that he has not had the opportunity to read the Task Force Report and to fully make a decision on it, but I am disappointed that he is not able to get up right now and say that he is objecting and being able to make us a commitment that he will not accept that Task Force recommendation as the Minister of Education, that he does not agree with the recommendation that the head of the Frontier School Division be a director reporting to an assistant deputy minister. I am sorry to not hear the Minister say those words, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciated his remarks about his impressions of the northern communities in his trips around the north, but I am hoping that he can make us a commitment that he is not considering making the Frontier School Division an appendage of the Civil Service of Manitoba, and reporting to a middle-level civil servant, that he agrees that the Frontier School Division should continue as a body school division that is working at arm's length from the Provincial Government, and maintaining the status of that person or position reporting directly to the Minister of Education and thereby have an input directly into the policy of the Provincial Government.

I am imploring that the Minister reconsider his remarks that he just made and make us a commitment that he will not be accepting the recommendation that is contained within the Task Force Report regarding this School Division, since it will be such a regressive step, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, I appreciated the overview that the Member for Rupertsland has given of Frontier School Division. I know that is an area that's very near and dear to his heart, and I do appreciate his knowledge and association with that particular area. However, I have to inform him at this time that I am going to stand by my position that until I have had a chance to study and evaluate those recommendations that I don't intend to comment one way or the other. By the same token I appreciate his input and his impression of the feelings of the people of that area regarding this particular recommendation. I certainly will take it under advisement.

There was one point that he mentioned, among several others, that I wanted to perhaps come back to at this time, and that was the matter of teachers in Frontier School Division. I know I am encouraged, as he is, by the fact that many more, not only young teachers, but experienced teachers are now taking advantage of what I consider a tremendous opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to experience perhaps another way of life for a few years, to learn about another culture, to perhaps move into a way of life that is a little bit slower than the hurly-burly of the city and so on. It is an opportunity that I highly recommend to young teachers or to any teachers in fact to avail themselves of. Whenever I have the opportunity to speak to groups of graduating teachers as I have had in the last few months, I certainly impress on them that the Province of Manitoba does not stop at the Perimeter nor does it stop two or three hundred miles outside the City of Winnipeg, or outside the City of Brandon, but that there is another world, if we wish to put it that way, in this province that offers a tremendous challenge to teachers and a great opportunity for them not only to enrich their own lives, but to enrich the lives

of other people. So I certainly agree with him in regard to teachers in Frontier School Division and in the north. It is rather refreshing, Mr. Chairman, to work in a community where the main topic of conversation is dog team racing, for instance, as I experienced when I visited Brochet. Most of the people there have a great interest in that particular sport, and it also in the past, of course, has had a very practical application for them. But how many communities in Manitoba do you go into a home and visit where that is the main topic of conversation and everybody in the community is interested in that particular area.

Once again I would thank the Member for Rupertsland for his remarks and I think a very worthwhile overview from his point of view of that particular School Division.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (d)(1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Further to the comments the Minister has already made, already made, I would like to hear his comments on the direction his government will be taking with respect to that particular issue of local autonomy within the School Division since I believe it is incumbent on the Minister and his government to maintain an atmosphere within the operation of the Frontier School Division which will encourage the advancement towards more and more local autonomy. That is not to say that all of the schools within the School Division of Frontier should all take over running their own affairs, but the more of their affairs that they continue to take over and operate on a local basis, I believe the greater will be the emphasis on better and better education at the local level. They quite obviously cannot finance and support at the local level all of the educational facilities within their community and the operation of those facilities, and that was the reason for the creation of Frontier School Division in the first instance, and it has been supported and maintained by the past government. I note with satisfaction that this government is also maintaining that support financially towards that School Division.

But I would like to know what the Minister's intentions are more specifically with respect to that local autonomy issue, if he is committed as a Minister to maintain the policy of offering the communities the opportunity for local autonomy, and if he is in favour of maintaining that atmosphere which is conducive to the creation of more local autonomy, more local control, more local involvement of parents within the administration and decision-making of the School Division.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, I have no difficulty at all agreeing with the Member for Rupertsland in this regard. I heartily condone this particular direction where we see the community committees, the school committees, gradually developing to the point where they can take on more responsibility and more decision-making, and having more say in what happens in the schools of their communities. I think that is certainly an evolution that is taking place. I am not aware of how long these committees have existed, I suppose it depends on the particular community. I appreciate at this time that some perhaps have reached a certain point in this process, others are at different stages of the process, but I have no problem at all agreeing with the Member for Rupertsland that this is a very healthy type of community development and something that I am sure any government would have to condone.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (d)(1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. All this talk of the Task Force turned me to my own copy, and I was looking at the Native Education Branch section of it, and right underneath it it talked about the \$100,000 grant to the Manitoba Metis Federation, and I am wondering if the Minister could explain just where this grant is coming from and what purpose it is serving at this time?

MR. COSENS: It will take a minute to get that particular information for the member. I believe it is under 3.(a) under Grants. We have passed that section, but I will endeavour to get that particular information for the Member for Churchill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the Honourable Minister be prepared to answer it under 1.(a)?

MR. COSENS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Well, perhaps with the indulgence of the Committee and the Minister, could he just inform the House and myself as to whether the evaluation — now I will read from the Task Force Report, which is page 75. It says that, and I am taking part of the sentence, “. . . the effectiveness of the grant to the Manitoba Metis Foundation, \$100,000, should be evaluated. . .” and I would ask the Minister if that evaluation is taking place as per suggested by the Task Force Report?

MR. COSENS: Well definitely, Mr. Chairman, we will be carrying forward some type of evaluation in this matter as I think we should with all grants that are being paid out.

MR. COWAN: I agree with the Minister in total that they should evaluate all grants. I am just wondering why this specific grant was singled out, and in being singled out it is somewhat ominous, if not ambiguous, as to their intent in regard to this grant. I would ask him to clarify that. I am not for

one moment suggesting that they shouldn't evaluate any and all grants, but why has this grant to the MMF been singled out as part of the Task Force Report?

MR. COSENS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the Honourable Member for Churchill has to realize I was not a member of the Committee studying that particular aspect of the Education under the Task Force, and certainly have no responsibility for the writing of that particular document. I have no idea as to why that particular grant was singled out, but I suppose at that point in time where we have the opportunity to study and consider these different recommendations, that particular justification will come forth.

MR. COWAN: Well as the Minister responsible for the Department, I should hope that the Task Force at one time or another either consulted with him or presented background position papers in reference to this particular grant and why they feel that it in specific should be evaluated, and I am just wondering if the Minister can indicate to us some of the reasoning behind the evaluation, the call for an evaluation by the Task Force. I realize that he was not a member of the Committee, but I would hope that there would be consultations of some nature.

MR. COSENS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I can tell the Member for Churchill I have no idea of why they have asked for this particular evaluation and I, like the Member for Churchill, can speculate, but I hesitate to do that, as to why this particular item was singled out.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, to the Honourable Minister, I surely don't want to speculate and that was my purpose in rising, to avoid the necessity of speculating. I wonder if the Minister could endeavour to undertake to find out why it has been suggested that this particular grant be evaluated and, at the same time while he'd doing that, give some thought to that evaluation and indicate to us when he intends to initiate such an evaluation, what criteria he would be using, what format. In other words, would he be talking to the people in the community, would he be holding meetings in the community, or would it be an arms-length evaluation because I think when it comes to grants such as this and grants especially for organizations in Northern Manitoba, that sometimes we tend to lose sight of the fact that they must operate under different criteria because of the distance, because of the remoteness, because of sometimes the lack of experience — not expertise but experience — in these matters that we must approach them with a certain degree of leeway and a certain attitude which allows for a bit of different functioning. In other words, we cannot apply the same criteria as one would for a grant in the south.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (d)(1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, before this item is let go, perhaps the Minister would be good enough to — and I would think from my own experience it's not very difficult — would be good enough to read the list of grants and the amounts so that we would have the kind of grants which are not subject to evaluation, the grant that is subject to evaluation, so that we can get some idea as to the inarticulate major premise that the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Could we refer this to Section 1.(a) because the grants have already been discussed? The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that the item has gone by and I could probably leave it to the question of Salary but the Member for Churchill has raised a point in regard to the Manitoba Metis Federation grant and there has been some mystery with regard to the point. The Minister is mystified; the Member for Churchill is mystified; I am mystified; I'm sure that you are mystified; the Clerk is mystified. If we read out all the grants we would have — and it's not very difficult to do — we would maybe be able to derive some idea as to the inarticulate major premise of a group of people from the Great-West Life Assurance Company and fellow travellers as to what kinds of grants they think should not be evaluated and what grant should be evaluated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. COSENS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I hesitate to become involved in a debate on something which is not really a matter of these Estimates. The Task Force Report, of course, is a separate report to these Estimates and I think I've made it quite clear, much earlier in these discussions, that it's not my intention to debate the different recommendations there at this time until I've had adequate time to study them and to examine the background to these different items.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether the Minister can be that confined. He is dealing with a group of Estimates which is in context of an entire government position. We have been assured by the First Minister that this task force is one of the most important exercises that has ever been engaged in by the Province of Manitoba, that we can expect that the report of this task force and its recommendations will have great significance for the people in the Province of Manitoba. The Minister, in his Estimates, has one item which this task force has said should be evaluated. The Member for Churchill asked what criteria did they use to pick on this item. Now the Minister cannot

deny that his group and he are going to be going through these recommendations to be dealt with and therefore debate which treats his Estimates in context of this very very important — quotation marks added on my part — “document” is of utmost value to the House and I believe that the Member for Churchill raised a point that certainly aroused my interest and mystified so many people. What possible harm could there be in the Minister taking about two minutes to read a list of grants in his department and the amounts because what we do know is that these geniuses who are going to save the public of Manitoba, recommended that a grant of \$100,000 to the Manitoba Metis Federation be reviewed and, Mr. Chairman, I may be in sympathy with that particular recommendation. I would be in more sympathy if it said, “Review the grants that are now being made by the Department of Education.”

A MEMBER: It said that.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, that's not what the Member for Churchill has told — (Interjection)— That's right. That's not what the Member for Churchill said and therefore my question is simply . . . And, Mr. Chairman, I can't predict the results, nor can I speculate on the results, and I can't remember the results, maybe my friend, the Member for St. Johns, can remember, but what possible harm could there be in reading to this committee: There are 18 grants; these are the organizations; these are the amounts — so that the Member for Churchill will have further enlightenment with regard to this evaluation of the Task Force?

MR. COSENS: Well, Mr. Chairman, in reply to the Member for Inkster, I have heard before his estimation of the Task Force, his aversion to the people who gave their time and efforts to bring it forth but I would suggest to him that there are many recommendations in that particular Task Force Report that ask for the review of many different items and the item that the Member for Churchill mentions is only one of several that it suggests should be reviewed for any given number of reasons. I'm not aware of what those reasons may be and I'm sure that the Member for Inkster is not aware of what those recommendations would be or the reasons for the suggestion at this time. So, the useful purpose of reading off a list of grants and I can inform the Member for Inkster that within the Department of Education there are literally hundreds of grants, a large number of grants that are given for a large variety of reasons and so that this is one of those particular areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Churchill. If we could confine it to education grants at this point because the Honourable Minister has already declared that he would be prepared to discuss it further under 1.(a). The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to seek some direction then because I would not ask for information on grants generally but on this one particular grant which happens to fall under Native Education and I would ask the indulgence to pursue conversation or to pursue discussion of this particular grant for a brief period of time from the House and I would seek your direction on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's concerning Native Education. I would allow you to ask your question.

MR. COWAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Is the Minister willing, due to the fact that he does not know what criteria the Task Force used to call for the evaluation of this particular grant and he does not know the reasoning behind the Task Force to call for the evaluation of this particular grant, is the Minister willing to disassociate himself from just that one particular call for an evaluation until such a time as he is able to report to the House the wherefores and the whys of why that grant should be evaluated by his department?

MR. COSENS: I'm not completely clear, Mr. Chairman, on what the Member for Churchill means by “disassociating” oneself from an item, what is implied by that particular term as far as he's concerned. I have mentioned before that as far as the recommendations of the Task Force Report are concerned, that until I've had a chance to study them at some length, to find out the background material that is being used to justify the recommendation, to find out why they feel it is necessary, that I don't intend to comment on these particular recommendations.

MR. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I don't begrudge the Honourable Minister time to thoroughly examine the Task Force Report. I think in respect to the many questions brought forth by this report and the many questions of the effectiveness, the validity, or even the justification for such a report, he should — and I encourage him — to take great time to evaluate the report in full but there is so little time and so little opportunity to protect the interests of the north and to protect the interests of my constituents and to protect the interests of the Manitoba Metis Federation who are not able to be in this House at this moment to question this. There's so little time to do that that I hesitate to let go of an opportunity to find out exactly what the government's intentions are in regard to this grant. I think the Minister either has to disassociate himself from that statement that it should be evaluated because it is an ominous statement, there are implications there that I don't care to speculate on, to say that he sees no reason for that grant to be singled out to be evaluated — and I'm not saying that he shouldn't

evaluate grants; it's part of the normal process of his Ministerial responsibility — but in this particular instance, that this grant will be evaluated on exactly the same specific criteria as all grants are evaluated on and that we not single it out. So what I'm asking the Minister to do, in fact, is to disassociate himself from the singling out of this one particular grant for evaluation until he can come back to this House and report, in specific detail, why he feels this one grant, this grant to the Manitoba Metis Federation should be singled out for evaluation.

MR. COSENS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have to tell the Member for Churchill that I don't feel that I can sit here or stand here in judgment of the work that other people have done without finding out the type of background and the reason for that recommendation. Let's just speculate for a minute because I think that's probably what has happened. The Member for Churchill is speculating when he suggests this is ominous. Perhaps the review team made that recommendation because they think that grant should be doubled or tripled. So I think that we are engaged in rather a fruitless pursuit at this time, Mr. Chairman, when we try to read into something what may or may not have been the thinking of the particular people who made that particular recommendation.

MR. COWAN: Mr. Chairman, I assure you sincerely and honestly, I don't wish to speculate as to why they singled out that grant. I do not wish to read anything into that statement. I am just somewhat apprehensive that the Task Force did not take what I — and it's my own personal bias — what I would call a positive attitude to many programs and to many grants in that their response has tended to be negative response, that we should restrain, that we should cut, that we should curtail, rather than positive response, and if I just read through the statements on that page, "The Small School Branch should be eliminated; the Special Programs and Project Branch should be terminated; the Native Education Branch should be changed by eliminating; the Vocational Education Branch should be eliminated." You know, these are all negative responses and tucked in those responses, or tucked in those statements of elimination and curtailment is this one statement, somewhat ambiguous, and that is why we are forced to speculate and we are forced to read into it — although I choose not to — but it is a somewhat ambiguous statement that this one grant should be evaluated.

Now, if the Minister could come and tell it to me that he has read the background papers and that he has read the reports in relationship to this particular grant, and he says that it should be doubled, I would be most happy, I would be most satisfied. If he came to me and said, this is why we feel the grant should be evaluated, and these are the criteria we're using, and they were honest criteria and they were honest criticisms, again, I would most likely be satisfied with his answer, although I might not be satisfied with the result of that evaluation; we may differ on what that evaluation should be.

So, what I am asking him to do, as the Minister responsible for this one particular grant, I am asking him to say that they will not undertake a special evaluation of this grant, as called for in the Task Force Report, unless he can come to this House and explain why the Task Force called for that special evaluation. In other words, that he would treat it equally, as all grants are treated, with a normal evaluation, a normal review, but they would not single out. I'm asking him in effect, not to single out this grant, as the Task Force has singled out this grant, and I'd like his comment on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I am trying to associate with the Estimates on Education, where it says, Native Education: Salaries and Other Expenditures, the particular recommendations of the Task Force. I am having trouble relating it at this point under this particular section. I have allowed a clear latitude trying to find out whether in fact we would be getting back to specifics on Native Education, and up until this point I can't see the specifics.

The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Mr. Chairman, I, too, am having trouble relating to it. All I have asked throughout the questioning process here, which I think is due to me, all I have asked is that one question again and again and again. I have tried to explain why I feel an answer is necessary, but I have not altered from answering that one question. Is the Minister willing to explain to the House, and I am just repeating the question, is he willing to explain to the House why that grant was singled out, and if not, is he willing therefore, not himself — convoluted here — not himself to single out that particular grant? In other words, to treat it as he would treat all grants. And basically, that's the same question I'm asking time and time again, and I think, what we're doing is we're just, at this point, trying to clarify the situation. But I don't think we're bringing in any more information; I don't think we're expanding on the topic; I think we're on the same topic, if you will.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Order please. I think that the Minister has indicated that he would discuss grants under 1.(a). We have passed the clause on grants and I think if we just wait until we get to 1.(a) under Minister's Salary, you can restate your questions and I'm sure that you will be able to get an answer.

The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, perhaps to facilitate things, if the Minister would remember that we will be asking for the entire list of grants; when we get to his the Salary, he'll have it ready, and can dispute it at that time. So, when we do ask him then, he will not be in a position where he'll have to say, "I haven't got it, but I'll bring it back," in which case this debate may be over. So we're serving notice now that we'll accept his offer to distribute to the House the information on grants when we get to the

Minister's Compensation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think the Minister did state that he was going to give a complete list of the grants. I wouldn't want it misunderstood when I made reference that the Minister said that he would discuss grants under 1.(a).

MR. MILLER: Well, Mr. Chairman, if you didn't give that undertaking, certainly, under his Salary, we can ask him, and if he wants to go through that procedure, well, I'll be up here for an hour taking it down; that's fine. I think it would serve his interests and ours if he knows that that information is being sought and he makes that information available today, tomorrow, but certainly before we get to 1.(a).

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. COSENS: Well, Mr. Chairman, just to facilitate things, I can assure the Member for Seven Oaks that under 1.(a), I think I am probably obligated to find the answers to almost any topic on this whole department, that he or any other member may require, where the information is available. So, if at that time he wishes to pursue that area, which we've already passed in the Estimates, I certainly would attempt to oblige him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. BOYCE: Well, perhaps these main points can be raised under 1.(a), Mr. Chairman, but I am somewhat at a loss too, because the First Minister, supported by the Minister partly responsible for the Task Force, when asked when we would discuss the Task Force Report, said that we would be dealing with it under Estimates. Now, here we have an example of one of the northern members who is quite concerned about Native Education, which is the item under consideration, and he has asked some indications from the government as far as their policy is concerned, and this is entirely in keeping with my nine years' experience of listening to the questioning in the House, as to exactly what he intends to do as far as this particular organization, or expenditure of funding, is concerned and what influence, if any, that this purported important document is going to have on his thinking, and I don't know what other items under which that could be raised.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can help my honourable friend from Winnipeg Centre. The question that was raised was when the Minister who was responsible for the Task Force could be questioned, and the reply that was given was that it could be discussed under the Executive Council when the salary of that particular Minister is then debatable. That does not preclude my honourable friends from, as they have done all through the course of this debate, raise questions related to the Task Force as it applies to a particular set of Estimates, and that has been done. But the question that my honourable friend raises deals specifically with the questioning of the Minister responsible for the Task Force, and I tell him again, that that will take place under the Estimates of the Executive Council when the item dealing with the salary of that particular Minister is up for discussion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the honourable members, I wasn't trying to limit the discussion on the Task Force Report in relationship to any of the departments. The only suggestion I had made was on this particular reference, that it was under Grants, and we had passed Grants, and you still have an opportunity of discussing it further under 1.(a) of this section.

The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. BOYCE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I realize that and I thank you for reminding us. But I would point out to the House Leader that he's partly right; he was partly right in the sense that what he said was correct, but also, and I think the record will bear me out, that the point was made that as we went through the departmental Estimates that the ramifications of the Task Force could be discussed departmentally.

MR. JORGENSEN: That's what I said.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we are all in agreement. The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Chairman, I just want to get a bit of clarification from the House Leader, because I'm looking at the item for Resolution 4.(b) and it states, "Ministers without Portfolio;" we've got three of them. Now, suppose we are dissatisfied with the Minister for the Task Force and we wish to move the traditional reduction in salary; how are we going to do it? Are we going to reduce all three?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, I'll leave that to the ingenuity of my honourable friend.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (d)(1)—pass; (2)—pass; (d)—pass.
The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, on (d)(2), and before I begin, I would thank the House and you, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence — and the Minister, of course — for their indulgence in letting me pursue that line of questioning at this time, and I would tell them that I intend to pursue it further under 1.(a) as indicated would be the proper procedure by the House.

I would like to know in (d)(2), the items have stayed exactly the same on the printed page here, \$170,800 for the previous year; \$170,800 this year. I would like to know what would fall under this category of Other Expenditures, where this money would have been spent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, they fall into the following areas: the Director's office, some \$24,500; Curriculum, some \$55,000; TIE, Traditional Individualized Education, some \$14,000; the Head Start Program, some \$21,000; the Cultural Program — perhaps the member knows it as the Native Awareness Program, \$28,800; the Field Section, \$19,800; and Administration \$7,700, which I believe totals \$170,800.00.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'll thank the Honourable Minister for his addition there; without checking, I'm sure that it does total that. Has there been any changes within this global sum of \$170,800, broken down into seven areas? Have there been any changes of allotment of funds from the previous year, in other words, are you following exactly across the board per area?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, there's been no sizable or considerable change in any area; I would hesitate to say that there might be \$1,000 more in one area this year than there was last, or perhaps half-a-thousand dollars less, this sort of thing. But no outstanding type of shift, if this is the type of direction that the Member for Churchill is concerned about; no outstanding shift from one particular part of the expenditures to another.

MR. COWAN: In that case, perhaps the Honourable Minister can indicate if there have been any areas dropped within that, or does it correspond, and when I say exactly I'm not talking about to the dollar, but does it correspond substantially? Have there been any departments, or any sections within that global allocation dropped?

MR. COSENS: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: As this, Mr. Chairman, does not allow for any sort of inflationary pressure to increase that funding, I am wondering if the Minister can then confirm that there were actually, because the global sum has stayed the same, there will actually be a reduction in the services provided by these seven areas?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, at this time I would have some difficulty in answering one way or the other on that. I am assured by the people in the particular branch that they can carry on their programs using this budget for expenditures; I think the Member for Churchill is well aware that in all government departments, and certainly from what I can gather, that in the past, and I'm sure in the future, where additional expenditure is necessary to complete a program, usually a few more dollars can be found if that is necessary to carry a program out properly. I know that there have been examples of under-budgeting that I've found in years past where the solution was to find some dollars in another program, or to go to a Supplementary Estimate, and that is really not a serious situation, I would suggest to the Member for Churchill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Then the Minister is indicating that he would be prepared to do that, if at any time during the course of the next fiscal year it was brought to his attention that while these programs were indeed carrying on, they were suffering in regard to the level of service for each of the communities that they serve?

MR. CHAIRMAN: (d)(2)—pass.
The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering, by way of a specific question, if this section (d)(2) Other Expenditures, contains funds for contract staff. Would there be certain contract people budgeted for under this section?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. COSENS: Well, Mr. Chairman, we're on Operating Expenditures, are we not, at this time?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're on Other Expenditures. The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Well Mr. Chairman, I still maintain my question. I would like an answer, if the department has budgeted for any other expenditures in the area of contract or professional services that would be covered in this particular part of the appropriation, Other Expenditures?

MR. COSENS: I'll have to check out that particular information for the Member for Rupertsland, Mr. Chairman.

There are no contracts under Other Expenditures if this is the question that the Member for Rupertsland is asking. There were contracts under Salaries, however they have been converted to term positions.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the fact that we have passed that section and I was specifically desiring some information on the number of permanent staff, term staff and contract staff in this section. Perhaps I missed this, but with respect to the total department I wonder if the Minister could supply us with a list of the number of staff in various categories for comparison purposes for the past fiscal year, as contrasted to the fiscal year under review and evaluation right now. Perhaps he has already supplied that to the House and I have not received the information personally, in which case I can obtain it, but if he has not done so, would he please do so?

MR. COSENS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I can inform the Member for Rupertsland, that I supplied that information a few days ago to the Member for Burrows who is not here at this time. I have another copy of the information that is available to him if he would wish to peruse it at some time in the future.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (d)—pass; (e)(1) Salaries—pass — The Honourable Member of Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I believe this deals with Vocational Education. It is not a large item but I notice there is a drop in the printed estimates from \$167,700 to \$110,000.00. As well the figures don't jibe with what was printed last year, which added up to \$217,000 and I wonder how the Minister could rationalize all these figures for me.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, under the Vocational Education Branch the figures printed in the 1977-78 Estimates book under Salaries were 102.9 and under Other Expenditures 18.6 and I believe under Assistance 95.7 for a total of 217.2. The 1977-78 adjusted figures, which I believe are the ones before us at this time were Salaries 53.4, Other Expenditures 18.6, and Assistance 95.7.

MR. MILLER: Well, the arithmetic is the same as I have, but can he explain what occurred when the vote was 102.9 and it's now been adjusted to 53.4. Does he mean the 53.4 was spent or that in fact this is because of a deployment elsewhere and that difference between 53 thousand and 102 thousand is picked up elsewhere in these printed Estimates. Or, did they cut back in the program or what.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Chairman, this reduction from that printed 1977-78 Estimates book of 102.9 to the 1978-79 vote of 53.0, can be explained by the transfer from one SMY and occupant to Curriculum Services section early in 1977, actually before my jurisdiction, as a Social Studies Consultant. What I understand at that time, was a rearrangement of priorities. And also, the transfer of one SMY, the occupant apparently has retired and is on contract to June 30th of this particular year. That transfer to Curriculum Services reflects more clearly the field related nature of the activity, however, beyond that, that pretty well explains the particular staffing changes that have taken place.

As far as Assistance, I believe the Member for Seven Oaks was questioning that area as well. There's some decrease there and that is because this concept of vocational alternatives is fairly well established at this time and has been incorporated into the regular activities of the department under the Public Schools Finance. Board and the manner of . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The hour being 5:30 I'm now leaving the Chair to return at 8:00 p.m.