



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

31-32 Elizabeth II

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The Honourable D. James Walding
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Second Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 19 April, 1983.

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. J. Walding: Presenting Petitions
. . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . .

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River East.

MR. P. EYLER: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Member for Burrows, that the Report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Economic Development.

MR. CLERK, W. Remnant: Your Committee met on Tuesday, April 19, 1983, accepted the resignation of the Hon. Ms. Dolin as Chairman of the Committee and elected Mr. Lecuyer to fill this position. Your Committee considered the Annual Report of Manitoba Forestry Resources Ltd.

Mr. Murray Harvey, Chairman of the Board, Mr. W. Jonas, General Manager of the Woodlands/Lumber Divisions, Mr. Paul Demare, Director of Finance and Mr. Dave Bown, General Manager of the Pulp and Paper Divisions, provided such information as was required by members of the Committee with respect to the company.

The Annual Report of Manitoba Forestry Resources Ltd. was adopted by the Committee.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

RETURN TO ORDERS No. 3 and 12

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file with the House a copy of each regulation filed under The Regulations Act, being Regulation 33, 1982, to 236 of 1982 inclusive.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file Return to the Order of the House No. 3 dated December 15, 1982, on the motion of the Member for Lakeside.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file Return to Order of the House No. 12 dated December 15, 1982, on the motion of the Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. J. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Annual Report for the Workers' Compensation Board of Manitoba for the year 1982.

MR. SPEAKER: Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports . . . Notices of Motion . . .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MR. D. SCOTT introduced Bill No. 59, An Act to grant Additional Powers to Victoria Curling Club Limited; Loi accordant des pouvoirs additionnels au Victoria Curling Club Limited.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: Before we reach the Oral Question period, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have 11 students from the special class of Windsor Park Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Bourrier. This school is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Radisson.

There are 55 students of Grade 9 standing from the Darwin School under the direction of Mrs. Matthisen. This school is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Riel.

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

SPEAKER'S RULING

MR. SPEAKER: Also before question period I have a statement to make to the House.

On Wednesday, March 9th, during Oral Questions, the Honourable Member for Arthur rose in his place to raise a Point of Order concerning the words spoken by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture in answering a question.

In raising the Point of Order, the Honourable Member for Arthur said on Page 614 of Hansard, "I want to speak on a point of order and I would refer back to Hansard. The Minister has accused me of saying that I said in this House that there was fraudulent activity taking place, that it was I that was providing that information."

After several of the members had spoken to the same point, I took the matter under advisement in order to review Hansard.

In perusing Page 462 of Hansard, I find that the Honourable Member for Arthur in his speech on the Throne Speech Debate used the term "fraudulent activity" three times and the term "fraudulence" once, all occurring in the same paragraph. The context of the paragraph made it clear that the Honourable Member for Arthur was referring to statements made to him by someone outside the House, and that the

Honourable Member for Arthur was not making the accusation.

Two paragraphs later, the Honourable Member for Arthur said, "But he is now paying 5 percent or 7 percent of the gross value of that animal into the government coffers that are being fraudulently handled or being mismanaged."

In this reference, the word "fraudulently" is sufficiently separated from the earlier paragraph as to make it unclear whether the Honourable Member for Arthur is referring to the same situation. Neither does the member state that he is referring to an alleged fraudulent activity.

In the absence of any clarifying remarks, the printed record clearly shows the Honourable Member for Arthur making the charge of fraudulent activity, and the Honourable Minister of Agriculture did reflect accurately the words printed in Hansard. While the Honourable Member for Arthur might well have had cause to clarify his remarks of the House, it cannot be considered a valid Point of Order.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Bankruptcies - farmers

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: I want to, Mr. Speaker, direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, when the farm community is going through a very difficult time and in view of the fact that well over a year ago this Minister was told by the opposition and by the farm community that the farm community was entering into a period of very difficult times, I would ask the Minister of Agriculture how many farm families or farm businesses to this date are having the same difficulty that the one yesterday that was in the news, or like ones that were in the news yesterday, how many farms have reached that stage, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, unless one is contacted through the department and given that information, I have been advised by financial institutions that there may be upwards to 100 farmers who are in severe difficulty.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, to the same Minister. Would it not have been his responsibility to do a survey and find out precisely how many farmers are having that kind of economic difficulty, rather than wait for those people to come to him as the Minister? Would he have not been better, Mr. Speaker, to have done a survey and precisely tell us, or find out how many people in the farm community are being as hard pressed as those we've recently heard about?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, through the Interest Rate Relief Program, such contact is being made on a regular basis. In fact, we now have on our program, 772 farm families who are receiving assistance under

that program, who are in financial difficulty of a fairly serious nature. To indicate to the honourable member that a survey can determine when a financial institution might foreclose on a farm, Mr. Speaker, is impossible to determine. That is handled by the courts and by the financial institution and a survey as such would not reveal that kind of information.

MR. J. DOWNEY: In view of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that reports are now coming to us that the Minister has intervened in that particular farm situation yesterday, what is he going to do for those 100 people who have either gone through court proceedings, through bankruptcy? What is he going to do now to live up to this responsibility that he abrogated in the last year-and-a-half as Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker? What can those people expect from this Minister?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I don't accept the statement of the honourable member that we have abrogated our responsibility. The Province of Manitoba through, first of all, the first Interest Rate Relief Program of its kind in this country where we are assisting over 700 farm families was implemented by this administration, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, a long-term income stabilization program for the livestock industry, the Beef Program, was implemented in which some \$17 million of funds or thereabouts were actually distributed to the farmers of Manitoba.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, we have now embarked on a long-term Hog Income Assurance Plan to provide long-term stability to our hog sector.

Fourthly, we have also embarked on additional credit availability through one portion of one lending institution which is controlled by the Province of Manitoba and that is the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation.

Those programs are now in place, Mr. Speaker. I believe, and I think most people believe that the Province of Manitoba will not and has not been able to meet all the financial needs of the farming sector and never has been able to provide such relief. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the credit needs of Manitoba farmers far outweigh the ability of the province to provide those credit needs, and we are but one player in the situation.

We have put forward, Mr. Speaker, as a fifth alternative, an attempt to play, what I would say, the honest broker in trying to mediate and review crisis situations between farmers and their institutions. The honourable member is aware that I have also asked members of the opposition to provide me with some reference and some suggestions as to who in the farm community might be prepared to serve on this committee, Mr. Speaker.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, how many of the 700 that were helped under the Emergency Rate Relief Program did that 100 make up that went broke in the last few months? Were they part of the 700 under the Interest Rate Relief Program? Were those 100 farmers that he has indicated have gone broke, were they part of that figure, Mr. Speaker?

HON. B. URUSKI: First of all again, Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is misquoting what I have said. I

indicated that we were advised by financial institutions that up to 100 farmers are in very severe financial difficulty. In terms of whether they will go broke, or whether the loans will be renegotiated, or whether there will be an extension of repayment has yet to be determined, but those are the figures that we have received from financial institutions.

There is, and I will take as notice specifically, the question as to whether or not some of those people who were assisted under the Interest Rate Relief Program have now ceased operations. But I will take that specific question as notice.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister now plan to intervene in every farm financial difficulty when a farmer is either going to go broke or lose his business? Is he now going to intervene with his staff and with this committee that he's proposing?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member should be aware that we did not intervene in the situation. What we did do is offer our assistance if it was requested by the three parties involved and that is the farmer, the lender and the receiver. That offer was not acceptable to all parties and we did not intervene in the situation.

What we have put forward, as I have indicated to honourable members, is a review panel composed of farmers in the Province of Manitoba who could sit down with our staff, who would act as resource people to the farmers, with the financial institutions providing their side of the story to a review panel. The financial institutions have indicated that they are prepared to co-operate in such an exercise.

We do not intend to intervene in any situation unless there is a desire on behalf of the farmer involved, that negotiations and discussions have gone beyond the point and there is a threat of foreclosure, and there is a willingness of that farmer to come before a review panel and, of course, be prepared to put all the facts before the panel so that the panel can provide advice and look at alternatives that might be available to save that operation.

That is what we are prepared to do, Mr. Speaker, and that generally has been accepted by the financial institutions and the farm organizations whom we have spoken to up to this time.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, when and what type of legislative authority is the Minister going to introduce in this House? Will he provide in writing to the opposition and for the public of Manitoba, the guidelines, what the terms of reference of this committee will be so that we can provide competent people to assist this government which is crippled and unable to deal with the farm community in Manitoba during tough economic times, Mr. Speaker? Will he provide that for us, Mr. Speaker?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, yes, we will be prepared to provide the terms of reference to the committee.

The honourable member should know, with respect to legislation, there is a bill presently being debated and in committee before the Parliament of Canada under whose jurisdiction rightfully this matter belongs,

because this matter is national and international in scope, and any measures dealing with credit or moratorium rightfully belong in the Parliament of Canada and will be dealt with there.

Mr. Speaker, I have generally given the members the rough description of what the terms of reference will be, but certainly we will provide more detailed work to the honourable members when they are prepared.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: In other words, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is not prepared to do anything in this Legislative Assembly. He is now waiting for the Federal Government to pass the federal legislation so that he can hide under that umbrella and pass the responsibility on to the Federal Government.

Will he provide, not just the committee, will he provide us and the farm community of Manitoba with the terms of reference for the committee that he's asked us, Mr. Speaker, to provide names for? He said he would provide it to the committee. We're asking for the opposition to have that information so we can provide names for him. When will he do that?

Will he truly explain what legislative authority he is going to act under in the Province of Manitoba, not wait for the federal legislation?

Further question, Mr. Speaker: What happens if the Federal Government don't pass that legislation in Ottawa?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member should be aware, and he probably should take this matter up with some of his colleagues who are as well debating this bill in the House of Commons, and at this point in time I can't answer what might happen because it is hypothetical.

Mr. Speaker, I will provide the honourable members with the terms of reference as I have said, in terms of what authority will this committee be established under, Mr. Speaker. I believe there is authority under The Department of Agriculture Act to establish such a committee whose powers, as I have indicated publicly, are the use of persuasion and recommendation in terms of trying to resolve some of the difficulties that farmers are having with their financial institutions.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture in providing us with those terms of reference, as well have his department do something and provide us with the legislative authority that he is presumed to be acting under when he sets up this committee, so the farm community knows, Mr. Speaker, that it's not a bunch of gobbledegook that we've heard for a year-and-a-half?

NDP times are tough times, Mr. Speaker, and will the Minister of Agriculture finally take some action and take his responsibility to the Government of Manitoba and deal with a very crisis situation?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member should be aware that I've given him the general authority, that I've been advised by my department as to the authority in which a committee such as this can be established.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable member, I've given him the reply in terms of what concrete steps we have taken inside of a year-and-a-half in office to try and stabilize incomes of the farmers and agriculture in general. There is no doubt that there are still many farmers who are in difficulty, and in fact the reason for setting up this committee has been, because while we hear statements publicly from financial institutions in which they have indicated that they're prepared to go an extra mile to carry on the farm community and they do not want to place farmers into foreclosure, yet we have the cases that are drawn to our attention where, in fact, they are doing the opposite of what they've been saying. In order to resolve some of these difficulties we have offered to set this panel in motion and to try and resolve some of the very difficult times that farmers are facing.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, will what the Minister is doing and proposing to do in the short term to set up his committee, will that stop the very explosive nature of what is developing in the farm community where there is confrontation taking place, contempt of court possibly in certain situations, will what he is doing stop that kind of activity and take some of the pressure off those farmers who are now feeling so hard pressed because this government has lacked the ability to deal with a crisis situation?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, while I am not the chief law enforcement officer of this province, we have attempted to play - that's what I have said before - the honest broker in the situation to prevent that kind of a situation from occurring.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the farmers who have been involved in this have acted quite responsibly in terms of their actions in this situation. Although, Mr. Speaker, the matter of whether something is illegal or not is not for me to determine, and we will do whatever we can to handle the situation by playing, what I have said, the honest broker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the Minister's many times announced programs for assistance to the farm community have missed the target by a country mile and the problem is worsening, and in view of the fact that for the past year we have been pointing out to the Minister where his programs fall far short of meeting the need in the farm community, and in view of the fact that on Thursday of last week the First Minister took as notice two questions put to the Minister of Agriculture by the Farm Survival Group on Wednesday of last week, can the Minister now provide us with the answer as to whether (1), he is lowering the equity requirement under the Loan Guarantee Program from 20 percent to 10 percent to assist hard pressed farmers and (2), will he be increasing the level of farm income from \$70,000 to \$150,000 under the Interest Rate Relief Program, so once again more farmers in need of assistance can qualify for that?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member should be aware that I've answered that question . . .

A MEMBER: No, you haven't.

HON. B. URUSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've answered that question prior to the date that the questions were posed to the Premier, that we were prepared to review the program should we find that the program was not meeting the credit needs of farmers.

Mr. Speaker, as of today I'm advised that we have now already received application totalling approximately \$1.5 million to be guaranteed under that program from financial institutions around the province.

Mr. Speaker, the question of whether or not the 20 percent equity requirement for assistance under the Loan Guarantee Program is inadequate; it has generally been viewed, Mr. Speaker, that the equity guideline for the Loan Guarantee Program in comparative terms is certainly not excessive as a minimum for a viable farm operation.

In fact, 20 percent equity is viewed by lenders as a level very close to the danger point in maintaining a viable farm. In these terms the program strikes, we believe, a balance between what is judged to be a break point between viable and non-viable farm operations. Mr. Speaker, nevertheless we are monitoring the program as the applications are coming in to see whether or not further review of that program is warranted in terms of the equity criteria.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Speaker, surely the Minister's last answer tells him that he has a problem with the \$100 million Interest Loan Guarantee Program. He has indicated, Mr. Speaker, that there is \$1.5 million of applications. That's 1.5 percent of the total portfolio he approved of \$100 million. How many more indications of a problem does the Minister need?

I might ask the Minister to immediately address the problem of why he raised the equity requirement from 10 percent, under a program established by my colleague, to now 20 percent in worsening economic times for the farm community to deprive farmers who legitimately have a need of loan guarantee assistance. I might remind the Minister that he said approximately 1,000 farmers would qualify under this program. How many farmers does the \$1.5 million of applications to date represent, Mr. Speaker?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the honourable member should be aware that the previous program that he is referring to basically had loan guarantees totalling \$6 million over the last five years. Only one institution played any role in that loan guarantee program. No one took it up, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is this program — (Interjection) — Mr. Speaker, it was developed in consultation and discussion with the financial institutions, and as I've indicated if there is need to review this matter further, we will do so.

I remember so very clearly the Honourable Member for Pembina when we introduced our Interest Rate Relief Program indicating that we will not be able to find one farmer in the Province of Manitoba who would qualify for the program, Mr. Speaker. In fact, his own region

in which his constituency is in, is the region in which the most farmers have qualified under the Interest Rate Relief Program, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have over 772 farmers eligible under that program. We were criticized at the time that we could find no farmers that would be eligible. Mr. Speaker, up to this point in time, under this program in which some of the institutions are just having their meetings and in terms of notifying their branch representatives of the details of the program, we have now had in place 19 applications.

Loan Guarantee Program

MR. D. ORCHARD: I thank the Minister for the information, that he now has 2 percent of the number of farmers he projected would be helped under the \$100 million Loan Guarantee Program and 1.5 percent of the money committed. When will he change the criterion so that the rest, the other 981 farmers, may qualify to take up the other \$98.5 million worth of guarantees?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member should be aware that this program is here over the next two years to see whether all the funds will be allocated. Mr. Speaker, when one reviews the beginning of this program which has basically just started, in contrast to the Interest Rate Relief Program wherein we estimated that between 700 and 800 farmers would be eligible under that program over a two-year period, Mr. Speaker. That program has taken on those numbers and in fact exceeded the numbers we had projected, Mr. Speaker.

It would be my expectation that, given the seriousness of the situation that the Honourable Member for Pembina has indicated is that serious, that financial institutions who have generally indicated, and who have all signed up under the program, have signed agreements on their program will use the program as their needs arise and we will monitor the program in terms of how many they are turning down, how many they are approving and the numbers of applications that are coming through.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it will be cold comfort to the farmer who receives his approval under this program in July, after he's passed the seeding season without operating credit.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister, under what circumstances he would feel obliged to offer the services of a mediator from his department, such as he did in the Payne receivership case.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member should be aware that we were contacted by the farmer and by the farmer organization that was involved in this situation. We were not made aware of it until last Thursday. The department had not been in contact with Mr. Payne for other than advice on crop matters, fertilizer and recommendations and weed sprays, and those kinds of information. We have not been contacted by the farmer for financial matters and financial advice.

Mr. Speaker, we were asked by the farmer if we would be prepared to use our offices to try and play, as I've indicated, a review role in this situation and we did contact the financial institution involved and we did contact the receiver involved. We did not receive full concurrence of all three parties, and as a result we were not involved in the situation directly.

I am given to understand, Mr. Speaker, that the situation is being further reviewed by the lender and the receiver, and that they are appearing in court later today to discuss their matters with the courts.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that one of the people contacting the Minister, which prompted his offering of a mediator was a farmer, can we now assume that constituents of ours in the farming business who are having problems with their lending institution, should only now have to approach the Minister of Agriculture, explain their problem to him and they can expect the Minister of Agriculture to offer the services of a mediator to act as a go-between between the bank and that customer?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, that is one of the roles we see for the panel that is being set up. Mr. Speaker, the honourable member should be aware that our staff, in dealing with applications under the Interest Rate Relief Program, have played just such kind of a role to assist farmers in making presentations, in preparing financial statements, cash flows to lending institutions over the last year or more in providing courses to farmers, in dealing with survival. Those kinds of programs our department and our staff have been involved with and I want to say, Mr. Speaker, have done a commendable job in assisting the rural community to try and cope with some of the difficulties they are faced with in the negotiations and discussions. We have been doing that, Mr. Speaker.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, we were asked to intervene in a foreclosure that was imminent. Mr. Speaker, we did not intervene. What we did was, we said we would offer our staff to look at whether or not there was an option. We don't know whether there's an option, Mr. Speaker, because we had only one side of the story, but we were prepared to ask the institution and the receiver whether they would consider such a review. We did not receive the concurrence and we were not involved in that action.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Minister's mediation committee is not struck, and in view of the fact that its terms of reference are not yet drawn up, would the Minister, upon the request of a farmer in rural Manitoba with financial problems, take it upon himself if asked tomorrow, to offer the services of a farm management specialist as he did yesterday in the Payne case?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, we've done some work in that area and the criteria would be looked at in this sense - and I will try and relate it to the honourable member as to what I see as the possible situation that we would be involved in - where the farmer and the lending institution have reached an impasse and may have ceased communications in an effort to resolve

their differences respecting the financing of a potentially viable farm operation, and too, where the farm operating situation has deteriorated to the point where the farmer is seeking assistance regarding the orderly liquidation of his farm assets, those are generally the guidelines that could be looked at. I can't deal with the "what if" situation, Mr. Speaker. If farmers come to our staff, our staff and our department is pledged to assist them in whatever way we can in providing financial assistance.

CPR - taxes

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Urban Affairs. Since the CPR has been given a May 1st deadline, some 10 days away, in which to respond to this Legislature's demand to end their 100-year-old tax concessions, can the Minister indicate whether they have responded and agreed to pay their fair share of taxes?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been discussions with the CPR and myself and the Mayor of the City of Winnipeg some time ago. As a result of those discussions, there have been ongoing discussions with staff of the Government of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg and the CPR, discussing that issue and as of this point, there is no conclusion to those discussions.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to ask the Minister whether, since the CPR has already avoided some \$100 million in taxes over the past century and another \$500,000 this year, is he insisting on full payment retroactive to 1982?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The action that has been . . .

MR. J. DOWNEY: Demonstration days are Cabinet days.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Why don't you have a caucus meeting?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Mr. Speaker, if I might attempt to answer the question without interference from the noisemakers across the way there . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Minister has been asked a question. It would be most courteous if members would allow him to make the answer.
The Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, discussions have been taking place with the CPR and the City of Winnipeg with respect to the

resolution that was adopted during the last Session of the Manitoba Legislature, and I will attempt to bring about a conclusion to those negotiations in line with the direction that was given in that resolution.

Farm Support Program - review panel

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, given the fact that spring is upon us and that farmers are going to be on the land very shortly, perhaps within the next two weeks, and decisions are having to be made now with respect to farm financing, does the Minister believe that his initiative in setting up a committee to review differences over credit is going to result in any action being taken in time to help farmers with their operation this spring?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member seems to intimate in his question that this committee will solve all the financial problems that farmers are having. That is not the intent of the review panel, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Arthur raised the question of an explosive situation, and there may be ways in which a third party could assist farmers in maintaining the viability of their operations and convincing lenders that they should review the situation instead of foreclosing on a farm; that there may be alternatives to that situation. That is what the review panel is to undertake, to see whether a third party can play a useful role of putting forward alternatives and examining alternatives, whether there needs to be involvement of other lending institutions if the operation appears viable where a financial institution refuses to go any further. Those kinds of options should be looked at by the committee.

In cases where there is no hope, Mr. Speaker, the committee would be able to sit down with the farm family involved and basically indicate, look, financially and viabilitywise, there is no hope. This is what is open to you in terms of leaving agriculture, because no one will be able to help you out of your dilemma.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, there was no indication that this would ever have the chance of solving all of the problems. Our real concern is, is it going to solve any of the problems, because what the farmers of Manitoba are faced with now is a problem that hour by hour is growing more serious. My question to the Minister and he didn't answer it was, is the timing of this initiative - aside from any other consideration on timing alone - can this initiative possibly help any farmer in Manitoba to get the cash they need to get their crop in this spring?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think the honourable member understands that the majority of farmers, as had been indicated to us, are in reasonably good financial shape.

MR. D. ORCHARD: We're not asking about them.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, let's put it into perspective. Mr. Speaker, we've been waiting for national action if there is going to be national action. The whole difficulty started in our neighbouring province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker, where there have been explosive situations over the last year.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard any concrete proposals from the honourable members. They have, Mr. Speaker, been invited to submit names to myself to serve on this panel. The honourable members are devoid . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. B. URUSKI: . . . of any concrete proposals to assist the farm community in difficult times. We understand, Mr. Speaker, that we are unable to and Manitoba is unable to deal with all the credit requirements of farmers. This panel was not set up to deal with all the impending situations that may be out there at this period of time. It was set up, Mr. Speaker, on request of farm groups, to attempt to mediate some of the situations — (Interjection) — Mr. Speaker, I will answer questions of the honourable members, if they would give me a chance to answer.

Mr. Speaker, we are told that financial institutions are prepared to go an extra mile to many farmers in extending credit, in rewriting loans, but on the other hand we are also bringing and drawing to our attention cases where they are not prepared to go. There has not been generally across-the-board treatment of the same nature to all operators. All we are trying to do is, if there is an opportunity to get that balanced approach of treatment to our farm community, that's what this panel is designed to do, Mr. Speaker.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, today is the 19th of April. When will the Minister have his review panel in place and ready to begin work?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, if we have some members - who I sincerely believe could have an input and I don't represent all the rural areas that they represent - we have asked for input from the honourable members. If we do have some suggestions from the honourable members before the weekend, it is my hope that by next week sometime that panel could be in place, Mr. Speaker.

Municipal Affairs Committee - reconvened

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Can the Minister give some indication now as to when the Municipal Affairs Committee will be called to finalize a report relative to earlier submissions received on the Assessment Review Committee's recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. A. ADAM: Mr. Speaker, we will be calling the committee together as soon as possible after we have completed studies on all the information that we have received up to this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, I might add that we are still receiving briefs almost on a daily basis. In fact, yesterday I was advised by the Manitoba Farm Bureau that they wish to present a brief as well, a further brief. So a considerable amount of information has been received up to this point in time. I expect we will continue to receive information. As I have just mentioned, we are receiving some almost on a daily basis which will be of value to us and to the committee, I'm sure, when we call the committee together. I assure the honourable members that we will call the committee to report back to the Legislature at this Session.

Assessment Act changes

MR. D. GOURLAY: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could indicate whether or not he is planning on bringing in some legislative changes to The Assessment Act during this current Session.

HON. A. ADAM: Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the recommendations that the committee will be making to the Legislature. As far as legislation is concerned, that is a matter of policy that will be announced in due course.

Beef Income Assurance Program

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer a couple of questions that were posed by the Member for Pembina and the Member for Virden to the Premier last Thursday, dealing with the Beef Plan for Manitoba beef in terms of the announced layoffs of some 25 staff at the packing houses.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier generally answered the questions when he indicated that we do have a Beef Income Assurance Program which will provide long-term stability to our beef producers and it is our hope, Mr. Speaker, that we will be able to, through this program, increase the number of cattle finished within this province and be slaughtered in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable members should be aware that during the last two years that there have been closures of packing houses in addition to that in Manitoba in the late '70's, Mr. Speaker.

In '81 Canada Packers closed a hog killing operation, in Montreal, in which approximately 125 people were affected by that move. Canada Packers has recently announced that this year they are going to close their hog and beef packing plant in Toronto, where it is reported that up to 950 jobs will be affected, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Virden indicated in his questions, and I quote, the question on page 1720, dated April 14th, "The fact that at the present time 60

percent of the cattle that are slaughtered in the packing houses in Manitoba have to be imported because of the failure of this government to support the feedlot industry."

Mr. Speaker, first of all, that fact is inaccurate in terms of the numbers of cattle that are slaughtered within the Province of Manitoba. Manitoba does produce approximately 70 percent of the finished cattle to the packing houses and has done so in '81 and '82, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, the numbers of feeder animals in the first quarter of '82, that's January, February, and March and the first quarter in '83, feeder cattle and calves, have actually declined in movement to Eastern Canada, and we believe that this program is available now to feed lot operators, in that custom feeding is an option that is available to feed lot operators. They are, in fact, attending meetings that the Beef Commission is holding around the province and putting forward their proposals to farmers.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the feed lot industry is preparing a proposal of income assurance which we hope will be presented to the government in the next month or so.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

The time for Oral Questions has expired. Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY HANSARD CORRECTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. S. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of corrections to put on Hansard.

Page 1825, in the third paragraph, second last line. The sentence reads "and as such must deport itself collectively and its individual Ministers and caucus members as a government, not as an irresponsible collection of rabble of the left." The words used were "a mere responsible." I would never say that about the government, Sir, they are an irresponsible collection of rabble of the left. That's the first correction, Mr. Speaker.

The second correction is in the second last paragraph, on page 1825, on the left hand column, third last line of that paragraph. I read the full sentence: "This First Minister is the Leader of the New Democratic Party, period, paragraph, and is slavishly attending only to the" and it said here "chivalrous," I would never impute that to the First Minister, Mr. Speaker. What I said was "the shibboleths of the left, rather than to his sworn responsibilities as a First Minister of the Crown in this province."

MR. SPEAKER: I thank the honourable member for that correction.

The Honourable Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Mr. Speaker, I have a correction as well.

On page 1802, under Non-Political Statement, they show the name of Honourable S. Uskiw, that should be my own name.

In that same article they refer to Bonita, rather than Benito.

MR. SPEAKER: So noted.

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to make a correction to Hansard, on page 1847, of Monday the 18th of April, the very last commentary on the left hand column. It has under the name of myself, I believe it was the Member for Tuxedo, Mr. Filmon. It should be recorded under his name, and not under my name - "In the conflict-of-interest legislation why do we have to say what our wives' financial interests are?" I would not have made such a comment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Tuxedo to the same point or a correction.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to accept responsibility for that interjection. I know that the Member for Inkster wasn't concerned about that conflict-of-interest situation.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. R. PENNER: Mr. Speaker, before calling Orders of the Day I would like to announce a committee change with respect to the composition of the Standing Committee of Agriculture. The Member for Ste. Rose will substitute for the Member for Interlake.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MATTER OF GRIEVANCE

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on a grievance today because of the inability of this government to deal with the backbone industry of this province. They have left the industry of agriculture, Mr. Speaker hung out to dry, and what I said the other day in my comments in debate, that NDP times are tough times, are coming through loud and clear. NDP times are tough times.

Mr. Speaker, we have a Minister of Agriculture and a Premier, and I start, Mr. Speaker, on their election

promise of 1981 when they promised the people of Manitoba that no one would lose their home, their farms because they were going to prohibit that from happening. That was the promise that the people of Manitoba voted this incompetent group of people into office on, that kind of a promise.

So I speak, Mr. Speaker, today with some regret, because I did think that this Minister of Agriculture would pay attention to the opposition, to the farm community that have been pleading with them over the past 18 to 20 months now to do something to deal with the crisis situation that they're facing.

Three years in a row, Mr. Speaker, the farmers have seen a decline in their net income in Manitoba, a decline in their net income when everyone else in society has been demanding an increase.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Agriculture participated with the Cabinet that gave the Civil Service a 27.5 percent increase over 30 months. Who pays that increase, Mr. Speaker? It's the farmer, the small businessman, the labourer and everyone in society are paying for what he supported, Mr. Speaker.

I again go back to his Estimates where I'd like to have had some of this information that he's now giving us. I pleaded with him, Mr. Speaker, during his Estimates, during the MACC debate to establish a committee to deal with the crisis in farm financing. But he didn't do it, Mr. Speaker. What did he wait on? He waited on a march on the Legislature, the first march that's been on this Legislature since the New Democratic Party were in office one other time. God bless, if that ever happens again that they ever get in again. That, Mr. Speaker, is the only time there was another march on the Agriculture Minister was prior to our term in office.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's a knee-jerk reactionary government. Instead of having all this mechanism in place to deal with the situation, no, Mr. Speaker, a Farm Survival Group had to come in, pleading on their hands and knees for this Minister to do things that would help them.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we saw what happened out at Portage la Prairie where the farm community rallied. I'm not getting into whether it was right or wrong, but they were rallying for - they were trying to bring attention to this Minister of Agriculture that they were pleading for help from the government, Mr. Speaker; help which they were promised prior to the November 18th election of 1981. We have seen, Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Agriculture totally turn his back on the farm community; this Premier, Mr. Speaker, who is incompetent to govern, and we have tremendous examples, many examples, of every time somebody needles him a little bit, he jumps one way or the other.

What is the direction they're going, Mr. Speaker? Where are we going in this province with this kind of a government? We're going broke, Mr. Speaker, and the farmers are going broke in handfults. We have the Minister of Agriculture today tell us, admit, that there are 100 farmers that he knows of. He's been told by financial institutes. He didn't go out, Mr. Speaker, as this caucus did last spring and do a review and do a survey.

The Minister said, what did we find? We found, Mr. Speaker, approximately 1,500 farmers at that time who were extremely hard pressed for financial support. They

needed help. Mr. Speaker, the other thing we found was that, if the prices didn't improve, that would double to some 3,000 farmers. But this Minister of Agriculture didn't spend his time or resources to find out what the picture was out there. He sat in here and kept saying, we've got an Interest Rate Relief Program that, if you make \$70,000 or more gross, you don't qualify; I'm going to stick to that because there are 700 farmers helped. What about the other 2,300 farmers who needed support, Mr. Speaker? But he didn't take the time or spend his resources to find out how critical the situation was, Mr. Speaker.

Then I would say at that time, he would see the orange lights flashing. There were some warnings coming out, Mr. Speaker, in the farm community, but what did he do? He waited until all the red lights were flashing in the farm community; farmers pressed to the kind of confrontation you are seeing taking place. I'll put it on the record, Mr. Speaker, I don't support that kind of action. I don't support it, Mr. Speaker, but it could have been avoided if this Minister had acted responsibly and had structured his department, structured MACC and his programs to stop this kind of necessary confrontation approach.

What does he do, Mr. Speaker? He waits until the farmers want to go to the field and plant their crops before he says, we're now going to put a program in place. The farmers want to go to the field in two weeks, Mr. Speaker. They have to have financial support to buy seed, to buy fertilizer, chemicals and, yes, Mr. Speaker, fuel. What did we do, Mr. Speaker? Two years in a row, we asked support from this government to remove the federal tax on farm fuels, Mr. Speaker, which would have reduced farm prices on fuels by half. It would have reduced the fertilizer costs to the farmers, but he wouldn't even get up and speak on it or support us, Mr. Speaker. That is the kind of support the farmers are getting from the New Democrats. NDP times are tough times in Manitoba and they're just going to let it be that way, Mr. Speaker.

Let us talk about the Interest Rate Relief Program briefly. He wouldn't change it, Mr. Speaker. What about the MACC program? Make some change. I'm a farmer and I'm in trouble and I have got 10 percent equity in my farm operation. This Minister is going to help me out. He introduces \$100 million in loans, guaranteed, Mr. Speaker, but he says, now Mr. Farmer, that 10 percent equity isn't good enough. You have got to have 20 percent equity in your operation. How am I going to get it, Mr. Speaker, because everything is going the wrong way for me? This Minister kicks the stilts out from under me again, Mr. Speaker, kicks the stilts out from under the farm community and so it again points out that they really by design want NDP times to be tough times.

We have heard the Minister today say he is going to establish a committee, a committee that we wanted established weeks and months ago, Mr. Speaker. If he would read back during the debate of his Estimates, just finished his Estimates, Mr. Speaker, we have been asking him to change his programs for over a year, and what did he do? Turned his deaf ear. A month ago during his Estimates, we asked him to establish a committee to cut some of the red tape, to get on with the job of putting in place a committee to deal precisely with the problems that are now being pointed out in the Edwin or those other communities.

Mr. Speaker, another problem I have - he now says, we don't know what kind of legislative authority we need. He's the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, he doesn't know the legislative authority that he is going to use to help the farmers. But he says this, we're waiting on the Federal Government, it's truly their responsibility to deal with it. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that the bank-farm community, the relationship in the last month-and-a-half has broken down severely because people like him and his government haven't acted. I don't support the federal legislation that is being introduced, because it will totally erode the farm financing for Western Canada. But the reason, Mr. Speaker, that this could have been avoided is because he didn't act. If he had acted, Mr. Speaker, all this would have been set aside by now and we would have had farmers going into the field. We would have had those farmers being helped along the way that needed the help and deserved the help and those that didn't and there was no hope, Mr. Speaker, they would have been off in another way of life. The government could have helped them do it, but they didn't, Mr. Speaker.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, because it is crucial and it's critical and we are sitting on an agriculture time bomb right now with the farmers not only in Manitoba, not only in Ontario - yes, Mr. Speaker, there are farmers in Saskatchewan that are feeling the pinch as well, but not to the same degree because they didn't have the effects of the drought, the flood and all those problems in the last few years that we had. What I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, because he is so anxious to say it's a national responsibility and he wants positive and constructive recommendations, I want this Minister of Agriculture to get on the phone, to get out of this Legislative Assembly in the next hour and organize a national Agriculture Ministers' conference right here in Winnipeg to come up with some positive recommendations, because that's what happened when the oil industry was feeling the pinch.

Somebody spoke out for the oil industry; somebody spoke out and brought national attention to the plight of that industry. And this Minister today, if he'd had any leadership abilities - which he hasn't - could have called a national conference on agricultural financing and the lower grain prices, the lack of a stabilization payout that the Western Canadian grain farmers should be getting, Mr. Speaker. But he comes in and tells us all those things that he has done while back home on the farm, everybody is going broke, Mr. Speaker, because he doesn't want to deal with it.

I challenge him, Mr. Speaker — (Interjection) — not everybody, Mr. Speaker, but there are enough of them that he should be calling a national conference. Why doesn't he ask the Federal Minister of Agriculture where he stands on this legislation? Are the farmers just going to sit out there and hope something's going to happen? I said, Mr. Speaker, what is the alternative? And some of the banking institutes have put some proposals forward but he is not dealing with it. He's got to bring it to the focus of 24 million Canadians. He's not doing it, Mr. Speaker. He is letting them just slide away. He's letting them have a confrontational approach in the farm community, and that's not healthy for society, Mr. Speaker. What I am saying is, why doesn't he convene a ministerial meeting in Winnipeg next week to deal

with the national problem on farm financing and low incomes?

Mr. Speaker, the concern we have with what this Minister is proposing is, of course, somewhat of a very serious situation, because we have asked him for the terms of reference. There's no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, we have credible names that we could recommend to this Minister. I would have one better suggestion for this Minister, Mr. Speaker, and that is he and his Premier resign so that we can, in fact, take over the running of this province and put it back on some sound economic directions that will give the confidence to the people. Certainly he's asking us for names and it's a very wise political thing to do because he doesn't have many competent people.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that will be requested by us, because what did he do to the best people that we had in place? He fired them, he wholesale fired the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation Board of Directors. He fired good people and now he's coming back to us saying, well, we need names of people. You had names of people and you fired them, Mr. Speaker; people who could have helped you through a crisis situation. Don't come crying to us because you can't find competent people, but we will give you some names, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one thing further, we would also like to have the ability now to appoint members to other boards in Agriculture. Is it just when he's in a tight political spot and the heat's really on, he's saying, I want to share that heat with the opposition; help me out; bail me out. I think it's a fair request, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Agriculture give us the right to give him names and to appoint those people to other boards in Agriculture in other places. If he wants help now, let us give him help. I think the best recommendation yet is one which I think I have support from my colleagues, is for them to call an election and we'll take over and we'll get the names, Mr. Speaker, in wholesale numbers to put this province back on track.

Mr. Speaker, I've dealt with some of the concerns that the farmers are dealing with today; fuel prices. They're dealing with lower initial grain prices. There is no pay out from the Western Grain Stabilization Program, Mr. Speaker. We have a Beef Income Assurance Program that is ill-conceived and the farmers aren't getting money out of it today; they're paying money into it, Mr. Speaker. That will come back to haunt the Minister time and time again, Mr. Speaker.

We have, Mr. Speaker, a Minister of Agriculture whose priorities are somewhat mixed up. He is trying to tell us about his priorities, and he wants to introduce into this Legislature laws that will stop farmers from selling their land to other Manitobans who may be incorporated, or he wants to stop them from selling to other Canadians. Mr. Speaker, where did the two people come from in Portage la Prairie that everybody's rallying to their support yesterday? They came from Ontario, Mr. Speaker. In this Minister's own words, that's a bad place to come from if you're going to buy land in Manitoba.

His priorities are totally screwed up, Mr. Speaker. He's trying to put heavy-handed legislation in Manitoba; trying to put heavy-handed legislation on farm ownership when it's not a priority. Our priority is to save the family farm, Mr. Speaker; to use our legislative

strength and our resources to help every farmer today, not to try and put him out of business by restricting who he can sell his land to if, in fact, it happens to be another Canadian or a Manitoban who wants to have an incorporated farm business.

Another waste of time, Mr. Speaker, and I think that the First Minister and the Minister of Agriculture should finally start paying attention to what is happening in this country. We are spending our time going through the province on Crow rate hearings. Well, Mr. Speaker, why aren't we going through the province on agriculture financing hearings? We can do something about that, Mr. Speaker, but I've never seen the Federal Government in Ottawa yet under Pierre Elliott Trudeau that gives a darn for what the people of any part of Canada say. Here we're going around using taxpayers' money to find out again and again and again that we're opposed to the Pepin plan. Certainly we're opposed to it, Mr. Speaker, but why haven't we got Mr. Pepin sitting in on those hearings, a man that can hear directly? We are wasting the taxpayers' time and money, Mr. Speaker.

I don't mind, and I know that the Minister of Highways and Transportation would agree, we did hear one good brief on the hearings that we're on. It probably will be helpful, but I recommend that individual go to Ottawa and camp on the doorstep of Jean-Luc and maybe he would get his message across.

Mr. Speaker, I can't re-emphasize enough the concerns that I have for the farm community. I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that it's the responsibility in a free and open and proper society that everyone should be stopped from failing in business. I, for one, would say the right to succeed has to give you the right to fail, Mr. Speaker, I think that is something we all subscribe to. We have a government that promised that that wouldn't happen, Mr. Speaker, but it has happened time and time again. We have made some positive suggestions, Mr. Speaker, to this Minister, to this Premier. What have we heard, Mr. Speaker? We have heard farmers marching on the Legislature. We have heard explosive situations developing in the farm community where there are protest movements taking place, where the receivers are being confronted by farm groups. The farmers aren't to be blamed, Mr. Speaker, but this Minister of Agriculture is because he could have avoided it if he'd have played a responsible role as the Minister of Agriculture, but he has to wait till he's hit with a two-by-four over the head before he comes to life, or maybe it's the other way around. Maybe there isn't any life in him.

Well, if he doesn't act pretty soon, Mr. Speaker, he will have to be changed as the Minister and I would recommend that his First Minister do that. Even the Minister of Highways would be more acceptable to the farm community, as long as he didn't have his former Deputy Minister dragging along with him. I think that would be an acceptable change.

Mr. Speaker, what else has this government done to help the farm community? They've raised the hydro rates by 9.5 percent, Mr. Speaker; hydro rates which we froze. That's a great help to the farm community that are under extreme pressure and lower income. They've raised the sales tax, Mr. Speaker. That's helped everybody, so you could support a higher Civil Service wage of some 27.5 percent over 30 months. That's the

kind of help the farm community got, Mr. Speaker. They got an increase in gasoline tax, Mr. Speaker, something that they said wouldn't happen last year; they were going to freeze it; that was the end of increased gas taxes, Mr. Speaker. Every farmer, even though he drives his tractor in the field, does have a car to go to town to buy his supplies and his groceries and do those kinds of things that normal families do in the city, and he is strapped with increased taxes like you'd never believe.

Without, Mr. Speaker, talking about the increased cost of a deficit which is a burden on the backs of every Manitoban, all this has to come out of the incomes of farm people who have seen lower returns in grain; lower returns in other commodities; lower returns in wages to those people who work for farmers. This is all coming out of the people, Mr. Speaker, who make this province what it has been in the past. It has only taken a short one-and-a-half to two years, Mr. Speaker, for the general public to just realize how incompetent and how incapable these people are of dealing with the economic situation; their inability to govern during times when they didn't have a treasury full of money which was left by a previous government; a totally inept government unable to cope with current situations. So you end up with confrontation in the farm community; you end up with programs that are ill-conceived and a Minister who will not make the kinds of changes necessary to cope with the current situation. In fact, any changes that he has made, he's made it more impossible for farm help than not.

He's introduced a would-be committee, Mr. Speaker, to try and say that this will be the answer to farm bankruptcies. Mr. Speaker, he is doing it at the time when it should have been in place months ago, and the consequences of that will probably be unnecessary breakups of family-farm units or losses of assets of people who normally, through a little bit of direction and the kind of economic support that the Manitoba Agricultural Corporation could have provided. But he fired that board, Mr. Speaker, and now he's asking us to give him names of people to help him out of the wilderness. Well, I told him, Mr. Speaker, we would help him out of the wilderness, but he would have to resign first, which would be the best treat and breath of fresh air that all the people of Manitoba would get.

I will conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by saying this, that it's unfortunate that we had to have this kind of a debate, this kind of comment in the Legislature. Mr. Speaker, possibly you could give me the time I have left - the rest of the afternoon?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member has over 15 minutes left.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, you indicated 15 minutes? Thank you.

There's another area that I would like to delve into, Mr. Speaker, and again I mentioned during the Estimate process or the conclusion of the Estimate process where, in fact, things were happening in the Department of Agriculture that this Minister of Agriculture was not aware of.

But before I get to that, Mr. Speaker, I want to come up with a constructive criticism and a constructive

recommendation, and I wanted to make sure the Minister heard me again, and that is because of a lack of co-ordination and this government's ability in this province to deal with the current situation in agriculture; because we now have legislation in front of the House Commons in Ottawa that no one truly understands, but the total consequences of that, and of having to introduce such legislation would be disastrous - it would take away the farm financing, the background financing and support that has been there for the farm community, Mr. Speaker - I recommend again to this Minister that he make it a national issue with the Federal Minister of Agriculture with all the other Ministers of Agriculture in Canada. That I would like him to do. I would like him to make it a national issue, because if he doesn't, you are going to see an acceleration of confrontation, which I don't think any farm people like, Mr. Speaker. I don't think they like it; I don't like it and don't support it. - But they are forced to it, not because they want to, but because this Minister has lacked the ability to be strong and to show leadership.

I would hope he would take these words and I would hope that he would immediately deal with it, because he found time to go to a National Conference on Beef Stabilization, Mr. Speaker. He has found time to go to meetings on other kinds of programs with the Federal Government. I would hope today that he would leave this Chamber and give consideration to that kind of a co-ordinated effort by all the Ministers in Canada, because I believe, Mr. Speaker, if this Minister doesn't have some ideas that might deal with the situation, there are some pretty competent Ministers in a lot of the other provinces in Canada. Some of them are personal friends of mine; some of them I haven't had an opportunity to meet, but I know that they are coming from a pretty good background and have lots of depth. Their problems aren't totally unlike ours, although ours are somewhat unique, because of the past drought and the past flood problems, and certainly would be putting us in a little different area. So I do ask the Minister to do that.

I would hope that he would do it and I would hope he would get the kind of response from the Federal Minister of Agriculture who should, when there's a bill before the House of Commons, be prepared to go before all the Provincial Ministers of Agriculture and the public of Canada and totally point out whether it is good, bad or indifferent legislation. But, again, I want to point out, it is my estimation and from what I have heard, that it is not good legislation, but let's look at the alternatives that can be put in place. So I would hope the Minister takes to heart and takes some action on making it a national focus because this is what it's going to take. This is what it's going to take, Mr. Speaker, to defuse some of the confrontation that is taking place.

They at least know somebody in the Legislative Assemblies in the House of Commons in Canada care about the plight of the farm community and I again re-emphasize, a farm community in Manitoba that had a net decline in their incomes each of the last three years, Mr. Speaker. There aren't many other groups in society that have faced that kind of — (Interjection) — Mr. Speaker, we have the tree planter from North Dakota, who's done so much to enhance the trade for the farmers in the United States, one of our major trading

partners. The Minister of Natural Resources speaking from his seat has done so much to enhance that great market of 220-some-million people of the south by participating in an anti-American demonstration. That's the kind of help the farm community needs, you know. With help like that, Mr. Speaker, they won't go very far. That's the kind of colleagues this Minister of Agriculture has to deal with. You know, that's the kind of background that he has . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. J. DOWNEY: I want to just discuss briefly, Mr. Speaker. Again the Minister of Agriculture, who at a time when the farm community is feeling this extreme pressure, at a time when they are feeling the difficulties, this Minister of Agriculture has five people taken from his Department of Communications, and he didn't know a thing about it. It followed on the recommendations by the Wepler Report, Mr. Speaker, followed on the recommendations that the Department of Agriculture Communications Branch were probably doing the best job of any Communications Branch in the entire government, and he didn't even know about it, Mr. Speaker.

He came to the office one morning and he was told that they had five people taken from his Communications Branch, at a time, Mr. Speaker, when we need to put the message out to the rest of the public in Canada. He had a tool in his hands to do it, and what did he do? He left that great mastermind of a Premier of his who doesn't know Sic 'em from Come here, Mr. Speaker, take those communications people from him. And why didn't he stand up and fight for the farm community? He hasn't done that yet. There hasn't been one example that I can give this Minister credit, Mr. Speaker. I can't give him credit in one area for standing up for the farm community. He's standing behind them but it's so far back, Mr. Speaker, that he looks like the red rump of the Liberal Party. I think that's how it was put by one national politician. I think that's where he fits best.

Mr. Speaker, it's that kind of weakness; it's that kind of lack of direction; it's that kind of non-support that the farm community won't tolerate. And again, Mr. Speaker, agriculture again are saying, time and time again throughout rural Manitoba and it will spread to the city, that NDP times are tough times and that will stick with him forever, that under the Minister, Billie Uruski, the Honourable Minister for Interlake, that NDP times are tough times and it will be said over and over and over again, Mr. Speaker.

The lower grain prices, Mr. Speaker - I do want to be constructive, because the Minister did communicate to the Federal Government on lower grain prices, but he didn't have any positive suggestions on how it could be dealt with, Mr. Speaker. I suggested that possibly there could be a loan program put in place to lend that money to the Wheat Board so they wouldn't feel the initial lowering of those prices. A loan program, Mr. Speaker, interest-free, because let's remember how many millions of dollars are sitting in the federal Grain Stabilization Program that — (Interjection) — 600 million. My colleague for Morris helped me with the numbers. There are \$600 million of Western Canadian

grain farmers' money sitting in the hands of the Federal Government. That is a lot of money and that is sitting there, Mr. Speaker, and I would hope when the Minister of Agriculture calls the national Minister and all the other provincial Ministers together that he will say, let's rework the formula so that we can get a cash flow into the hands of those farmers this coming year. It will take some of the pressure off the backs of the farmers. It would take some of the weight off the backs of the taxpayers. It would use money that is the farmers' own money, Mr. Speaker, and isn't held by the Federal Government in Ottawa. That is the kind of thing that he could recommend, Mr. Speaker, to his federal counterparts and to the Ministers in other provinces. It's that kind of support that he could go forward with and make those kinds of recommendations.

What is he going to do, Mr. Speaker? He is going to sit in this Legislature and say there are 700 and some people helped under the Interest Rate Relief Program. At the same time, there are 100 people having the receivers knocking on their doors, taking their livestock or their machinery away. That's what is happening, Mr. Speaker, while he is trying to set up the guidelines for a committee who are going to do what? What are they going to do? Maybe by the middle of August, when the combines should be in the field, they are going to be recommending that farmer A, B, or C should get a seeding loan, money for their fertilizer. That's the kind of thing that's going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

You know, he is shooting behind the target all the time, Mr. Speaker. Why doesn't he show some leadership ability? Why doesn't he show some strength? Why doesn't he stand up for the farm community, Mr. Speaker, because that is what they need during a time of an economic recession. They are such a small group. Their vote is such a small group in society, Mr. Speaker, that it is unfortunate. — (Interjection) — The Minister of Natural Resources said they're worth nothing to him. They're worth nothing to you. Is that what you said?

HON. A. MACKLING: I said the honourable member is now speaking. When he was Minister of Agriculture, he did nothing.

MR. J. DOWNEY: I am prepared, Mr. Speaker, to go to the people of Manitoba and campaign on our policies on agriculture versus this Minister's policies on agriculture, and I'll tell you how it will end up. I can tell you how it will end up, Mr. Speaker. There will be a pretty big change-over because I'll tell you, the people who voted those members in opposite today in the government are seeing what they have done. They are seeing what they have done, Mr. Speaker.

I don't hold that against them. We live in a free democratic society. They have the right to cast their vote, their support, for whoever they like but, Mr. Speaker, they deserve the right to have the confidence of those people. They deserve the right to be looked after by those people and they didn't get it, Mr. Speaker. They didn't get it in spades. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, they will remember, and again and again and again, they will say that NDP times are tough times.

I would like to conclude my grievance today, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I have been receiving numerous

letters and phone calls from farmers who have made application for the new loan guarantee under the MACC; farmers who I would have never thought would have needed any form of support, but they do need it. They're legitimate, well-thought out farmers that have run into some tough times in the last couple of years and they do need some additional support. They probably need it a little bit more, because what I'm also hearing, Mr. Speaker, is that the banking community are tightening up just a little bit because of the confrontation and the activities that are taking place out there.

Do you know that the farm community makes up - and I think my figures are correct - just under 3 percent of the loans of the banking community in Canada. Under 3 percent of the amount of money that all the banks in Canada loan out go to agriculture. Mr. Speaker, if the kind of flak and the kind of lack of co-ordinated putting together and what I would call stability provided by government which has to be in place - confidence has to be there for both sides, both banking and farming - if that confidence is eroded, the banks and the lending institutes will do what they did following the depression of the 1930s. They will call every loan, Mr. Speaker, and upset the total farm community. They will say, who needs the kind of harrassment that we are getting from, yes, from the farm community, in most cases justified. I have to say, in a lot of cases it is. But if we would have had a responsible provincial Minister of Agriculture in government, if we would have had a responsible Federal Government dealing with the farm community, then I don't think we would have come to this situation. But we are on the verge, Mr. Speaker, if this thing isn't dealt with very carefully, of confrontation and crisis in farm communities.

We are seeing banks getting very nervous and lending institutes about carrying on with the continued financing of farms. If that starts to happen, then you have a domino effect, Mr. Speaker. The numbers of farmers that are in trouble today will increase in multitudes because the farm community will lose the support they're getting from the lending institutes at this point. That cannot be allowed to happen, so I will close, Mr. Speaker, by again re-emphasizing this Minister of Agriculture has a responsibility to make a national issue, to get some answers from the Federal Minister of Agriculture, to get some answers from his colleagues, and support him to make him a stronger Minister so that he can go forward and when he says something to the farm community, they know that it's more than empty echoed words, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if the Minister would just do those few things, we would be prepared to give him names, but we have to know the terms of reference and the legislative authority in which he's dealing with. If he would give them to us right now, I would have names right back to him. In fact, I could give him one name that really comes to mind right now. There is a man who is a credible farmer and he's had a reputation with the farm co-ops and he has done some good work for the farm community, and that's Jim Deveson who is the past President of Manitoba Pool Elevators. He's a credible person; he's a tough man, but he knows what the farmers need in tough times.

MR. B. RANSOM: Give him the names of some of those they kicked off the board.

MR. J. DOWNEY: I could go back to some of the names of those that he fired. That's right - Harold Sneath was one that was his own appointment, former President of Manitoba Pool - Harold Clement - you know, we've got many names of well-qualified people. I guess, Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of people that I can give him. If he would only listen to us, and if he would have listened to us and my colleagues for the last two years, this wouldn't have developed; but he buried his head in the sand and the farmers of Manitoba have every right to do what they're doing, call him and his government, and saying that he and Premier Howard Pawley under his administration, that NDP times are tough times.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do hope that this Minister of Agriculture will call a national conference to deal with the current prices in agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, in dealing with this grievance motion put forward by the - speaking on the motion that's been put forward by the Member for Arthur - well, it's a motion that he is speaking on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if one was to totally disregard what the honourable member has said and not realize the seriousness of the situation that is there. One would almost have to smile at what the Honourable Member for Arthur has said in this last little while.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Do you think it's funny? You think it is funny!

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, a Conservative administration and a Conservative MLA whose philosophy is non-governmental intervention, totally a philosophy of free enterprise, of non-interference in the economy, recommending that the state intervene in bailing out the financial institutions in difficult times - one would have to smile - and now saying that we should intervene in all the cases that are there of hardships that farmers are facing. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if one didn't realize the seriousness of the situation, one could smile, those kinds of comments coming from a Conservative MLA.

When they were in office, Mr. Speaker, they could not see themselves and the Province of Manitoba being involved in the day-to-day situations of farmers and government and private institutions. Mr. Speaker, what did we hear today; you'd better get your hands dirty and get involved in the day-to-day operations of the farmers and their lending institutions; get involved in this whole area.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Tories can't, and I guess they want to have it both ways, they want to be on both sides of the question. When in office, our philosophy tells us not to get involved in this situation; when we propose some situations and some solutions and some avenues of dealing with some of these critical situations, they now say you haven't done enough, You are waiting too long, you haven't done enough. Mr. Speaker, we are the first administration in this country to deal with the serious situation that we face throughout

this country. — (Interjection) — Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is in terms of numbers, they are no different than they are in other provinces; you look at the Provinces of Quebec, Ontario and other provinces.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, now that we've proposed some solutions, it isn't soon enough. Mr. Speaker, when they were in office, they supported high interest rates, their administration. Then when we brought in an Interest Rate Relief Program, Mr. Speaker, they told us we couldn't find any farmers.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, P. EYLER: Order please.

The Honourable Member for Tuxedo on a point of order.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Minister has made a statement to the effect that our party and our government supported high interest rates. That is not the case and I demand that he withdraw it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Turtle Mountain . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. B. URUSKI: . . . the former Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of Finance when he was in office - the Member for Turtle Mountain - did on May 8, 1981, Page 3468 in Hansard - "But if I might return for a moment to the previous question. The honourable member tried to isolate the monetary policies of the Federal Government from their fiscal policies. The best advice that is available today is that the monetary policy of the Bank of Canada is basically sound."

Mr. Speaker, if that isn't an outright statement of support to the then policies of the Federal Government and the Bank of Canada, if that isn't an outright support for that policy, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for River Heights can ask for withdrawals all he wants. We brought an Interest Rate Relief Program, Mr. Speaker, the first of it's kind in this country. In fact, we were told it wasn't enough and it was a pittance of . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the honourable members we did not say . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, order.

The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain on a point of order.

MR. B. RANSOM: I thought for a moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Minister was speaking on the point of order. Perhaps you could clarify that for me, because I wish to speak on the point of order when he's done.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Are you speaking on a point of order, Billy, or do you know?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the Minister for Agriculture speaking on a point of order?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, I was continuing with my remarks indicating that I felt there was no point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have on frequent occasions said that I had stated that we and our government favoured high interest rates. What he has put forward in evidence of that is a statement which I said to the effect that the best advice available was that the monetary policies of the Federal Government were sound, etc. There is a vast difference, Mr. Speaker.

I had discussion with the Minister of Finance in his Estimates last year, whereupon the Minister of Finance agreed that it would have been unfair of me to say that his government favoured high inflation, just as it was unfair of them to say that we had favoured high interest rates, Mr. Speaker. I suggest that the Minister of Agriculture has no basis for that statement . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. B. RANSOM: . . . and should simply withdraw it and get on with his remarks.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Agriculture on the same point of order.

HON. B. URUSKI: I continue to speak to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, and statements made again by the former Minister of Finance on 22nd of May 1981, Page 3731, wherein I quote in an answer to a question of the then Leader of the Opposition, the now Premier, and I quote from that page: "But given the circumstances we are in today, Mr. Speaker, I'm advised that the consequences of the Central Bank following a very different course of action than they are now following would lead to an even worse situation, Mr. Speaker."

Mr. Speaker, the Central Bank following the monetary policy of high interest rates, one can only deduct from those kinds of statements — (Interjection) — Well, Mr. Speaker,

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. B. URUSKI: From their statements I have said that it is my belief that they support high interest rates.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that in their remarks they have indicated that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are there any other members who wish to speak on the point of order?
The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Agriculture wishes to say that he believes that we supported it or he interpreted what we said as supporting high interest rates, fine. What the Minister did was attribute a statement to me and a policy to our government, and I have challenged them to either produce where that was stated by myself or was stated as a policy of our government. In the absence of proof, Sir, he should simply withdraw the remark.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance on the same point of order.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Yes, to the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. I don't think anybody in this House wants high interest rates or wanted them at any time, but there is a group in this House who believed that was necessary a year ago and two years ago. That group sits in opposition right now. They didn't say they wanted high interest rates, but they said that the high interest rate policy of the federal bank, the Bank of Canada, was the correct policy to follow.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Surely, it is dancing on the heads of needles, of pins, to say that there is a distinction between . . .

MR. H. GRAHAM: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: I'm on a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me. You cannot raise a point of order on a point of order.

MR. H. GRAHAM: I suggest the honourable member is debating.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Finance.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Mr. Speaker, I am not debating. I am pointing out on the point of order that there indeed is no point of order because the Minister of Agriculture was absolutely correct. That doesn't mean that he thinks that the people opposite want deliberately to foist work, they thought that it was a solution. One can use an analogy of the doctor in the old days who thought that he would cure the patient by taking a pint of blood out and if that didn't work, they took another pint out; and if the patient died, it was because they took not enough blood out. That's exactly the theory that they and Governor Bouey subscribe to, that if high interest rates don't cure inflation, then you boost interest rates higher, and if inflation continues, then it's because interest rates aren't high enough.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do any other members wish to speak on the point of order?

MR. D. ORCHARD: Are you making a ruling now, Mr. Speaker, as to whether he should withdraw?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a request for a ruling?
The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the MLA and our Opposition House Leader, has clearly indicated that the Minister of Agriculture should withdraw the allegation that we supported high interest rates. He has not documented any record of Hansard or any place where we made such a statement. In light of the fact that he cannot prove his statement, it is incumbent upon him to withdraw his remarks. I would ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you instruct the Minister of Agriculture to withdraw his allegations which are incorrect.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

The Minister of Agriculture has referred to two sections in Hansard which he has quoted and has interpreted as meaning what he has said. The opinions on both sides of the House conflict as to what the precise meaning of the passages is. However, a difference of opinions on the meaning of an interpretation of a passage, of a quotation, does not constitute a point of order. There is no point of order.

The Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For an administration that was prepared to support the then policies and which indicated that high interest rates would cure inflation, Mr. Speaker, and then, as I indicated earlier, when we brought in an Interest Rate Relief Program for homeowners, farmers and small business people in this province, the first of its kind in this country, it was the members opposite, the Member for Pembina and the Member for Arthur and other members, who continually derided this administration, saying that this program was ineffective. We would find no farmers in the categories that were under this program, Mr. Speaker, and which region of the province has the highest take-up on this program? The central region of the province, Mr. Speaker, the area in which the constituency of the Honourable Member for Pembina is in. As well, Mr. Speaker, the next highest - no, I shouldn't say the next highest - the third highest is the southwest region in which the Member for Arthur's region is in.

In terms of providing assistance and recognizing, Mr. Speaker, that these programs weren't the end-all and the be-all of the saviour of farm families in financial difficulty, as well as homeowners and small businesspeople, but we didn't stop there. We didn't close our hands to agriculture. We followed on with a long-term stabilization program for beef, Mr. Speaker, for the red meats industry, all along willing to co-operate with other provincial administrations and the national government where we saw the need for a national stabilization plan of orderly marketing of cattle in this country. We continued to pursue those areas, but we did bring into the beef industry some long-term stability,

and we hope that we will be able to turn around the long-term trends of the reduction of beef cows in this province and be able to continue to support a packing industry, processing industry, and feed lot industry in this province.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, we went on and we said, we know that there was only a short bail-out in terms of the hog industry that it took two years of continued pressure while we were in opposition in terms of assisting the hog industry in this province. They said, oh yes, we will help you out a year later, so we'll give you a retroactive payment and then it will go for one year and we'll phase it out because you don't need anymore. Mr. Speaker, we were not that short-sighted. Mr. Speaker, we are interested in terms of providing long-term stability to agriculture. In fact, what the honourable members are saying should be done now; we have provided in the last year and a half to both the hog and the beef industry, Mr. Speaker.

Recognizing the world situation in grain prices, Mr. Speaker, and the financial situation that farmers face, we did bring in a Loan Guarantee Program of \$100 million. It was recognized by the financial institutions as being, Mr. Speaker . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, we are providing \$100 million over two years as guarantees, as a bail-out - let's understand what we are doing, Mr. Speaker - as a bail-out to financial institutions and farmers who are in great difficulty, something that the former administration did not even recognize. They had a program for years that no one took part in or very few institutions took part in, Mr. Speaker. — (Interjection) — Mr. Speaker, if the honourable members now say that there was no problem while they were in government, that was the problem in Manitoba.

The Tory administration was the problem in this province, Mr. Speaker, and the farmers and the people of Manitoba dealt them their answer. They gave them their answer very clearly in November of 1981. Mr. Speaker, you look at the percentage of vote that we received. We were told on our beef program that we would be lucky if we had 10 percent of the producers sign up. Seventy percent of the cow herds and 5,000 producers joined the program, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, talk about an administration that is negative, devoid of any proposals to assist the agricultural sector, now that we have indicated that we're prepared to try and deal with some of the difficult situations and volatile situations that the farming industry is facing in terms of their dealings with their financial institutions, and we set up the review panel, what do we say now? You should have done it a month ago or two months ago, Mr. Speaker. We are the only administration in this country that have moved out boldly to put such measures into place, Mr. Speaker, and when we ask the opposition to become involved in this process, now they're saying we kicked off so many good farmers and, yes, we will advise. I don't know where they stand, Mr. Speaker. Do they want this or don't they want this? Are they prepared to support, or are they just prepared to carp, Mr. Speaker? I am not sure if they're just a carping opposition, Mr. Speaker,

because they talk about following the problem and getting up and carping that not enough is being done. Looking over the records of four years of Tory administration versus a year-and-a-half of an NDP administration, Mr. Speaker, clearly, it can be shown where the support and the policies of this government lie in terms of the agricultural industry of this province. Clearly, it can be shown that we have lived up to our commitments to agriculture to the farmers of Manitoba and we will continue to serve them and do whatever we can with all our policies that we've put forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the situation we have is and can be very volatile in terms of some of the situations that are arising. We have and will attempt to become and play a mediation and a review role, and we are hoping that farmers around the province are prepared to participate in a review panel, and will be able to analyze the severe situation that farmers face and have put themselves into, Mr. Speaker, many of whom have been unable to deal with the situations, because many operators who are in difficulty are there as a result of high interest rates and a number of situations.

A MEMBER: But you were going to stop all that. See this?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, it appears the honourable members feel that the Province of Manitoba can now put up hundreds of millions of dollars. We never promised that, Mr. Speaker. We promised an Interest Rate Relief Program, which we lived up to, Mr. Speaker.

In fact the Budget that was put out in the election campaign, was put forward, Mr. Speaker, and the numbers of farmers and assistance that we've provided is there and we have carried out those commitments. We are going further, Mr. Speaker, on this review, in the absence of any meaningful programs at the national level and we recognize that on the world market, Canadian farmers are being hard pressed in terms of grain prices.

We recognize that there is a national responsibility in the area of incomes for agriculture, but for an opposition who historically have been committed to having government remove from the daily lives of the citizens in this province; for a party who normally have advocated that position to now come into this House and say, you'd better intervene in the situation; you'd better use the instrumentality of the state to intervene in the affairs of private lending institutions and farmers and a whole host of other grievances, Mr. Speaker, really flies in the face of everything that they stand for. They really have no philosophy, Mr. Speaker. They are an opportunist party, Mr. Speaker, trying to capitalize on the hurts and the dilemmas of people who are suffering as a result - of what? - of a true free enterprise society, Mr. Speaker, the kind of society that they support. They don't want orderly marketing to provide stable incomes for farmers, Mr. Speaker. They want the true, free, open marketplace to handle all commodities. But, Mr. Speaker, when they are in opposition and they are outside of power, they are saying, you'd better intervene; you'd better pull us out

of trouble. What a lopsided opposition, Mr. Speaker, what a two-sided opposition. They really are devoid of any policies or any direction in terms of assisting the farm communities of this province, Mr. Speaker, and all of the citizens, for a free enterprise party, Mr. Speaker. I have yet to see such a rabid bunch of socialists on the other side, as we've seen in the last day or two - demanding action, demanding action.

The intervention of the state in the affairs of people and their lending institutions and in their community, Mr. Speaker, coming from a rabid free enterprise party, it is just unreal to hear that coming from the Conservatives. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that we can - not come up and carp and bring about statements and comments after the fact, after the government moves, as they have done in the past - but be constructive and play a meaningful role in making sure that agriculture remains the No. 1 industry, as we see agriculture the No. 1 industry in this province and we put our money where our mouth is, Mr. Speaker, in supporting that industry.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for River East in the Chair for the Department of Finance; and the Honourable Member for Burrows in the Chair for the Department of the Civil Service Commission.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY - CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

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

HON. M.B. DOLIN: Mr. Chairperson, I have some information that I would like to put before the committee. It relates to questions that were asked last evening and I think even in the previous sessions of this particular Estimate debate.

It is with regard to the Order for Return, or the two Orders for Return that are similar; one requesting information on all transfers of staff and people hired and people whose employment had ceased between November 31, 1981 and April 5, 1982. That's the first Order for Return and that information has, in fact, been returned to the House and given to the members.

The information that I have on the compilation of the response to that particular Order for Return, which was No. 3, required the documentation of 850 appointments and the tabulation of eight separate pieces of information - 6,900 pieces of information to be researched, documented, verified by departments, typed into proper format, and submitted.

There were two additional Orders with the same level of detail for all transfers and all terminations of employment. The costing out of this particular process is as follows: The computer costs for the initial data base was \$3,000; compilation of individual department breakdowns took 10 hours of work; verification of information by Civil Service Commission staff took 191 hours of work; typing the first compilation took 85 hours of work; review and verification by 33 individual departments or agencies took 165 hours of work; return

of information took 66 hours of work; typing, preparation and photocopying took 4 hours of work; materials, including 2,000 photocopies and the paper involved, took 93 hours of work and \$150, for a total costs - the computer, as I mentioned - cost \$3,000; material of \$150; the staff hours costed out at \$5,340 for clerical assistance; and \$1,710 for professional work. It came to a total of \$10,200 for issuing a response for that Order for Return, which involved four months of hirings or transfers or movement of staff.

The Order for Return under question now by the Leader of the Opposition and members of the opposition involves nine months of information. Now if we take \$5,100 as a monthly cost - half of what I just gave you - and take that times nine months, we come up with a cost of around \$45,000, and if my compilation of the hours of work is correct, the addition of the hours of work indicated by the Civil Service Commission staff, who of course must keep track of this sort of thing, we have 42.5 work weeks. They're almost a year of solid work by one person to do this. It is, of course, divided among many people, but those people have full-time jobs as I have stated.

Now, if we consider that what is being asked for is a subsequent nine months worth of information, that compares with the first four months, which we have already filed, and if members wish to compute how long that will take, based on the information I have just given them - and I will be happy to table that information for the benefit of members - they can understand, I'm sure, quite well, why it is not possible to immediately respond to an Order for Return or even to do so within the time of just a few months.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, it would appear that the so-called cost of providing the information requested in the Order for Return, filed in the House before Christmas, could have been offset by the government's grant to the Marxist Conference. Is the Minister suggesting, Mr. Chairman, that the opposition should not be asking for this information?

HON. M.B. DOLIN: No, of course I'm not suggesting that. The opposition may ask for any information they wish in an Order for Return and that is well-known and that is well-accepted. The responsibility for responding to this Order for Return has also been accepted.

What I am pointing out to honourable members is the cost involved, both in time and in actual expenditures. That is considerable and it must be done on top of all the other responsibilities of staff, and on top of all of the costs involved in running a government. It's not an easy task, it takes time. The information is of very, very extremely detailed nature and it must be correct. It must be checked and it takes a long time to do this.

Staff is not suddenly released from all of their other responsibilities and put onto this task, nor do we have the ability or the desire to hire extra people to do this kind of task. It must be done as an addition to the work that they already have assigned to them, and I am simply pointing out that it does take time, it must be correct, and the information that is filed - if the

members will recall the last time it was eight very large boxes of material that were brought down to the Clerk's Office to be distributed. If you multiply that by at least two and one-half times, that's what you're going to be getting this next time around and it's going to take a while to compile that.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I'm glad to hear the Minister believes that the opposition is entitled to have this information, because certainly when her party was in opposition they asked for very similar information for a number of years and the Minister's staff can confirm that to her if she wishes. We are discussing, Mr. Chairman, what we believe to be a very important principle for the Civil Service, and that is the principle of the merit system.

I read to the Minister last evening sections of The Civil Service Commission Act, which provides for selection, for appointment, promotion or transfer to a position and shall be based on merit. I must say to the Minister that our concern is caused by the policy of this government in appointing Selection Committees for priority senior competitions in addition to regular Civil Service appointments; committees composed of persons who are known for their partisan political activity and that must lead us to the conclusion that because of their political activity, in many cases because of the appointments that we have seen made, we are concerned that the merit principle is not the basis for all of the appointments that are being made in the Civil Service, and that is why the Leader of the Opposition has asked for the information that he has in the Order for Return. It is why we need to have that information in order to complete the Estimates of the Minister of Labour. Could the Minister indicate when this information will be available?

HON. M.B. DOLIN: Again referring to the time involved for the previous Order for Return, which was extremely similar, I would point out that it took about six months or a little more to gather that information and return it to the House. That was for four months' worth of information, four months' worth of hiring and transfers. So you're asking for nine months' worth. I suppose you can extend that accordingly. That would be an estimate.

I am certainly not giving any date on which it will be filed. That depends on the workload of staff.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister confirm that in the Orders for Return that have been filed there's not included the same information that has been requested with respect to the composition of the Selection Board?

HON. M.B. DOLIN: The members of the Selection Board is new information that has been requested during these Estimates and in the Order for Return. That's not in the Order-in-Council. Do you mean in the previous Order for Return?

MR. G. MERCIER: Yes.

HON. M.B. DOLIN: That wasn't requested in the earliest Order for Return.

Again I would point out that selection committees are made up of the people that I have enumerated many times in this committee. Determined by the department and the level of the hiring, you could easily figure out who was on the Selection Committee.

MR. G. MERCIER: But in the latest Order for Return filed by the Leader of the Opposition, in the information that the Minister will be supplying she will be providing the composition of the selection boards?

HON. M.B. DOLIN: Yes, that is one more detail that was requested that will probably add to the amount of time needed to gather the information and verify it.

MR. G. MERCIER: How much of the work has been done to date?

HON. M.B. DOLIN: The work is in progress. I can't tell you how far along it is.

Every single file needs to be scanned to determine the information that is requested when you're asking for selection committee names. Every single file for every one of those hiring must be looked at individually.

MR. G. MERCIER: In the Annual Report it indicates there were in 1982, 908 competitions. She has indicated she will only be supplying the information from March 15th to approximately December 15th. I'm puzzled why it is going to take eight months when obviously some work has been done and reference made in preparing the Annual Report.

HON. M.B. DOLIN: I don't recall saying that it was going to take eight months. I said it took six months for the last Order for Return to be filed.

That Order for Return involved the movement of staff over a four-month period. What we have delineated and what we indicated we would respond to is a nine-month period now for the second Order for Return, and I said that you could figure out from that how long it might take.

There also is additional information which must be gathered with regard to the selection committees and as, I guess, a matter of my own personal opinion, I am curious as to why in the discussion of Estimates of the Civil Service Commission we are still on an Order for Return, which is really a matter of the House as a whole.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, we are still on the Order for Return because it is the information that the opposition requires in order to determine and form an opinion as to whether this government is proceeding on the basis of the legislation and making appointments and hiring people on the basis of merit, or whether the appointment of people is being influenced by the partisan political backgrounds of some members of the selection committees that this government has set up and comments on in the Annual Report in order to hire senior people and make regular Civil Service appointments.

So the information that will be in the Order for Return is the information that we require in order to complete these Estimates and question the Minister on. Surely, one of the most important responsibilities of the Minister

responsible for the Civil Service Commission is to ensure that the merit principle is maintained, or would she disagree with that?

HON. M.B. DOLIN: I think it's important at this point to have it show in the record a particular section of The Civil Service Act, which I think is very important because it relates directly to the freedom of Manitobans. This is a free province and people have the right of political activity.

It's Section 44(1) of The Civil Service Act. "Nothing in this Act or any other Act of the Legislature prohibits an employee in the Civil Service or a person employed by any agency of the government: (a) From seeking nomination as, or being a candidate, or supporting a candidate or political party in a provincial or federal general election or by-election and, if elected, from serving as an elected representative in that public office; or (b) From speaking or writing on behalf of a candidate or a political party in any election or by-election if, in doing so, he does not reveal any information or matter concerning the department, branch or agency in which he is employed, or any information that he has procured or which comes to his knowledge solely by virtue of his employment or position."

That section of The Civil Service Act ensures that civil servants in Manitoba may be politically active if they choose. This, I believe, may not then be held against them when they are performing their duty as civil servants. The opposition is assuming, first of all, that a person is active in a particular political party, and I would ask you to please note that section of the Act does not refer to which particular party they may be active in. They could be active in the Liberal Party, the Progressive Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, or the Rhinoceros Party, any of these parties; but they may be politically active. It is not correct to assume that because a particular person might be politically active in the party of their choice or in an election for any given particular political party, that they then have prejudiced all future activity by themselves in their Civil Service position. That is an incorrect and, I believe, not in keeping with the law assumption that is being made by the opposition.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, my question to the Minister then is: If she wants to remove the cloud of suspicion that politics are involved in a number of these appointments, would she not then recommend to the government or establish as a policy that people like the Clerk of the Executive Council and a number of the politically appointed Deputy Ministers like Mr. McBryde and her Deputy Minister of Labour should be removed from the selection committee and replaced by career civil servants so that there is no cloud of suspicion on the appointments that these selection committees make when they are composed of people with very partisan political backgrounds? Would she make that recommendation or establish that policy?

HON. M.B. DOLIN: The Member for St. Norbert is assuming that whatever he calls a career civil servant - and I'm not sure how long a person has to be employed before you consider it a career. I don't know if he is talking about longevity or some kind of self-declaration

that there is no party card of any type in a person's purse or wallet. I don't know how he could assume that Mr. McBryde is the supporter of one political party and another Deputy Minister might not be the supporter of some other political party. He is making all kinds of assumptions and, particularly, because of the section of The Civil Service Act which I just read to members, I certainly would not do as he asks.

MR. G. MERCIER: Does the Minister not recognize that when people like Mr. Decter and Mr. McBryde are on a selection committee with their partisan political background, that any appointment that they make carries with it a cloud of suspicion that politics have been involved?

HON. M.B. DOLIN: Again, I find this just amazing. Politics are involved in elections. There is a party in government right now that has a particular philosophy; there was a party in government before that had a particular philosophy.

To assume that civil servants, who exercise their right under Section 44(1) of The Civil Service Act, have excluded themselves from then exercising their rights as employees and their responsibilities as employees, particularly as senior managers, is something that I cannot comprehend. I am really surprised that the opposition is pursuing at such great length this line of questioning, as it is very clear in the Act, and it is very clear that one cannot differentiate between what they call a civil servant and what someone else might call a civil servant. We have a definition of a civil servant in law, which is very clear, and that is the one we use.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Wolseley.

MS. M. PHILLIPS: Yes, Mr. Chairperson. I'm also quite amazed that this discussion is being carried to quite these lengths. The Minister has very distinctly outlined the makeup of selection committees, based on the position that certain individuals hold, whether they will be on that particular selection board or not, in terms of their responsibility.

If we used the same procedure that the former government used, which was by Order-in-Council, the Minister or the Premier of Cabinet appointing certain deputies, that I presume they appointed because they shared a common philosophy as to what that department should be doing, were they then assuming that person was a political appointee, and therefore should never sit on selections boards, or did they allow their deputies and their ADMs and their senior managers that they appointed, with or without a selection board, such as the Minister has set up, but appointed them by strict Order-in-Council political appointments? Were they not allowed to sit on a selection board to hire departmental staff, or because they happen to be of a different philosophy than certain people the Member for St. Norbert mentioned - if they happened to have Progressive Conservative cards in their hip pocket, I don't think he had any with purses, which is something else the Minister should be congratulated for - would the members opposite say that those deputies and those ADMs should not have been sitting on selection boards, hiring any other staff in those departments?

If his argument is logical to him, it has to work both ways. It has to be what is good for the goose is good for the gander, and you can take your pick which category fits.

I think for the members opposite to say on one hand, yes, when we were in government we did not remove that section of the Act. We understand that civil servants have those political rights in a free democratic society and they left that particular section of the Act in there; in fact, left many of us operating under that Act in our positions. Obviously they agreed with that particular right for civil servants. Their argument in this particular case seems to be extremely contradictory. They say it's all right if it's our appointments; it's all right if we choose to recognize as government the validity of civil servants having political rights; we didn't change it, but now that we're in opposition and the government is following the same procedure, in fact, even making the procedure under the present policy standardized in that it happens with all levels, not just levels that are covered by the MGEA agreement, but senior management as well, it seems that their argument is going around in full circle and coming back to hit them in the face.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour being 4:30 the Chair is interrupting the proceeding of this committee in favour of the Private Members' Hour. We shall be back at 8:00 p.m.

SUPPLY - FINANCE

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. P. Eylar: Committee come to order.

We are considering the Estimates of the Department of Finance, Item 3.(a)(1), Comptroller's Office, Salaries. The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: I have a few questions on this area, Mr. Chairman.

In respect to paying bills, what's the average time that it takes the government to pay a bill, and can the Minister give us a distribution of the time required for the payment of bills? What percentage takes 30 days, what percentage takes 40 days, and so forth?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: I believe I'll have that answer for the member in a matter of a few minutes. We're getting some more personnel in here.

MR. B. RANSOM: Perhaps the Minister can tell me whether or not the government has made any move to pay interest on overdue accounts. It seems to me I saw some mention of that at some point.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: No, there has been no move made to change policies with respect to interest.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, has the Minister given any consideration to paying interest on the accounts that the government has owed for more than 30 days, for example? I believe that the government charges interest on accounts that are due to it. Perhaps he could refresh my memory on what basis the government

charges interest on accounts owing, accounts receivable, and could he then give an indication of whether he's considered turning the system around and paying. If his staff aren't here, Mr. Chairman, maybe he'd just give us the commitment; while the staff aren't here to give him all the reasons why he shouldn't do it, just give us a commitment that he's going to do that.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Mr. Chairman, there have been discussions, not so much with staff of the Department of Finance who would probably be more reluctant to suggest payment of interest on overdue accounts, but rather with Government Services. I am sure the member is aware that federally there's a move in that direction at the present time to pay interest on overdue accounts. We are looking at improving our method of payment so that the turnaround time is less. As I've indicated, there's certainly been communications within government about that problem, and sometimes it really is unfair to small businesses if they have to wait for three months and those kinds of time.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, I know that I wasn't able to accomplish that during the period of time that I was Minister. I had actually hoped to have been there a little longer than I was. I would urge the Minister to give serious consideration to that, because I know that it's an area that causes a lot of frustration to the average person who is dealing with the government. They know that if they owe the government any money, it doesn't take very long until there's a nasty little computerized note comes along that says if they don't pay up right away, they'll be slapped with an amount of interest and their bill will go up accordingly. Yet, there are numbers of cases where people don't get paid by the government and it drags on for months. Perhaps there aren't many of them, but there are some of them, and then that individual isn't entitled to get any interest on that account receivable from the government. So perhaps the Minister could give that some consideration.

With respect to quarterly reports, Mr. Chairman, can the Minister give any indication whether he's contemplating any changes in presentation of the quarterly reports?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: No, there's nothing under review at the present for changes other than that if in the next year after review and after discussion with the Public Accounts Committee, if we decide to show more information - that is, it would be as a supplement rather than as a substitute - there might be some information with respect to current capital. The basic method of preparing and the continuation of it is not something that's under consideration for change. The cost is really not very much. The machinery is now set up. By the six month report, there are advantages to government in just making sure for our own discipline that the report is there; not so much that the report is there, but that we do it so that we see where we are.

MR. B. RANSOM: There are a couple of changes that the Minister might give some consideration to. One was, I believe, that there is a lapse factor taken into consideration, but the lapse factor isn't identified when

the quarterly report deals with making an estimate of the deficit. I think it might be useful to identify that. I don't have a quarterly report in front of me, but I don't think that at any time that they indicate what's happening in specific areas of revenue. Perhaps, by the six month report, the third quarterly report that some indication of what's happening to the revenues might also be worth the consideration. I have a copy here presently and what it shows, I believe, is just what's planned to flow in that period and what actually flowed as opposed to any indication of what's really going to happen for the year.

Again, there is the figure in the last page which shows a revised projection for revenues, but it doesn't show where the changes are. I know that the Minister doesn't want to see this develop into a report that becomes so large that people don't look at it again, but probably one extra sheet in the report would be able to provide that information and I think that it would be more useful if it contained that.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Well, with respect to the first matter, the lapse factor, I think that certainly just offhand it makes a lot of sense because I'm being asked that every time anyway, so I may as well have it in there.

With respect to the second factor, I think just off hand, I can't see any reason why we shouldn't take that into consideration as well.

I should - just going back to the matter of time it takes to pay our bills - the average bill, I am told, is paid within 42 days of the time that it is presented; that is from the invoice date at the present time, so that if there was some kind of payment made - I don't have the numbers in terms of what it would cost to pay interest after the 30-day period that is customary in business. That's something that maybe we'll attempt to get. I don't know whether we could get that during the Estimates, but maybe later on.

MR. B. RANSOM: Could the Minister give me a distribution of the time period required to pay invoices, the number of days within which 90 percent of the bills are paid, 95 percent, and so on. It seems to me that if the average is 42 days, then there has to be a lot of invoices that aren't being paid for two to three months. I think that is quite a long period of time and one that, I'm sure, the Minister and his department would like to try and shorten. I don't need that right now, but if the Minister could have his department get that information for us, it would be useful, f.r. Chairman.

There are a number of other areas of responsibility that fall really within the Comptroller's Division, having to do with accounting policies and so forth that I think that we'll just pass over for the moment and deal with when we get to Public Accounts. We will have an opportunity to raise some of those questions there, in view of the time considerations that we are under here. I have no further questions within the Comptroller's Division, unless some of my colleagues have more at the moment. We'll have some further questions when we get into Public Accounts.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: I will undertake to check to see what information we can get in terms of the turnaround time. As I understand it, there are some

departments that have much better records than others, but they are done on individual department bases. I believe that we do have some information and I will check to see what we can get out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Minister could give me somewhat of an elaboration on the (b) part of this particular division, the Systems Planning and Development. Specifically, what does that particular division do?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Is it the wish of the committee to consider these line-by-line or to deal with all of Item 3. as a whole?

Mr. Minister.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Mr. Chairman, I believe that I have no objection to answering it and we can do the line-by-line later on. I think things are working reasonably well.

I could refer the member, if he has the Supplementary Information, to Page 31. The Systems Planning and Development group develops financial policies, systems and procedures which have governmentwide implications. It co-ordinates data processing activities in the Department of Finance itself. It develops management policies and systems to improve management information and control. It prepared Treasury Board management policy guidelines; these include Planning guidelines and internal Audit guidelines. It prepares financial administration policy circulars; prepares and maintains financial administration manual, etc. I think the member is following that on the page.

MR. C. MANNES: I had forgotten that I had read this. I would like to know then, specifically, whether it's this division that makes the final recommendation to the Minister that the assumptions of economic growth that either are derived internally or that come forward from Ottawa are the ones that the government should consider following. Does it come out of this department?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: No, Mr. Chairman. Federal-Provincial Relations is the group that does that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Just one brief comment before we pass this, I would like to commend the Minister and the staff on the presentation of this Supplementary Information. I find it quite useful information, especially when it's made available in advance. One thing that the Minister might consider adding to it that would be more useful would be to identify at least the senior people where there is the organization chart. If the names of the people who are in the position were included for this report and for others, I think it would be helpful.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: That sounds like a good idea. I think we should do that for next year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3.(a)(1)—pass; 3.(a)(2)—pass; 3.(b)(1)—pass; 3.(b)(2)—pass; 3.(c)(1)—pass; 3.(c)(2)—pass; 3.(d)(1)—pass; 3.(d)(2)—pass.

Resolution No. 73. Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,268,000 for Finance, Comptroller's Division, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1984—pass.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a)(1) Taxation Division, Administration: Salaries - the Member for La Verendrye.

MR. R. BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister, in the calculations for the year ending March 31, 1983, if he could confirm that the freezing of the gas tax at the level of the year before - it would take a composite of the pricing for that whole year - and I'm talking for the fiscal year 1982-83, that because of the level it was frozen at, that in effect really what happened is that the revenues really didn't decline and the only reason that the revenues did decline somewhat in the book, is the fact that there was a drop in consumption.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Mr. Chairman, as the member notes, the consumption of gasoline did drop; I believe it was by something like 4 percent. I don't have the number handy right here as to the amount we lost as a result of not increasing the amounts, the several times when gasoline prices did increase during the year.

I should say that the price at which the tax currently sits is approximately 18 percent of the retail price of gasoline. That is, the retail price of gasoline currently is approximately 47.3 cents per litre and the tax on that gasoline right now is 7.5 cents, which is somewhat under 20 percent. We don't anticipate right now that prices will drop for any significant period of time below that and it may well rise during the year.

MR. R. BANMAN: I wonder if the Minister could inform the House. He mentioned that the consumption dropped by 4 percent, but would he tell me how that related to the tax collected, in other words, the projections they had done with regard to the total monies collected on gasoline taxes?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: If the member has some more questions, maybe I . . . I don't have the answer right now, but I should have it in a few minutes.

MR. R. BANMAN: Mr. Chairman, the point I'm trying to make, and I guess I am asking for some information to sort of point out that I believe my figures are right. I think the point that has to be made is that when the government announced the freezing of the gas tax at a certain level, that was based on the premise that the gasoline tax would continue to rise, when in effect - I have the figures here for a six-month period in my home town - we actually saw a decrease in taxes, so while you froze the tax at a certain level with the increase that was announced this year of the 1.1 percent before the federal tax came on April 1st, you would have seen really no saving to the consumer by the freezing of the gas tax.

I just, in the committee here, want to receive some information with regard to that. What I'm saying to the Minister is that his freeze was based on the premise that gasoline would continue to rise, and in that

particular year that he was talking about, what in essence really happened is that because of the gas-war situation that we had going, really the consumer did not benefit from that freeze at all. Something that was touted as being something which would help the consumer, in essence, really wasn't a freeze. As a matter of fact, if I look at my figures right, in some months the consumers were paying more than the 20 percent that was supposed to be in effect, but by virtue of the freeze, we never adjusted it downward in those months when the prices were lower than I believe the 6.4 cents a litre that was involved. I just wanted to find out what effect that freeze had on the revenues of the province.

I'd appreciate, if not now, maybe sometime later on, finding out from the Minister what the projections of the revenues were with regard to that. A program that was touted as going to be a big saving factor for the consumer, in essence, didn't end up being that and should the price of gasoline drop somewhat - and I have no hesitation in saying that I think it will probably drop in the next little while somewhat from the 47 cents - then of course, we'll be at the 20 cent volumetric tax or 20 percent figure again where we were before. I guess the program then, one really has to question what the semantics were all about with regard to changing it from a volumetric basis to another one.

The other question I have is, has the Minister done any studies through the Department of Finance with regard to the impact that the increased taxes - and on this particular commodity right now where we're looking at over \$2.25 a gallon already - what impact that is having on further consumption with regard to the Province of Manitoba and also on other related industries that rely heavily on the use of fuels. In other words, what kind of tax implications are we looking at from cutbacks that will result from the large costs of energy in different fields? One of them is future revenues for the tax department, because I think we all know that if the gas prices continue to climb, there will be a definite shrinking in the volumes. Have any projections been done by the department with regard to declining revenues in that field?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Mr. Chairman, last year we had projected a decrease in volume of 5 percent when we were setting up our Estimates. The actual approximate that we are now looking at is 4.8 percent for last year. It's very true that there may well be further declines in consumption. There are certainly some advantages to that as well, because a large portion of the purchase price of gasoline, diesel fuel goes out of the province as opposed to remaining here. We are projecting further decreases in usage.

The member was also referring to - he made the proposition that what happened last year with respect to gasoline prices was that our tax change didn't make any real difference. There was, in fact, a wellhead price increase on July 1st and there was another one in December. It is true that occasionally there were gas wars which you could say on this particular day, you guys were charging too much. The previous administration didn't change the price on the basis of something like that any more than we did. Over the year, certainly my recollection is that the price at the pumps was in the range of 40 cents. If that's a correct

recollection - I believe that it is - then we were well under the 20 percent. Now there were times when it dropped to 35 cents and maybe even lower than that. I think, overall, it was something that did save the taxpayers some money.

I am told by my advisors that it would be quite difficult to come up with a specific number as to how much was saved for the simple reason that the only way we could do it would be to get the average retail price of gasoline on each particular day in the last year. If we were doing it on one day a month, it would only be an estimate, and depending on which day, you could get very, very inflated figures or very deflated figures.

MR. R. BANMAN: Mr. Chairman, I just point out that I've got some composite figures. For instance, in the month of February, the average price in Steinbach was 35.6; not on a given day, but that's average for the whole month.

Anyway, be that as it may, all I want to do is say to the Minister that despite him touting that this was a big saving to the consumer - the freezing of the gasoline tax - it really didn't turn out to be that. The saving for the Manitoba consumer was really very minimal.

Since the cost of gasoline now - some 67 percent, almost two-thirds is now taxation - has the Minister along with his federal counterparts, discussed any of the problems that we face in Canada related to our neighbours to the south with regard to gasoline pricing? The Minister has established on the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border, a system whereby the people along the border, along the Manitoba side, receive a subsidy from the Provincial Government. He has also said that that subsidy will be earmarked to certain volumes that that individual has had - I guess based on the last number of years performance which is something that we'll probably discuss a little further. — (Interjection) — Okay. The Minister says that provision has been changed and I'm glad to hear that because it was sort of a disincentive for people to sell fuel.

The problem we now face though is the one which is pretty serious to all the people which are within easy driving distance of the United States. You go across the line now, gasoline is 98-99 cents, and I know a lot of the dealers that are on major truck routes, as well as people living close to the border, are now faced with the problem of competing in the U.S. for their gasoline.

The question that I have of the Minister; since two-thirds of our commodity right now is tax and since the U.S. Government has allowed the commodity to float, has the Minister talked to his federal counterparts about the problems that will be faced by border towns with regard to the sale of gasoline to the locals? In other words, this is going to cause an even further problem, and unless we don't do something about our energy costs over here and get totally out of wack with what's happening in the States, we're going to have some pretty major problems in the next little while.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, provincial tax on gasoline, as the member is aware, is less than 20 percent of the price of gasoline. He's mentioned that it's 2.25 a gallon; 20 percent of that would be somewhere in the vicinity of 43-44 cents. If we were to knock our entire provincial tax off, and you

have a 90 cent or \$1 a gallon price over in the United States, we would still be left about 75 cents or so above them. So I don't think it would be possible for us provincially to do it.

In terms of our percentage, the percentage of the provincial tax, let's remember as well that the 18 percent we're at now is much much lower than where we were at a few years ago. A few years ago when we were at 21 cents a gallon and it was selling at the pump for 50 cents, our provincial portion, we were paying about 40 percent tax. We're now down to less than 20 percent tax.

But that particular problem on the border, I would point out to the member, is one that stretches right across this nation. Most of our citizens live within 80 miles of the border, and if we were to eliminate the problem right along that border, it would be at horrendous taxation cost.

I would also remind the member that for many years our dealers on our side of the border were getting a tremendous benefit because of the lower prices in Canada and Americans coming here and buying gasoline here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The hour is 4:30, time for Private Members' Hour. Committee will resume tonight at 8:00 p.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR
ADJOURNED DEBATES
ON SECOND READING - PUBLIC BILLS
BILL NO. 36 - THE AGROLOGISTS ACT

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

The first item on the agenda for Tuesday afternoon is Adjourned Debates on Second Readings. On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for The Pas, Bill No. 36, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to put a few remarks on the record.

I'd start off by saying that I'm a member of the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists, and although I must say that I wonder why at times, the organization is sort of maintained by the spirit and the ambition of a limited few who from year to year bring forth and devote a fair amount of energy toward the objectives of this professional association.

I know that they've laboured for a number of years in attempting to hammer out an Act which would reflect more precisely some of the concerns and address some of the concerns that they have. I know that they haven't been totally successful in always inspiring the membership at large to be involved in this process. Even though it seems to have a strong endorsement from the membership at large, I would suggest that basically there's only a small group who have wanted this process to continue; and that process, of course, being to see a new Act come forward.

In reviewing the briefing notes that were provided for me by the Member for the Pas, I don't find too many sections or indeed areas within the new Act that

I can take strong exception to. However, I suppose there are again some basic areas that always concern me in the general attempt by associations to furnish for themselves some type of protection by way of legislation. I see some words that seem to jump out at me. They seem to flag that concern. I look at the second paragraph here when it says, "The new Act will make the MIA more responsive to the needs of both members in the agricultural community. . ." and I'm wondering really what the Institute of Agrologists mean by saying "more responsive." It's a loose association which is what the members seem to want. At times the members are active, and for the greater periods of times they are less active; but nevertheless, I'm wondering what the general membership has wanted to bring forth this requirement of responsiveness.

Anyway, moving on it says, "In addition, there will be less opportunity to practise agrology without becoming a member of the Institute of Agrologists; thereby governed by the ethics and responsibility required of MIA members." I suppose that I have a concern on this restriction, that having to practise agrology, and although I'm led to believe later on that three non-members can be included on the council so as it won't be considered a closed-shop type of association, I still again wonder why there isn't a better definition of agrology and who really can practise this.

Moving on to some of the major changes, and I think most of them deal with the bylaws and the attempt to bring forward a council which will include non-members, and of course that's acceptable. I understand that that's becoming in vogue now with some professional associations, that indeed to get around this stigma, that is sometimes attached to these types of associations as being a little bit closed, what the groups have done on their own volition is to have come forward non-members sort of to act as lay people to bring forward in views from outside of the professional academy, so to speak. Certainly that's an acceptable change.

I'd also say that their attempts to set up a council, one that will be able to make decisions more precisely in any given time, outside the general membership, outside the annual meeting, which probably is a worthwhile effort, and again may ultimately end in an association that is, if not more vocal, maybe more in a sense focal. It seems to me that this association, maybe with the right type of people, will attempt to upgrade the whole profession of agrology.

I'm a little concerned about one of the definitions of agrologist. They say in that regard this new Act will be more compulsory. Of course, again, that's one of those words that seem to beg some questions, and there is some reference here to enforcement provisions. I would ask the sponsor of the bill that maybe those that are feeding the information to him, can tell him, in due course, specifically what enforcement provisions are being considered. Indeed, if somebody chooses to call himself an agrologist and has not qualified by somebody's definition, at least, to use that term, maybe the sponsor of the bill can tell us specifically what the enforcement provisions are. — (Interjection) — Thirty days on the chain gang, my colleague says. Well, let's hope it isn't that.

I suppose, as one of many in the group of a large membership of people who are not too involved in their

association, we sometimes question why we may or may not belong to this group. I can tell you that I'm an agrologist because I achieved a Bachelor of Science of Agriculture, as indeed, a few other people have here, but that doesn't make me a member automatically of MIA. It sort of begs, I think, the definition aspect of agrologist, and I'm wondering if maybe the draftsman, or indeed the association themselves, wouldn't be well-advised to put in a little better definition of agrologist. It says here it means a person who is qualified to teach or practice the science or art of agrology, and again, what are those qualifications? Is it strictly a degree in agriculture, or is it some other factor?

I think again that the Member for The Pas maybe can go back to the MIA and ask them if there isn't some opportunity to make that definition more definitive. Well, of course that brings up a good point. The practising agrologist, or former agrologist from The Pas is a sponsor of this bill, but then he's not an agrologist, because he was simply a farmer, and my understanding is that farmers are not allowed to be called agrologists. Indeed farmers, under the definition of the bill, even though they're practising farmers and even though they may have been in that industry for many years, are not eligible to use that particular term.

The exemptions area, I'm not particularly hung up with, although further down on this page that I'm making reference to, it says, "This council will be given flexibility to respond in a practical manner to isolated instances, where the law would otherwise require membership." I again ask the sponsor, the Member for the Pas, to give examples of that when he speaks on this again, because it seems to me that there is an opportunity here for certainly the creation of hard feelings, because who, and who is not again allowed to use that term, because the definition in the first case is rather broad, and again, who will put the final determination as to whether one is allowed to be called that and what law are they talking about that would otherwise require membership? I think the Member for The Pas should give us some examples of specifically what is being meant here, because I think that we want to know precisely what we're being asked to pass.

Now, as I've said before, I think we can accept the fact that there will be three non-member appointed councillors, to move away from a closed shop type of consideration. And as we move on, oh yes, "The President will be appointed from the persons elected as councillors," and I don't really see anything wrong with that. I know the present procedure is to bring forward two nominees and send out their biographies, as such, to all the membership at large and have them review and everyone of us has a chance to cast a vote on the individual that we may decide should best run this organization. It might be better if the president came from all the councillors and was afforded an opportunity to act more than one year in that capacity.

I suppose though, one of main concerns is to what regulations may or may not follow this particular new Act, and what type of powers will be given to the council? I'm wondering indeed if we will be required - those of us that may have achieved this status some years previous - if we'll be required to take upgrading courses in the future to maintain the status of an agrologist? I don't know if this is general practice, practice in other professional areas or not, but I again

would ask the sponsor of the bill if it's the intention of the MIA to require members at large to take refresher courses over some period of time. Maybe he could address that particular concern.

Well, Mr. Speaker, those are my few comments on this area. In general, I support this bill, although I have to tell you I have some grave reservations as I watch the unfolding area of all professional bills. I know we're going to be petitioned by the Teachers' Society, no doubt, in the near future for a professional bill, one which would afford them potentially much greater say in the whole area of education and I'm wondering where we're headed in the adoption of all these professional bills.

So with those few comments, I'll sit down. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the MLA for Emerson, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 44 - THE FISHERIES ACT

MR. SPEAKER: On the Proposed Motion of the Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, Bill No. 44, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dealing with this proposed bill to amend The Fisheries Act and to move towards the installation in the Act, of both the Annual Reports and also a five-year report, I'd like to commend the Member for Turtle Mountain for bringing this forward. It is not something, however, that's foreign to our concept of knowledge of what is happening in our environment, be it land- or water-based. What I would like to start my comments off on, is the concept that the bill provides. I would like to deal on that actually more so than on some of the administrative problems that could come up and would come up if we followed the bill in its present form.

First off, dealing with the concept of a five-year review or a long-term periodic review of the health of the fisheries in Manitoba, is an excellent concept. The one problem I have with it and the major problem, I guess, I have with it as it's presently presented is the idea that it is probably going to be aimed almost totally towards the commercial and the game species of fish. It does not address the problem and the broader scope of the problem that can be behind declines in fish populations.

I would suggest that the study and the report should be based on limnology and not simply on fishery counts or fish counts or fish-scale counts. What this would get towards is you would be looking at the health of the whole lake systems and river systems of the Province of Manitoba. We would be looking at the health of the habitat of the fish. That's far more important than simply looking at the numbers or the estimated tonnage, I guess you could say, of fish in any particular lake system or river system.

We have to be looking at the habitat and the health of that habitat. Are the trace elements moving into the water system caused by our activities as human beings? We know, for instance, that the increased mercury levels in the fish up in South Indian Lake are caused by the flooding of the land, flooding of permafrost. With that permafrost flooded, the permafrost melts and the uptake from the previously frozen ground that is taken into the river system and into the water itself of the lake, I should say, combined with processes of some of the mosses and the - I don't believe it's lichen - but some of the botanical aspects - put it that way, I guess it's best put - of the ecosystem of the lake is raising substantially the levels of mercury in those fish.

That is why a few years ago, prior to the flooding of the area, one had in whitefish in particular, pretty near all very high quality whitefish. Now the bulk of the catches is much lower quality. That is not due to fishing pressure; that is due to a change in habitat. The mercury levels in the fish and the reasons for it being there, as I've just said, is because of the habitat change.

Now we have other fish in the English-Wabigoon River system in Ontario. It was clear the mercury uptake there was clearly the responsibility of the pulp and paper operation. It's simple dumping of their effluent into that river system. We have a responsibility to be looking and to be monitoring our lakes on a much broader basis than just looking at the status of species of fish mentioned in any schedule which the province may have, as the proposed Act or the proposed amendment by the Member for Turtle Mountain suggests.

We have a responsibility to monitor such things as the Ph levels. Is acid rain affecting any of the lakes, particularly in the north-east part of the province where you're closer to the smelters where the sulphur dioxide emissions are coming from? Is there any changes or take-ups of additional trace elements in the water? Are there common pollutants that we are putting into our river systems, be it in our pulp mills or other industrial processes or our cities and towns?

I would suggest that, if we took a little more care for monitoring of the fish and the health of the fish and the ecosystem of the Red River north of the City of Winnipeg, you would find elements in the fish, particularly those feeding - and the fish do feed near sewer outlets - near the outlets of the City of Winnipeg's both treated and non-treated sewage and undertreated sewage in most instances as well, because I think that is something that we have to address in the coming years and sooner rather than later, I would hope, is the inadequate level of sewage treatment by the City of Winnipeg.

We must also look at, not just commercial and so-called game species of fish, what people want to catch, but we have to look at the food supplies of those fish. We have to look at the other organisms in the water, both plant organisms and also the smaller animal as well and fish. These are the species and these are the food sources for the larger fish that we're more interested in catching for the commercial fishery and the sports fishing - (Interjection) - I just mentioned the sport fishery just as you were starting to comment there. We can't forget the sports fishing because the sports fishing is an incredibly important industry not only from an economic terms but, far more importantly, from the terms of enjoyment that people get out of the sports fishery.

We have to look at such things as fluctuations in water levels. In this year's Annual Report for the year 1981-82, we look and see some of the work that has already been done in fluctuation of water, and just how much of an impact that can have on the fish and the health of the fishery in general, let alone the health, looking at it more from a limnological perspective. But in Cross Lake and Pipestone Lakes and the Pipestone River, studies that have been conducted by the branch over a two-year period show that the impact of Manitoba Hydro's Jenpeg station, there is a direct correlation between the operation of that station and the water levels downstream from the station, in particular, on whitefish and tullibee. Those two lakes, as logic only tells you, that it's true, and there has to be a certain level of water in those lakes to be able to maintain any kind of a healthy fishery.

Having visited that community a couple of summers ago myself and spoken to many of the fishermen about the problems that they have in their fisheries as fishermen trying to even catch anything is almost impossible, because areas where the fish may once have been - I'm afraid the Member for Springfield just caught the Finance Minister - areas where the fish might have been previously, particularly in Cross Lake, they are no longer there when the lake levels changed. The spawning grounds, one year they can be under six feet of water and the next year, Mr. Speaker, they can be high and dry. So the productivity of that lake and its ability to be able to produce those species - (Interjection) - Yes, high maybe; dry never.

So one has to look, Mr. Speaker, at the full ecosystem; one has to do limnological studies. That's a touch of a tongue twister and not only is it difficult to pronounce, but it's not simple to do either. Something we have to look at in our request for these reports - be they five-year reports or annual reports - we have to look at the costs to the province of conducting the studies. I myself think it's a cost we cannot avoid. If we're going to continue to benefit from the harvest of these resources, we have to be able to put forward the money to be able to do the studies. I suspect when we get into the fisheries, in particular, and the monitoring required there, we're going to have a lot more co-operation with the people in the fishing industry - be it from the sports fishery end or the commercial end - we're going to have to get more of those people giving us reports of what kind of fish they're catching, not only for the commercial side but the non-commercial species, doing the aging of the fish, and doing some experimental fish counts for us as well.

One of the problems that we've got with just looking at it from a provincial perspective is we also have in the Province of Manitoba one of the top freshwater research institutes in the world; and with the Freshwater Institute, we have to be working in co-operation with them. That's not something we can do by an Act; but that is something that has to be pulled in or has to be worked on between our Department of Natural Resources and the Freshwater Institute.

Of course, the Freshwater Institute is tied directly to the Federal Department of the Environment, but I would suggest that we should also be pulling in our own Department of the Environment and taking a broader perspective and using the resources that they have in that department to assist the Department of Natural

Resources in conducting thorough limnological studies of our lakes and fisheries here in Manitoba.

We have to deal as well with the fishermen on the lake, the commercial fishermen in particular, and as I mentioned a few minutes ago, working in co-operation with them. We already have one organization called the Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Management Advisory Board which are presently looking at studying alternatives toward coming up with new commercial fish licencing systems for Lake Winnipeg; but we must also get them involved as an organization in the monitoring of the lakes and as a tie-in to the department so it's not all a bunch of civil servants who are required to run out and to do the full studies.

We've got to have co-operation from the user groups. We have to have co-operation from the Federal Government. In particular, I would suggest through the Freshwater Institute, which has done a remarkable amount of just simply superb studies on the analysis of the status of fisheries in the province. They are far more expert than us and have far more resources and researchers available to be able to study the impacts as new trace elements are coming into the water system in trying to trace back where they're coming from, so that we can then enact legislation in co-operation with the Federal Government where jurisdictions are crossed so that we can control those pollutants entering our water system.

We must be looking at all species. We must be looking at the nutrients in the water system so that we're not simply going after and taking a narrow perspective of looking at trends of demands for the fishery resource itself, and the capability of the fisheries' resources to meet the anticipated demands. Certainly that is part of a study, but I quite frankly feel, and I could understand now why the recently released five-year report to the Legislature on wildlife, why it is phrased as it is, because the Act requires that, I suspect. But here they concentrate far too much on the game species and looking just at the status, and it seems to be totally brought around to what is the demand for that particular species from a hunting perspective. There is not the recognition in the study to be looking at the whole ecological perspective of the role of those particular species that they're writing on in relation to other species, be they game or non-game species.

It's because of the narrowness of the legislation that that report is written in that way. I would suggest that we do not want to be moving into the same sort of narrowness of scope, although one must appreciate there has to be some form or scope as to how the legislation is brought forward, but we have to be looking at a broader base simply than looking at particular marketable species of fish.

The other problems are from an administrative nature. The opposition, who is always calling for us to spend less money, have to recognize that in the production of the report on wildlife, the cost of that was up near \$30,000 to be able to produce that report; the amount of staff time it took to produce the report. Once one has processes in place, I would think that it would take a less concentrated amount of time in putting together the report, because the data should be collected on an ongoing basis.

That is the value of the Member for Turtle Mountain's suggestion of going to a five year - or whatever term

one may choose - of a five-year report on the full status. When he gets into asking it for a report every year, I think every year we should be perhaps reporting through the Annual Report of the Department of Natural Resources instead of having to put out separate reports. Certainly, the report of the Department of Natural Resources could be expanded somewhat from where it is right now and doing updates, bring in warnings as to the status of the resource and the status of the lakes as compared to what was in the initial report, be it in wildlife; or in five years time, the initial report on fisheries or the initial report on forestry.

As to the appropriateness and the kind of report one would get out, if one went into the department right now and asked, as he is asking, in these proposed amendments to the bill, to have a five-year report finished within the year, six months after March 31, 1983, which would mean that we would have to have the report ready for next year, I don't think the department is geared up to be able to come up with that kind of a report. It is not the same sort of time line that was given on the one on wildlife, and if you just wanted to do one on a species count, one may be able to come up with something. But I don't think it's realistic to be looking at six months after March 31, 1983, to be coming up with a report and we should be looking at getting a first report, say, in another three or four years time - one may then have the time to be able to put together a worthwhile report. We're looking after something that will be a quality report, and not some "panicky" put-together report by the department, which would be being reported simply because of a legislative demand, and not being reported because of either the state of the resource, or because of the ability of the department to be able to put together a full and comprehensive report.

So I wouldn't mind seeing a report go forward, but I would not want it to go forward as it is presently set up. I think that it's got to be put together in a much broader perspective than the Member for Turtle Mountain has submitted the proposed amendment as it stands currently.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. H. HARAPIAK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Rupertsland, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 45 AN ACT TO AMEND THE FOREST ACT

MR. SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, Bill No. 45, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot of the comments I'd like to make on forestry have a similar line, I guess, of commentary to what I just finished saying on fisheries because the bills are quite similar.

The one thing I think should be brought to the attention of the House is that we are currently working

towards the completion of the first five years of a proposed 20-year Forestry Management Plan, and that first five-year period, which is already under way, will not be finished until 1986.

So it's kind of odd for us to come forward to support a bill asking for another five-year report, when one is already ongoing or already into the process of the first stage of a 20-year management plan, and the first five years of that plan and a first stage of that plan is to come due in 1986. So, in effect, the proposed amendment to The Forestry Act, as put forward by the Member for Turtle Mountain, is somewhat redundant.

However, once again, I must address the idea of looking at the status of our forests only in respect to certain species, which may be referred to either in the Act and regulations, or any licence or permit issued by the department. In forestry management we must look far beyond the particular species that are being cut, harvested by the various interests, be it for pulp, or use as pulp, or pulp and paper operations, be it for lumber, be it for heating or be it for some other use. But we must start addressing our resources across the board from a multi-disciplinary approach from an ecological perspective, so that we know the impact of the operations and where our proposed operations are to be, and we have a good idea of what those impacts will be on the rest of the ecosystem.

I bring, as an example, one on the east side of the Woodland caribou, it's a species I have some interest in and that I have yet to see one in a while. It is a species which is very very susceptible to hunting pressure, once roads and that sort of infrastructure are put in so that either winter access on snowmobiles, or fall and winter to some degree as well if you don't have much snow, but fall access and particularly by vehicles and particularly looking towards four-wheel drive, or looking at four-wheel drive vehicles and motorbikes, the sort of access that they give to an area. The kind of the access they give to the area and also the habitat alteration that can happen with the cutting operations can be very very detrimental on those herds. There are not too many of them left any more; the numbers aren't all that great. If we were going to have more hunting pressure on those herds, especially on the lower east side, say down below Poplar River, one could be in serious trouble, or the herds could be in serious trouble, as to their future existence.

They are still not a primary food supply by any stretch of the imagination, but they still are a supplementary food supply to the Native people in the area, be it in Grand Rapids, or up towards Red Sucker, or up towards Island Lake areas and further south in towards the Manigotagan districts. We've got to address ourselves very very carefully when we get into forestry operations as to the impact that they have on the wildlife of the area.

Also, I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, on the health of the forest system itself that generated the wealth of forest that are there for us today to harvest, something I personally have qualms about and concerns of because of what has happened and what every agrologist, as was termed earlier today, knows is that you cannot monocrop continuously on agricultural land. There are some efforts going on in other parts of this country and in other parts of the world, for sure, of monocropping the forests, of going in and planting and

assisting the preferred species by sprayed herbicides which do widespread damage to other aspects of the forest as well, to other parts of the forest ecosystem, that are there and playing their respective roles that gave us the forest in the state that they are today and the state that we inherited them in.

Yet to go in under these species, especially a coniferous, a lot of them are taking similar elements from the soil. Even though we're talking about 100-year cycles here, to a very marginal soil types, as we have in the Shield country, to have similar species drawing the nutrients from those soils, drawing the basic elements from those soils and to do that over two or three generations I would suspect that that would run a very high chance of killing the life of that soil.

We must have the deciduous trees in between the various cycles as nature has governed that the forest be. Silva culture can do a great amount for sure in increasing the productivity of our forests. We can, and we should be, and we are, I might add, trying to develop stronger species of trees.

Last year I had the opportunity to go out and visit the Hadashville Station, along with the Member for The Pas, and the Minister of Natural Resources, last year in his announcement of the new facility, the new forestry operation we're putting in. There is a tree nursery in The Pas area as well.

We're recognizing the need to get out and to increase the quality of trees that are being planted in our environment. That'll give us not only larger trees but faster growing trees, trees that are adaptable to our climate, and not trees that are imported and may not be able to suffer the rigors of our very harsh, northern, arboreal forest environment.

We must, when we're looking at forestry, as I said look to other aspects of the equal system in that forest. We cannot, I don't think, afford to be looking simply at the commercially viable trees of that forest, and the ones that commercial operators have a great interest in.

It is very important in assessing our forestry and the health of our forestry, that we look at what man can do to assist it, that we recognize the need, and the continuing need for extraction of woods from that forest, but that we do it in such a fashion so that it leaves the resource for future generations in as good shape as possible.

The five year reports, by not concentrating simply on the species but concentrating on the equal system that they're growing in, should be concerned with what kind of insects, especially the insects that are serious defoliators, such as the spruce budworm, and what kind of cycle they are going through in their life cycles. That is very important for us to understand and not just to overreact to a situation, and maybe even cause the situation to become worse, which I would suggest has clearly happened in New Brunswick.

Within this forestry report, on a long term report, a five year report, and the one that is currently undergoing of a larger 20 year forestry management plan that the province has embarked on a couple of years back, that in this report it is very important to recognize the role of the various insects, along with other wildlife and other plant species in the health of that forest.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that the request under the Member for Turtle Mountain's proposed bill for the

annual report can be accommodated in the Department of Natural Resources Annual Report. There's no reason at all that the report cannot be somewhat extended to once again highlight changes to the health of the forest, changes that were not forecasted, new situations that are arising, and the implications of the economic demand upon the resource.

What would happen if the people who were in there currently, such as, Abitibi, or such as, ManFor further north, if their operations were to become less viable? What implication would that have on the forestry industry in the province; what kind of an impact would that have on the basic forest resource? Is there room for an additional plant to come in if the economy turns around so that we can support, perhaps, an additional lumber mill or an additional pulp mill, or move into new products? Along the cellulose base they're moving into using more wood for wood alcohol production, and methanol production. What is the ability of the resource to be able to withstand that additional demand?

Those are issues that have to be addressed, and I don't know that they would be addressed by the more narrow . . .

MR. B. RANSOM: It says the ability of the resource to meet the demand.

MR. D. SCOTT: I'm not sure that, looking from that narrowness of a perspective, as is requested here, just dealing with the particular species, and looking at the resource of the trees alone, and not looking at the total ecosystem that they're living in, of whether or not that is going to be able to meet the objectives that the Member for Turtle Mountain is really looking for here, at least I believe that he is looking for, and I hope that he's looking for.

So I think both of these bills, the one on forestry, and the one on fisheries are excellent in their intention. I think that they probably would have been better handled, or what we maybe should have looked at the masses of resolutions requesting the government to undertake this starting next year; that we bring in legislation, and amendments to those bills next year. So that we can have a better grasp of what is needed in the reports, instead of just coming, and introducing a report, and requirements of that report, without doing the adequate research as to what we should be looking at.

So, from that perspective I personally would have been much happier had it come as a resolution instead of a demand for us to amend the Acts today; that if you would have presented it in resolution form I think we would have less trouble with it than introducing it as an amendment form. Perhaps the Member for Turtle Mountain would be willing to withdraw the bills if we took upon ourselves that commitment to do that. That

would give us time as a government to implement, to look in and see what actually has to be done and what should be reported in our five-year reports, and how that can go along with what has already started in a 20-year forestry management plan.

Mr. Speaker, then we could have really addressed the problem, and had Manitoba's forestry resources, along with the fishery resources, and the wildlife in general, our environmental resources, under much better understanding because, quite frankly, I don't think a lot of us do understand near enough about the natural environment and how it works. That's being proven daily in the amount of research that's coming forward.

So given those comments I would like to, I guess, wrap my comments up on this for today at least, and to encourage the Member of Turtle Mountain to perhaps consult with the Minister to see if there is some possibility that we could come up with an alternative to his proposed amendments to the Act to do it this year, and for us to take a commitment to review this, and to bring forward amendments to the Act in the next Session of the Legislature.

Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. H. HARAPIAK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Thompson that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Introduction of Public Bills, the Honourable Member for St. Norbert - he's not here.

Proposed Resolutions, assuming the House still wishes to hold Resolution No. 1, Resolution No. 9 - The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe we should call it 5:30, if that's agreeable to all the members.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the agreement to call it 5:30? (Agreed)

The amendment will stand at the top of the list, to be introduced next time we reach this item. The Chair will accept a motion to adjourn.

The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. A. MACKLING: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, that subject to the committees meeting this evening, this House do now adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried and the House adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).