

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 25 April, 1985.

Time — 8:00 p.m.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY - NATURAL RESOURCES

MR. CHAIRMAN, C. Santos: Committee, please come to order. We are now about to begin Item No. 9.(a)(1) and 9.(a)(2), but before we do, the Member for Emerson wants to ask some general questions about Fisheries. The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to maybe just raise this issue at this time. Unfortunately, I wasn't here in the afternoon when Fisheries was passed, but it's just a matter of maybe raising the question of the use of live bait in certain areas. It is a concern that has been raised over a period of time in terms of the use of live bait, and certain areas have been allowed and certain areas not. I know that the Minister obviously must have had dialogue or correspondence with people that are involved in this aspect of it.

The one thing with the previous Minister, when I wrote them and expressed some concern as to the licensing of operators who have a fair amount of equipment in that respect - and there are not that many, it's a small group really that is concerned - the concern that was expressed to me was the threat of long-term resource and environment degradation resulting from the introduction and transfer of noxious fish species via the bait bucket, this type of thing.

All I want to do, with the indulgence of the committee, is just ask the Minister what his approach is going to be with regard to the use of live bait.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, we've had a number of discussions with people in the industry, certainly within our department, and we are really not in a position to know what we intend to do with that at the present time. There has been really no new policy initiative decided upon, although I think we will be looking at it within the next 12 months. If we decide to move on it, we will have to engage the people that are involved in the industry to ascertain whether or not there is a means of doing it, which would somewhat modify the impact on those that are in the industry, or at least assist them in the process if necessary. That's something that we would consider if we were to move in that direction. We have not yet decided that question in any event.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: The fishing season is just about on us now and the individuals involved obviously have considerable investment involved, and we're looking at not that many weeks till the season opens.

Is the Minister going to be issuing licences to the present operators to some degree until this review has

taken place, or is it terminated and then we are going to review it after that?

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't think there is going to be a new policy for this season.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to belabour it because of the consideration given me, but it was my understanding that the licence for the individuals that operate with live bait is issued on a year-to-year basis.

The question I have is, are the same licences that were issued last year going to be issued this year until the department has a chance to maybe review the picture? That is the question that I have.

HON. S. USKIW: We intend to continue business as usual, so to speak. We will not issue brand new licences for new operators, but the existing ones will be honoured.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That terminates, I hope, this line of questioning. Thank you, the Member for Emerson.

We are now formally beginning Item No. 9.(a)(1) Wildlife, Administration: Salaries, 9.(a)(2) Other Expenditures - the Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to indicate that this is probably going to be a pretty lively section here, because of keen interest from members on our side of the House. We would like to just float along with this thing and, instead of going on a general basis, maybe we'll just start off with, you know, general things with the acceptance and providing that the Chairman allows us to proceed. We will take and run at everything under Administration, and then keep passing things as we go along. It's worked relatively well, and I hope we have the indulgence of the Chair in that respect now.

The first concern that I'd like to raise is with respect to the wildlife feeding programs that we had this past winter. I want to express some disappointment and concern as to how the thing developed within the department. Since the time when the problem was flagged by many people that probably have good knowledge of it, which was early winter when that first snowfall came, already the warning signs were out. We already started getting calls at that time. I'm sure the department must have, at that stage of the game, already had got some warning news or notifications from people that have a good understanding of what happens.

The way the thing developed is it seemed that the government, the Department of Natural Resources, almost came in as an afterthought once the problem was a major problem. I want to pay special tribute to the many wildlife associations and the Manitoba Wildlife Federation who sort of took the initiative in this thing and, I think probably, have to take most of the credit for the deer and elk that are in existence at this time in the spring.

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It seemed that we had a sort of aftermath in terms of the way this program developed, in terms of the assistance, the pellets and stuff like that. As I indicated before, there are many people that are very conscientious of this. Once the signals were out that there were problems, money and individuals came forward and did a remarkable job, and government ultimately came in and allowed additional funding to proceed to take place in this end of it.

What has happened, I think we have a major problem at the present time. I'm sure the Minister must now be aware of it because, as this whole cycle developed where concern was raised about deer and elk utilizing feed that farmers had in short supply, especially in the southwest part of the province, I had the occasion to do some touring out there and see the damage done by wild deer. The farmers and the people locally have by and large accepted the fact in certain winters that our wildlife population, whether it's elk or deer or whatever, that there is going to be a certain amount of impact on them in terms of their feed.

What happened this year that sort of, I suppose, drew the whole thing to a crisis stage was the fact that in the southwest part of the province - my colleague from Arthur can probably substantiate that - was that we had a drought; there was a shortage of feed; farmers were very concerned about that aspect of it. Then we had the early snows and then the deer populations in many cases came down and started utilizing the farmers' feed. In a normal year, probably, the farmer would not have been that concerned about it.

What happened though because this general problem seemed to roll down, and we didn't have any positive direction, is that many farmers were feeding. Some were started to be compensated or promised compensation; others were not. The wildlife associations, as well as government, with the money that they were putting into the thing, anticipation started to develop that there would be compensation. As a result of that, we now have a situation where once somebody gets compensated, then the anticipation is there for many others that, okay, we have fed them all these years, it's costing us some money this year, we want compensation as well, and the thing sort of mushrooms.

I am not critical of the work that was done in terms of the individuals, your wildlife associations, or the money that government put in. I felt that there should have been possibly some development organization or direction developed from the Department of Natural Resources in terms of how this would be handled because I feel confident from the calls that I get, and I am sure that the Minister and his department do, that there are many farmers out there that feel they are qualified for some form of compensation because some people got, others have not, and now we have a problem.

I wonder whether the Minister could give us some indication as to how he views the ongoing process because I'm sure there must be claims coming in yet. I know, for example - and I want to stress this at this stage of the game - that I met with a group in the Spruce Woods Park area where there was a group that had set up and started asking farmers how much damage has been done by elk. When I met with that group, they were looking already at \$70,000 plus in

that area where I think 20 licences were issued and they were just starting to itemize all these things.

I suggested to the farmers, I said, well, if there is going to be that amount of damage, that we have upwards of \$70,000 to \$100,000 worth of damage claims for the amount of elk that we have in there and for the amount of licences that we issued there, maybe we should issue licences and have them all shut out and then there is no more problem, which is an exaggerated position of course, because by and large I think the farmers feel they are prepared to accept a certain amount of damage.

But now the perception is out there that if there is damage by elk and deer because some people have been compensated because wildlife associations - the Manitoba Wildlife Federation - have stepped in and have come up with money being forwarded and now we have a problem, in my mind.

I wonder if the Minister can maybe give me a better background as to where it stands with the department at the present time, whether that is a major problem now or not, because maybe he's got it all resolved, maybe everybody is paid off and there is no problem. But if not, I would like to maybe just get an insight as to where we are at with all the claims that are coming in and how the department is dealing with that.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, the member is correct in the sense that there was a crisis period because of the harsh early winter. He is incorrect when he says that there was slow response because the additional response from the department, I believe, came in about the month of December or January - December. The end of December we were already augmenting our program in recognition of the problem that was out there. So we moved from about \$60,000 some-odd to \$300,000 towards feed supplies for deer and elk, which by and large was about equal to what has been raised by farmers and supporters of wildlife, I think that's correct.

So in essence, what it ended up being is that the public through the tax system has supported this year's winter feeding program at about 50 percent, and private donations, fund-raising campaigns, have raised about 50 percent. The department has worked very closely with those private groups and it was a very harmonious exercise for that matter, a lot of consultation and a sort of cross-referencing took place between the department's effort and that of private individuals and groups, and especially the wildlife associations.

We have had many compliments from the Wildlife Association people with respect to our augmented effort and the co-operation that we extended to their effort. So I have not detected any problem with respect to a perception that somehow the government was not ready to deal with the prices that were there.

In total, with respect to claims for damages, we've had about 460 claims which we anticipate will cost us about \$295,000 this year, and which we have provisions for. So there is no problem with that issue either, Mr. Chairman.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Can the Minister indicate where we're at in terms of the claims that have come forward through the department or through the wildlife

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associations? Are there still claims coming in? And what is the time element involved in terms of from the time that a person makes a claim until it gets investigated and gets authorized? Or are all the claims of the 485 claims, is that what the Minister said?

HON. S. USKIW: 460.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: 460. Are those the amount of claims that have been paid out already, or are those the amount of claims that have come in?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, that's the total and most of them have been paid out. They are paid out on the basis that as they come in we process them. So there is no significant backlog at the present time. It's about a six-week turnaround time between application and response.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Well, I want to just touch on the one group specifically - and I think possibly the Member for Gladstone will follow up on that - but the elk damage in that area - and I think this is ongoing - every year there is some elk damage in that area because, all of a sudden, there was the element of compensation available. I think maybe the claims came forward at a more rapid pace than maybe for things that were standardly accepted to some degree. Can the Minister indicate roughly how much money was paid out in that specific area, or is it all lumped into a package? Spruce Woods?

HON. S. USKIW: We might be able to break it out of our numbers. We'll attempt to provide the member with that information. We wouldn't have it readily available.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Maybe just for the record, could the Minister indicate what would be the normal procedure in terms of somebody who feels he's had damage and makes a claim? Can the Minister maybe outline the procedure, the steps it goes through just so that we have it on record so that if somebody feels concern that they have not been dealt with rightly that we know exactly what the process is?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the front line on that whole issue is our local C.O.s, our conservation officers, in the field. They're the ones through which everyone must process their application. They in turn fire it into the central system and it's processed. But if there is a problem with respect to any of them, we'd certainly be prepared to check into it.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Just to maybe illustrate the procedure, if a farmer has had damage by deer or elk, whatever the case may be, especially in the past winter, and feels that he maybe qualifies for some kind of compensation factor, he would make application to the local C.O., and the local C.O. then does the investigation himself, or send somebody out to do the investigation; then it gets put into the system, to the department, and ultimately the payment comes within a six-week period. Is that what the Minister is indicating?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the C.O. does the investigation and sends in a report with a

recommendation. We have paid out all the claims that we have had in the previous fiscal year by the end of that fiscal year. The only outstanding claims we have are those that have been received in the new fiscal year which is since April 1st. So we are right up-to-date with respect to payment. We have paid out \$320,000 for the last fiscal year.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: I assume that would be up to the 1st of April.

HON. S. USKIW: That's right.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: And I would assume that the majority of the claims would have come in prior to the 1st of April, because the concerns and damage were prior to that normally. How far back are we accepting applications? There must be a time somewhere along the line, because there are some individuals obviously that haven't realized, maybe don't participate that much actively in the community, realize that all of a sudden there's a payout and want to put in a claim. How far back are we looking at in terms of accepting a claim?

HON. S. USKIW: We'll accept a claim as long as it can be verified. There has to be proof of damage. There is a well-established procedure for that, it's not a new thing, it's a 10-year-old program, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next person in line is the Member for La Verendrye. The Member for Gladstone is next.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm having a little trouble following just how this procedure works with the damage claims, because I have been sort of led to believe it's a little different than that.

Anyway in my area around the Spruce Woods Park, for years people have been subjected to heavy losses from wildlife damage and this winter they decided they'd had enough and called a meeting to discuss the problem. Now they booked a small room and thought there would be a few people there and, as the Member for Arthur can attest, there were over a 100 people gathered and there were a lot of angry people.

One of the things that I got, and have got from them through subsequent meetings, is that they've been putting up with this for a long time. Some of them feel that it's just part of their farm operation, that they generally can look forward to losses through damage by wildlife, but it has got to the point where, as we all know, the farm situation isn't that great and these losses are weighing more heavily upon them than they may have in good years.

So, with all this in mind, out of this large meeting a committee was formed and they have held subsequent meetings to discuss the problem and to draw up the objectives of their organization and to prepare a brief for the Minister, which they hope to present to him in the near future.

I'll read to you the objectives of the group so that you will realize that they're not a group that are out to strictly get compensation, they're also looking for some remedy for the problem. So, their objectives are as follows:

1. To obtain reasonable compensation for any game bird or wildlife damage to crops, hay buildings and fences.

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2. To suggest methods of decreasing incidents of damage by use of control methods in the Spruce Woods Park.

3. To suggest adjustments to hunting seasons to minimize damage to fences and crops.

4. To inform farmers of methods of deterring wildlife and obtaining compensation.

Because I think they feel that there are some people that probably don't know you can get compensation.

Now they have a good relationship with the people that work in the park, the C.O.'s and the park staff there have been co-operative, very helpful, and in fact, have offered to help them with information that they can give them. A lot of people feel there is no point in claiming so they prepared a form for people to fill in just exactly what damage that they had - sort of an assessment of what the value of the crop was, what the value of the fences that were broken down, and this sort of thing - and they went to some people and found that they said, oh, heavens no, we think there's no point in it because we've been putting up with this for so long and nobody's done anything, there was not point. So I think, when the Minister tells us what damage has been paid out, I think, probably that is the tip of the iceberg from what we're finding out from this group.

One thing that has come out of it is that they feel that the elk have chased the deer out of the park into a new range and the deer, in turn, are causing damage where they didn't cause damage before. And out of all this I was a little surprised maybe. I thought when they were really in such a state about this I had envisioned them saying, get rid of the elk, but that isn't what they want. In fact, some of the people that are most upset about it are avid hunters. They enjoy the elk. They feel that they should be there, but they don't feel that they should be subsidizing the rest of the country in feeding these elk all the time.

Some of the problems that came out have to do with the way that the compensation was handled. I was under the impression from them that crop insurance handled damage claims, that you reported this to your crop insurance agent, who in turn had to get a form from the Wildlife people. Of course, it had to be assessed before you went out on the combine and harvested the field, because of course somebody had to see it. So when you're ready and the weather is right and you're ready on your combine to do the harvesting, you're waiting for this form and this person to assess the damage. So that can sometimes cause a problem.

They're not complaining about the crop insurance people. They feel they've had a very excellent relationship with them, they are doing the best they can. But there are some things in the crop insurance part of it that I hear a lot of complaints about. One, of course, is the \$25-per-quarter fee that's charged, which is sort of a deterrent fee, I guess. So if you have several quarters, then you're paying \$25 on each one which you get back if you have a valid claim, but still it's a problem.

Now when they do get all this assessing done, they receive a cheque in the mail, and there is no indication of what it's for, whether it's for Claim One or whether it's supposed to be 75 percent of the damage, they don't know. It's 75 percent of what. The crop insurance people tell me that they don't get a report back at their office telling them the details of this claim. So everyone

is at a loss to know exactly what they're being paid for, why they're being paid it, and they don't know when they are going to get it.

They are beginning to feel that it should be probably handled the same as the waterfowl damage has been changed right into the Department of Agriculture with the crop insurance. They, I believe, will be making a recommendation to the Minister to that effect.

Of course, the compensation does not pay for the hours you spend chasing your cattle when the elk have broken the fence, when you would be really better employed on the combine harvesting the crop. If the elk knock the fence down and the cattle get in and damage the crop, then the compensation people say well, the elk didn't do it, the cattle did, so that's your problem. So all in all, it is a very frustrating and bad problem.

The property damage, of course, isn't paid for, the fences and the time, as I say, spent in chasing cattle and rounding them up. One farmer told of a problem he had with purebred cattle. The elk broke the fence. His bull got out, and the neighbours were not happy that their purebred cattle were violated and of course, this sort of thing can happen. There goes the value of those cattle, because you can't sell a calf as a purebred registered animal if another bull has got in with the herd. So there we have problems that probably are peripheral, but they still are definite problems to this farm operation.

So I'm sure that the Minister hasn't got an instant answer for the problem, but I would be interested in hearing his remarks on it.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: He has all the answers for everything else.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, he will have an answer.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, I have to appreciate the fact that the Member for Gladstone knows her agriculture. She must have some knowledge or she wouldn't have put her argument across as well as she has.

It's always difficult to keep the bulls in the fence for very obvious reasons.

MRS. C. OLESON: More difficult if the elk break the fence.

HON. S. USKIW: I don't know whether or not I really should belabour the point one way or the other. These are inevitables. When you have a co-existence situation between wildlife and domestic, you are going to have those incidents occurring from time to time. It's something that we can't legislate against or for.

Nature plays a big role in how animals behave, having to do with various seasons, reproduction, grazing needs. All those things play a part in the behaviour of animals. In fact, it's not that much different from people. Sometimes fences don't keep animals out.

The process that we use is that the C.O. has to establish that there has been big game damage. The C.O. leaves a form. That form is subsequently filled out by the crop insurance agent, and then it's submitted to the department for payment. That's the process.

I don't know whether there is an answer to the problems that the member has illuminated for us. We

know they're there. In some years they're more of a problem and in other years they're not much of a problem. It depends on the circumstance of the natural environment, feed supply and a whole host of other things.

Farmers also have some responsibility that they have to try to protect their assets to whatever extent they can. When they run out of ways of doing that, then of course they inevitably do call the C.O.s into the act, and try to resolve their problem. But it's like everything else. We only have so much capacity and beyond that, everything takes its course.

MRS. C. OLESON: This committee feels that one of the problems is with timing of hunting season, that late crops, say, like sunflowers and corn are the worst hit by this and of course, that gets us into hunting season, and the elk get spooked by the hunters probably, and are running through the fences. They, of course, are more prone to damage fences than deer are. Deer manage usually to jump over them.

But just to give the Minister a little indication, just a preliminary report that I got, I believe it was this morning, from one of the members of the committee. The Member for Emerson had given you an estimate figure of \$70,000.00. Well they haven't got all their information in but on the 18 claims or forms they have in, it's interesting, the deer damage is higher. It is \$34,352 as part of those 18 claims, and the elk, \$12,376.00. So it gives them a total \$46,728 just on 18 forms that they have got in and when they get in the rest of them. The highest one they have to date is \$7,700.00. They asked for figures to do with repairing fences and so forth which aren't covered by compensation.

Another thing that I neglected to mention in this is contract crops. The compensation doesn't take into consideration the price of the contract crop when compensation is paid. The committee has some feeling that there should be, with all compensation, 100 percent compensation for the damage. As one fellow put it, he says, when I go to the bank and I haven't got the money to pay the loan and the banker says, where is the rest of your money and the farmer says the elk ate it, the bank manager isn't too impressed.

I know of one case where the wife, who is a partner in the farm, decided that since things were not that great on the farm that she would get a job in town. Well, she made a certain amount of money and it pretty well coincided with the damage they'd had from the elk so she figured she was working all summer to feed the elk. There is some thought by some members in that group, and I don't blame them, that if this was a city yard and a herd of elk came stampeding over many yards that probably there would be a state of emergency declared and there would be a fair amount of compensation paid.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the Member for La Verendrye want to reclaim his speaking order? Does he want to?

MR. R. BANMAN: No, we can vote on this issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Minnedosa. I have a mental speaking order here.

MR. D. BLAKE: If it'll help solve the Minister's problem on the elk damage in the Spruce Woods Park, Mr. Chairman, my good friend, Jim Ferguson from Gladstone and I have been applying for about the last six years and we haven't got drawn yet, so I can assure him that there'll be two elk less if we ever get our names drawn for that hunting area. But, my colleague from Gladstone, I think has another question she would like to ask, Mr. Chairman, before the Member for La Verendrye and I take a shot at the Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: I'm sorry about that, but I had asked at the beginning of the Estimates for numbers on the elk population in Spruce Woods Park. As I had mentioned at that time, the five-year report a while ago - in 1982 I guess it was - stated that there were 750 elk in the Spruce Woods Park area and it was forecast that it would increase. This spring, when they did an aerial count, the last figure I had was 289 and that seemed to be very low, unless the count had not been completed when I heard the figure.

HON. S. USKIW: We anticipate 350 elk in Spruce Woods. We had a count of 289.

MRS. C. OLESON: I think that number must be way off because . . .

HON. S. USKIW: Low or high?

MRS. C. OLESON: Low, because I'm sure half of them ran in front of my car not long ago - a small herd - when I was coming home from Carberry. But, yes, I would suggest that since there's such widespread complaint about it and more problems than ever, I think that must be a very low count. There's a herd north of Carberry that apparently hasn't entered into the count at all - north of No. 1 Highway.

HON. S. USKIW: I've just had a suggestion that maybe we appoint the Member for Gladstone to our C.O. group.

MRS. C. OLESON: Help the elk. You lend me the plane, I'll go and do it.

HON. S. USKIW: We have counted 289; we estimate 350. Now, that's the best guess we've got. What else can one say, unless one has to ask an independent commission to count the elk.

MRS. C. OLESON: Has there been a count in between that five-year report count of 750 and this current count.

HON. S. USKIW: No.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: There must be a lot of poaching going on.

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Emerson is right.

MR. D. BLAKE: Mr. Chairman, how many elk are there in Riding Mountain National Park? Is that strictly up

to the federal people to count and give you those figures or does your game branch have those?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, we don't have authority there, but we can get the figures from the federal authority; we don't have them here.

MR. D. BLAKE: I know there is compensation paid for damage around Riding Mountain Park, also, although it's not as widespread or as concentrated as it is in the Carberry or Gladstone area, but the problem there, of course, is that there is such a wide area. I think there is something like 6,000 or 7,000 elk in there, but it's a very large area and the damage is scattered over a wider area and doesn't receive the same attention, or it's not as concentrated damage as you see in the Carberry area. I fully support the Member for Gladstone in her plea to have some solution to the problem that those people are facing because it's pretty discouraging to a farmer who works and tends a crop and sees a reasonably good crop coming in to wake up some morning and find that there have been 30 or 40 elk ravaging through it, because I've seen what they can do and it's a pretty discouraging event.

But, there are others, I think, that want to carry on this same topic and maybe we can finish that off and then move onto other subjects, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few comments and questions I'd like to put on the compensation part of the Estimates, Mr. Chairman.

The comments the Minister made on the six-week turnaround, I have to definitely question because I have had constituents that have waited some six months to get settlement on some of the wildlife claims. One of the problems I can see - I don't totally blame the department or the politicians - I think there is some frustration, as my colleague from Gladstone has pointed out. I think the main frustration is between the two bureaucracies, one in the crop insurance and some in the wildlife management section that possibly, if it were streamlined a little bit, it would be somewhat helpful.

The other concern that I have in dealing with this, and that is the amount of compensation. I have a constituent who has made representation to the department, and to the former Minister of Natural Resources, from the Turtle Mountain area and he has pointed out that the maximum that anyone can get, because of the way the formula works, is 50 percent of the value of the crop, whether it be hay, bails that are in the feed yard for winter storage, or whether it be sunflower loss; and the deer, as we're well aware, find sunflowers very tasty and have ravaged many many crops of sunflowers in the southwest area of the province, particularly last year with the extreme shortage of product.

I have a bit of difficulty when the Department of Natural Resources - and I'm not certainly against wildlife, I'm a very strong supporter of them. I've got some property that I'm leaving particularly for the production of white-tail deer. But, I have a concern when I come into the southwest part of the province where we have 11,000 acres in the municipality of

Cameron to produce wildlife, and then the farmers around there, who do a lot of the winter feeding of them, have a difficult time in getting adequate compensation to carry the deer herd that comes into their alfalfa bails to feed.

The same applies in the Turtle Mountain area, and I would request that a major review of the wildlife compensation program be looked at, the adjustment portion of it, because I have a letter that my colleague wrote to the former Minister of Natural Resources, colleague from Swan River, who had a problem with a constituent of his whose name was Mr. Hogg from Kenville who had - and I'll just make comments from the letter which Mr. Gourlay wrote to the Minister - Mr. Hogg had 60 acres of red clover but was only able to harvest 20 acres in the fall of 1982. He contacted the conservation officer and requested assistance in keeping the big game out of this area during the winter of '82-'83 so that he could harvest the remaining crop in the spring of 1983. This is the argument against the six-week turnaround.

The department responded but after some time and effort in discouraging crop depredation, advised Mr. Hogg he should put in a claim for crop insurance. Mr. Hogg complied and subsequently contacted crop insurance.

The crop adjuster appeared in the field on May 24, 1983, and completed his crop loss report. That was the 24th of May, 1983. Mr. Hogg subsequently made inquiries as to his loss claim but was told he would have to wait until the spring of 1984. We are now another year later, Mr. Chairman - it's been now from the fall of '82 to the spring of '84 - the above noted individual is now being advised that he is not eligible for crop loss assistance because red clover is not covered. So he has gone two years and now he found out he wasn't covered.

However, this is not being very consistent because a neighbour of Mr. Hogg, Mr. David Brundage, received compensation for red clover in 1978.

I think that there is a real frustration out there, and I think a lack of clarification of the policy, as I am pointing out here, not only did it take six weeks, it took two years and six weeks and then found out that it wasn't applicable. So I think it would have been fairer to the individual to have told him from Day One that he wouldn't be eligible and it would have helped.

I wanted to put that on the record, Mr. Chairman, because it again points out some of the frustrations that some people run into when two departments are involved.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I would like to follow that one up because there is an inconsistency in treating people and we should address that. Perhaps the member could, for the benefit of our staff, give the details of that to them directly. But in the meantime the Member for Arthur is correct; there is a problem and nothing stands still; we always have new ones. In the sense that we have tried to replenish our big game herds in Manitoba over the years, I guess we have created a larger problem with that policy. There is nothing wrong with the policy but the question of co-existence is where the problems are.

There are commodities that are not covered and that doesn't make any sense, because if you are going to

cover agricultural production and cover one commodity, you should cover them all. Damage is damage, notwithstanding what the production is. But there are two things that we have to look at and I think we have to do that soon.

First of all, let me put on the table the facts. In these Estimates was a cut of \$50,000 out of compensation, Big Game Damage Compensation. So to be able to replenish that and to then add other crops in and to award more generously, if you like, we would probably have to do two things, put more money back into compensation, and introduce a mechanism of raising more money in order to pay for it. I think that's really where we have to go. We may have to impose a higher fee for those that benefit from that resource directive. We may have to impose a higher fee for that very purpose.

The claim is legitimate. There is inconsistency; there's unfairness with respect to length of process. By and large, that should not be a problem other than when there is a dispute as to the claim. Once you get into that scenario, then I agree it would take months and months and even years to determine the end result. But by and large it shouldn't take more than - I would say at the most - two months, you know, so we should sharpen up our effort if it isn't happening within that time frame.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, there is a copy of this letter, from my colleague the Member for Swan River, in his office, but I am prepared to have the Clerk make a copy of it now and they can return the letter.

I would like to just follow up on one other area and that was the compliments that were paid to the wildlife associations this winter in their efforts to establish deer feeding stations. There were in the southwest corner - which the Minister may not be aware and the public may not be aware - my colleague who is from Emerson travelled through that area and we did meet with quite a few individuals - there were a lot of individuals that privately put money out and feeding stations out on their property. In fact, right at the Souris River, right in the Town of Melita, there was probably for two months some 50 to 75 deer being looked after.

I know personally, I had an individual tell me the other day I should put a bill into the Department of Natural Resources. I was unfortunate in losing a crop of corn to drought, and we had several hundreds of deer through the winter that pastured that particular crop - but it wasn't good enough for harvest - and without the feeding stations and without the support of private individuals and different groups, then we would have seen a massive starvation.

Now the question has to be brought up again, as was earlier today, to what point do we go to support them? But I go back to my earlier comments. As long as the Department of Natural Resources is encouraging habitat, increasing acreage and producing the deer, then somebody had better be prepared to look after them in the wintertime. — (Interjection) — Well, the Member for Inkster says that there isn't enough habitat. Well, I would say that most farmers . . .

A MEMBER: How many acres has he dedicated to them?

MR. D. BLAKE: He doesn't know a buck from a doe.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The members will address their remarks to the chair.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you. Most farmers, Mr. Chairman, like to see wildlife on their property and in their different areas. I don't think there is any real strong feeling that they shouldn't be there, but with the enhanced production areas, and there are - I think it's fair to point out I made one particular comment about the 11,000 acre one in the southwest - that after the grasshoppers ate most of the feed off it last summer, there wasn't much left for the deer summer or winter. So there had to be some feeding stations put in place because if there aren't feeding stations put in place, they just move into the farmers' yards and they take advantage of what's there.

So I appreciate the fact the Minister is going to look into the policy of compensation and look into the problems that have been derived, particularly on an equity basis as between the different crops.

As the Member for Gladstone pointed out, I was at that meeting in Carberry. One of the other main problems that was pointed out to me and that is the elk, as we are aware, lunge through the fences of farmers. The farmer that was telling me, he said, when I go to where a bunch of elk have gone through a fence, I hope I don't find any wire because it's a lot easier to rebuild a fence than it is to try and fix a fence that a whole herd of elk have gone through, that they are in such a tanglement. So he said I would just as soon that everything be gone and I could start afresh. I can understand having to do some fence fixing; it's understandable.

The other thing is, as we see the increase of special crops, particularly sunflowers in the Carberry area, and the expansion of the elk herd, we see they complement one another. Some of the farmers say you should see a bull elk or an elk with a big rack of horns go down two rows of sunflowers and see how many sunflowers are left after they've gone down. They are better than any combine that goes down a row of sunflowers. So it is a problem; I think it's one that isn't insurmountable. I know my colleague from Emerson will be bringing it up, as I will be, about the possibilities of other ways of maintaining elk herds in the province and hope that the Minister is receptive to some of the suggestions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. A. ADAM: Thank you. I have a couple of questions I wanted to ask of the Minister. I think a few years back, we had some discussion on the possibility of going into reindeer ranching in the north, or along those lines, going into reindeer farming. I know that we have, on an experimental basis, it's gone beyond an experimental basis, and that is, the Waterhen Buffalo Ranch.

It brings me back to the question of feeding the deer. You know, on the surface to me it seems the right thing to do. My tendency was when this was about that I should arrange to have 15, 20 big large bales of hay taken out in the wild somewhere and let the deer eat. It didn't happen because a farmer came along and

said, look, I have no hay and I need hay. So the rancher ended up getting the hay for his livestock. It brings up the question of has there been any comments from the biologists on the advisability of feeding - these are not domesticated animals, they're wildlife - have the biologists made any comments in regard to the impact? What are we doing there? Are we turning the wildlife into kind of a zoo? Is it the right thing to have deer coming to one feeding station? Those kinds of questions. I'm not an expert in that area, I don't know whether members opposite are experts in that area. I would suspect that very few of us are experts in what impact that has on the wildlife. I know that wildlife is under pressure, they are losing their habitat. I know that this has probably more impact than a severe winter, you know, one bad winter out of ten.

It seems to me that the loss of habitat is far more harmful and damaging to wildlife than storms, and so on. I'm not an expert on it, and I was just wondering what the experts are saying about this; what are the biologists saying? Should we be doing that every year? We're in the northern fringes, as the Minister mentioned earlier, up in this area. This is really the northern end of it and you're going to have some tough winters and you're going to have some nice winters and, you know, if you have a few nice winters the deer are going to move north, they're going to move further north, because they're losing habitat then, all of a sudden, you get a boomer, and you have a problem. So what should we be doing on that? I don't know because I'm not the expert, and I would like to know if our people are speaking to biologists and the experts from the University and so on.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the question of policy with respect to feeding of wild animals has two answers to it. You know, when you're in a crisis situation like we had this past winter, the animals are there and the natural response by everyone is to make sure they survive the winter.

On the other hand, there's an argument that is being made by biologists that will say that overly stimulating production and encouraging it beyond its normal habitat area, will either lock you in into a permanent expensive feeding proposition for more and more of the animals, or if you don't do that, you will end up with a big disaster down the road when the harsh winters set in and the capacity to feed them naturally isn't there. The policy has been to feed them only as a means of minimizing the damages that they create to farmers; that's been the policy. This past winter we fed them to survive them, so we extended our normal policy into a survival program for the animals, from that of solving the farmers' problems. And there's probably a limit to how far we do that. That has to be evaluated as to its worthiness. There's an argument to be made that nature should take its course and, when they go beyond a certain level, they should be set back by nature itself.

On the other hand, statistically, the Member for Arthur alluded to the fact that we are setting aside more habitat areas and, therefore, we are creating problems for farmers by having a higher density of animals in the area. But, statistically, we're losing habitat at the rate of 4 percent per year in southern Manitoba. So there's a perception here that we are increasing potential for

wildlife while, in fact, it is going the other way. We are maintaining a level program. The habitat is reducing in size, and the animal population is reducing in size, year after year. We are depleting the animal population, we are not increasing it.

I should add one more point. Because the habitat is shrinking, the animals are venturing out and becoming a little more domesticated than they otherwise would be, just simply searching for food. And that's why they are at the farmers' haystacks and I guess that's why I have a picture of one in my front lawn. Took a picture right through our front window. You know, they are becoming a little tamer because of their own environmental situation. So there are many arguments on both sides of that question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. A. ADAM: I'd ask the Minister what the biologists are saying, and I don't know whether he answered that or not? What is their argument?

HON. S. USKIW: The biologists?

MR. A. ADAM: What are they saying, should we proceed with this every year, or in just very exceptional cases?

HON. S. USKIW: The biologists recommend that we have a program as a means to solve the problems that animals create. I don't think that they are stressing, at least not overly so, that we stimulate artificial feeding to have more animals fed through the winter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I just want to indicate there's been a fair amount of discussion about the aspect of damage by wildlife and what have you, and I think possibly if you have a winter like we've had it sort of highlights the situation because it seems more severe and everybody becomes more conscientious. I would like to indicate to the Minister that I firmly believe that our farmers, by and large, are the best conservationists that we have in terms of deer and elk, and everybody becomes a bit more conscientious in a winter like we've had the past winter, and I think it is a matter of maybe trying to work out some kind of a general co-operation factor with our farmers that are putting up with the wildlife and I am really not that much concerned about it except during some specific tough years. And the one thing that comes forward sometimes is, when we were in government, we initiated a program where a landowner could apply for a licence for hunting of elk on his own property for a certain period of time. It was done as a trial thing at that time. It was relatively well-received by the landowners, and now there is some dissatisfaction because the time that these licences are issued or available to the landowner in conjunction - it's my understanding, it's a short period of time.

For example, with the elk there, they move up and down. They don't stay in one spot necessarily. As a result, a farmer picks up a licence for the hunting of elk on his property, and the elk don't show up for the

two weeks or whatever period of time that he has the licence. Three days later, they come marching through his fences, you know, and his hay crops and stuff like that.

I realize the problem, but what I'm suggesting is that maybe - when we initiated it, it was on a trial basis; there was good reception to it - whether we could maybe expand on that, because if we can keep the landowners basically happy who are putting up with the elk and deer, I think in many cases there would not be that much concern about some compensation.

But now they're sort of caught in this dilemma. We have tried to appease them. They accepted that and it isn't working out well. There is some flexibility there I think, but also create flexibility on their aspect of it when they have some damage, because, by and large, they've learned to live with these animals, except in extreme cases. If we allow them a little bit of a concession there, that we have our best conservationists right there. I just want to throw that forward as one suggestion.

The other suggestion is that I think that our hunters generally would even be prepared to accept an increase. I criticized the Minister for, or raised some comments about the increase in fishing licence, but I think generally that our big game hunters, whether it's deer, elk or whatever the case may be, are prepared to accept an increase in fees to some degree. But I think after what happened this past winter they would like to see a desire to see a bit of a fund buildup. You know, if we build a bit of a stabilization, if you may, in terms of the good years versus the bad years so that there's a fund available that it can click into place. Because some of the people, very much to their credit, scrambled pretty heavily in terms of the wildlife association in terms of raising funds and stuff like that. I think that if there was an increase in the licence fees and it was indicated that this was to establish a fund for times when there are bad times or bad winters, that there's a feeding program in place, that would probably be very acceptable. I'm just throwing that forward because at the present time I think we're building a bit of a problem from time to time.

The other comment that I want to make to the Minister is he indicates that initially I believe there were \$50,000 or \$70,000 in the Wildlife Feeding Program, and I think you've expended \$320,000, and you might have to expend some more. I want to say to the Minister, don't feel bad about that, because this is a renewable resource like we have with forestry, for example. When we have forest fires in an extreme year, there is not too much concern. If their money is needed to fight the forest fires, we send out people, equipment, and money is there. This doesn't happen every year.

So if we have a case - and relatedly the amount is minimal compared to that - every time we spend a dollar, it's a concern, of course. But in that sense, I don't think we should feel that concern just because the Minister had to kick in through his department more monies into this thing. When you compare that to something like forestry and when you consider the income from hunting and the related spinoff in terms of fuel and all these kinds of things, hunters are guys that spend money not necessarily just on shells and guns and gas and even other things a little bit. So there is a good spinoff; it's a healthy industry.

And I just wanted to draw this to the Minister's attention that these are kinds of things that I think the department could look at, because when you talk to enough of these hunters after a year like this, you get a sort of a feedback of what is acceptable. They all, I think, want the same thing. They want to have a healthy hunting resource available to them and they would like to have the habitat there. Maybe a program could be worked out over a long period of time through the licensing aspect of it so that habitat could be set aside for this. You know, there are many ways of looking at it. It's basically, I suppose, a desire of maybe working something out in conjunction with the sportsmen to try and resolve this.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I'm not surprised in one way and yet maybe surprised in another way that the member suggests that we raise our revenues for this very purpose. I would like to respond to that by saying to him that from my limited knowledge, the way the wildlife associations are working and thinking, I have to be impressed with the fact that they appear to be a very responsible type of organizations and people that are really expressing the viewpoint that they are prepared to pay, if necessary, to improve wildlife habitat. They are not worried about licence fees per se, if they know that money is dedicated for that kind of a program. So I think there is a sense of responsibility that is felt there by the various participants.

So, as I said earlier, I think we will have to look at that as a means of trying to fund a more stable, participatory rate on the part of the department for the purpose of meeting these crisis years from time to time. I think that can be worked out, and we can work that out with the wildlife people and their associations.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Mr. Chairman, now I'd like to move on to the aspect of the poaching end of it to some degree.

HON. S. USKIW: We're going to eliminate it, Albert.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Well, it would be desirable if it could be eliminated. I don't know. Certainly at the present time I don't know whether we're even making a dent, whether the poaching is increasing or not. I just know that it's very high in people's minds, even those who are not hunters. People generally have a concern when our wildlife in the province is being illegally hunted. If somebody has a licence - there are those who feel that there should be no hunting, and they're allowed to have their thoughts on that aspect of it, but I think when game is taken illegally is when everybody's ire is up.

The Minister indicated initially when he started off in the opening remarks that he had instructed his staff to clamp down and pursue to the maximum any nightlighters, for example, or any poaching generally. I certainly commend him for that aspect of it, but I think we would want to have a little bit of discussion on exactly besides that how to deal with this problem.

I suggested initially that maybe the involvement of our wildlife associations could maybe play a role in it. Certainly they play a role, and we very much accept it when it comes to feeding of deer in an emergency

situation. Maybe we can enhance our wildlife associations to get involved and to help control the poaching aspect of it. Maybe our general public can be encouraged to maybe help control the poaching aspect of it because when I see, even in a small rural station like Piney, the amount of calls that are coming forward regarding infractions and the taking of game illegally and I know this happens all over, then I think there is room for reviewing the whole situation.

I would like to, at this stage of the game, Mr. Chairman, ask my colleague, the Member for La Verendrye, who has some very interesting suggestions that I would like to have the Minister maybe consider, and maybe he'd like to bring them forward at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for La Verendrye.

MR. R. BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think many of us over the years have been concerned with regard to problems of poaching not only in the field of big game but also in the field of fishing as well as in the migratory and upland game bird field.

In travelling through some of the states recently, I noticed that the State of Wyoming had adopted a program which I would like to commend to the Minister. I've got some brochures and a letter which was sent to me by the chief law enforcement officer of the State of Wyoming. They have adopted a program which I think was pioneered back in 1979 by New Mexico and it basically is a program which is aimed at catching the poacher. It's a program which rewards, in a monetary way, anybody who reports someone who has been poaching.

The interesting thing about this program is that the reward is paid out whether there is a conviction or there is not a conviction. In other words, when someone calls in what happens is, that person who is reporting the particular poaching activity is given a number and the payment of the reward is made to the individual after the arrest, in cash, and at any location that the particular individual requires.

Now I say to the Minister that I think one of the biggest problems is people see someone taking too many fish and hiding fillets in the back of a pick-up truck, or for that matter involved in some big game poaching activity and many people are somewhat concerned about getting involved. It might be someone who they know who has done it. It might be someone who they particularly don't want their name mentioned to, as far as any legal action is concerned, and therefore they, I believe, if were given the opportunity of having a toll-free number to call, would bring forward information which would lead to the arrest and probably conviction of many people who are now involved in poaching in the province.

The program, as outlined by the officials from the State of Wyoming, seems to have had very good results. They instituted the program in the fall of 1980 and have had some pretty impressive figures as far as, not only the amount of people who have called in to claim the reward money, but also the convictions that have flowed from those calls.

So I would ask the Minister two questions, No. 1, whether he would not have his staff and have the government look at this type of a program to see if it

could be instituted in Manitoba. And No. 2, whether or not the department along with the Minister could, in conjunction with the wildlife associations in the Province of Manitoba, see if they could be plugged into this program also? I know it will require the support of the game and fish associations and I believe, if implemented in the right way, would provide us with another vehicle of trying to cut down on the number of poachers who are involved in the province.

So I'll give the Minister a copy of the letter and a copy of the brochure that was sent to me. I think it's rather self-explanatory as to what the State of Wyoming has found it has done for them, and hopefully something along this line can be instituted in the province to catch some of these people who are abusing and misusing our natural resource to the extent, in many instances, that it's hurting the recreation fishermen and the avid hunter.

It's unfortunate that there is a small percentage of the population that does engage in that type of thing, but like in so many things that happen in society, there are always a few who spoil it for everybody else. If we can catch a few of those and maybe make them aware that the eyes are on them and that there is a toll-free number that somebody near or around them can call, it might make them think twice and hopefully not only would this be a way of catching them, it might also be a deterrent.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the suggestion is not a new one; it's been around for some time. I appreciate the information the member is willing to table for my benefit or the benefit of the department.

We have advised the Wildlife Federation that we are prepared to take a look at those options. That was one of the main items in their brief, the proposition that there be a mechanism for voluntary policing of some sort or at least to assist the C.O.s in apprehending people who are violating the laws and regulations.

So we have an open mind on that issue and we'll be getting on with the discussions with them in the near future to determine just what the potential is and may even examine the experience in other jurisdictions in Canada where similar things or programs are in operation. So we are very much interested in that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, just to follow up on the comments by the Member for La Verendrye, I think we do have to try some new and perhaps more innovative ways to capture these poachers.

I personally cringe every time I see a report in the newspaper of someone getting a \$500 fine for having been caught with meat in their freezer, or caught red-handed in the act either in the process of hunting with the equipment and also with jacklights and that sort of thing. But I really question where we have a sport hunting season, how someone who has broken all the rules and principles of sport hunting, that they would ever be allowed to have a licence again.

MR. R. BANMAN: Within a year.

MR. D. SCOTT: Not within a year, within a lifetime. We have some members opposite here that when

something is as totally counter and as detrimental to the environment and to the species being hunted, I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister would consider reviewing both the penalties along with other methodologies, be it alongside the Neighbourhood Watch Program or the Rural Watch Call, arrange patrol, whatever. I think it's valid, but I think the penalty has to fit the crime. And in this instance, I would even go so far as to say that if a person, with the new codes on firearms, the basis of a person having a firearm primarily is either as a hunting weapon or in some instances, as well, for target practice.

And when a person has used that firearm illegally I think they should have also lost their right to ever possess firearms. I do not think that is at all overly severe. Citizens have a tremendous responsibility when we have these weapons in our homes, in our possession, and when we misuse them, I do not have any difficulty. There's no such thing as a right to bear arms; it is a privilege granted in our society. And I think maybe if we move towards similar approaches of that line, we would shut off a significant amount of the poachers. The deterrent may be there for some. Many, I don't think that any deterrent will be of any benefit, but once they're caught, if they lose their right to bear firearms as well as the right to ever apply for a hunting licence, I quite frankly think we won't have anymore; at least the number of repetitions will be down considerably. I'll let you comment on that now.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, there's one major flaw in this business of what kind of penalty fits the crime, and that is if one is breaking the law to begin with, then what's to stop one from breaking another one and another one after that. You know, if you want to break the law, you don't need a licence and you can use a gun that isn't registered and that's what crime is all about. It's not obeying the law. I think the one point that the Member for Inkster made has some validity to it.

But I would give it a different interpretation, a different interpretation than he has. I would think that an appropriate penalty for someone violating our game laws in Manitoba is an effort that would somehow help the department carry out its program. Rather than incarceration — (Interjection) — as a penalty - I guess they're not interested in my Estimates, Mr. Chairman - rather than taking away their privileges as a penalty, our department is so short of manpower resources that I think we can find room for them in this department and we can put them to work to help us enforce the rules. — (Interjection) — I hope not. Because as far as I'm concerned a person is wasted when one is just simply hauled into jail and spends his time playing cards with his mate in jail, or his friend behind bars. There are much more productive things that could be done and which could serve the purpose of our penalty sections in law, and that's the direction that I would hope to push for within this department. So that if we have a violation that perhaps then we could clean up our parks a little better. We can help our C.O.s in their endeavours, do all sorts of things. — (Interjection) — No, that's not Conservative philosophy; that is very practical commonsense philosophy. So, yes, there's a problem and we have to try new ways of grappling with

it. Poaching and nightlighting go together. And I said earlier in the introduction of my Estimates that we are going to try to apply very harsh rules to that activity, henceforth much more than we have in the past.

MR. D. SCOTT: I don't have any difficulties with, instead of incarceration on a first offence, to have the person give some service as part of the sentence to work alongside of the department. I still think that they should not ever have the right to even have a hunting licence again in their lives for any species.

On the other side, under the Criminal Code, for someone who is banned from possessing a firearm, was caught with a firearm, then they are really in Dutch and it's not going to be just given a little bit of time out working alongside a C.O. or cleaning up some of our parks, they would be much more in Dutch at that point in time.

HON. S. USKIW: The problem with that scenario, Mr. Chairman, is it doesn't afford the sincere individual who went over to visit the Pope and asked for his forgiveness, that then becomes nullified and there's some merit in maintaining that process as well, and the member's answer wouldn't allow for that.

MR. D. SCOTT: I never thought I'd hear that from you, Mr. Minister. Is this a new leaf?

Before we leave Wildlife, I'd like to make a few comments on the deer feeding program that we had just discussed a few minutes ago before we moved on to poaching. As you're very aware, we've had some discussions on this in the past, and I have very serious doubts of the validity of getting into, be it the emergency feeding programs and especially sustaining feeding programs on an annual basis. It's very easy to get wrapped up in the terrible sight of seeing wild animals starve. It is also I think equally cruel for us to play or to try and turn wild animals more or less into almost an open-zoo policy which is what we are in effect trying to, in a way, almost domesticate the animals. — (Interjection) — - Well, Dieter Brock had a few troubles at the Zoo, I think. I think maybe he spent a bit too much time there. — (Interjection) — Depends on the zoo, some zoos have the people inside and the animals outside; and others have the animals inside and the people outside. I've been in both of them, and I've usually been alongside the people.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. D. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, in all sincerity, I've tried, as the Minister is aware, to seek out some professional opinion on this from people from both within Manitoba and also outside of the province and gone to some ungulate specialists, in particular, Dr. Bill Prewitt at The University of Manitoba's Department of Zoology, and also from the University of Calgary, one of the continent's eminent specialist in ungulates, a Dr. Valerius Geist. Both of these gentlemen express very strong doubts of programs, getting especially emergency programs, coming in late in the season, wanted to have extensive follow-up to see what kind of results that the actual program had. I suspect that from what I understand of the program it was very well conducted.

I must give my congratulations to the departmental people and the other volunteers who participated in the program. They got started, I believe, early enough so that it could be effective - and further west, in Alberta, where Dr. Geist was more familiar with the situation. It's my understanding it didn't start until quite late and trying to feed ungulates food that they cannot then digest more often than not, and frequently, just ends up in a packed rumen in which they cannot digest, and for people who think starving deer are a sad sight, deer who are starving and with a stuffed rumen are even worse from what I am led to believe from my communication with these gentlemen.

Both of them had given very strong recommendations that the emphasis and the monies that we put into habitat feeding programs would be much better used if we put them into habitat, both restoration, habitat maintenance, and got into better zoning requirements in our developed areas of the province where the habitat is disappearing at the fastest rate, so that, as Dr. Geist refers to in Switzerland, for every area a person goes in and cuts trees in an area of that country, they have to plant an equivalent number of trees in another location, so that they are trying to maintain their forest cover at the same level for wildlife habitat.

We, I think, often shy away from zoning practices. I think that we have to recognize our responsibility if we are going to keep any aspects of our natural environment, especially in the southern part of the province. We need those zoning requirements; we need, in some instances, special tax concessions through the municipal tax levies, even though the taxes right now on non-agricultural land that's in a natural state is exceptionally low. My understanding is it wouldn't cost a heck of a lot to write it off altogether.

But the emphasis that both these gentlemen put on, as the Minister mentioned earlier, is that these critters are at the northern range or northern limit of the range. Also in something, if I could read from Dr. Prewitt's letter, and I will just read a paragraph of it. He says, and I quote, "There are some biological facts that must be outlined first as a foundation for future understanding. First, each species is tied to a habitat or a particular set of environmental factors. These include climate, topography, vegetation and other animals. Second, there is an ecological law called the 'law of the minimum'. It states that no matter how many ecological factors there are, no matter what their concentrations, survival of the species depends on the factor in shortest supply."

He gives an avian example, birds, "For example, if a certain bird species requires tree holes for nesting, then ideal weather, excess food, lack of predators will allow no more birds to nest in confined tree holes. Tree holes are the minimum. If one wishes to increase the species, the only way is to increase the number of tree holes."

A classic example of that is the bluebird and the bluebird trails that have sprung up throughout North America, and the population of that species has expanded very greatly. Wood ducks are similar, their limiting factor is the number of nesting trees that are available for them, or on number of nesting grounds.

MR. D. BLAKE: Do you get a blue star for that?

MR. D. SCOTT: Dave, I will give you a gold star for pointing up more. The wood duck is probably the most beautiful of all the ducks.

So recognizing the limits that we had, and the primary limit being habitat, and when we are feeding, artificially, species to try and maintain population levels in that species and they aren't in danger of crashing - they are in danger of crashing to a fair extent but not as far as for elimination of the species by any stretch of the imagination - we also, therefore, stress their critical lack of habitat that much more. In other words, there are that many more animals trying to still exist or more likely subsist on the same amount of habitat. So you are actually even creating a greater problem down the road, I suspect, in carrying forth with that.

Another thing that I found kind of sad in a way with the policy is that we, in the province, through co-operation, I understand, with the people of Riding Mountain National Park, made sure that we did not put feeding stations close by the park boundaries because they, in effect, drew the animals out of the park because in the park the food supply was short as well when you had that heavy snow conditions as we did this year, which were not that abnormally high levels with more normal levels after several years of very low snow levels.

But there is an awful lot of farmers, on the other hand, I believe, especially in the western end of the park, who were feeding very close to the park boundary. They are drawing out deer and elk and, in some instances I have heard of, the deer feeding stations turned into excellent wolf feeding stations. Because of the bias against the wolf, which is just as critical if not more critical, but far more critical the predators are the ones that determine the quality of the prey species in the area. It's probably the largest, I think.

A MEMBER: Tried eating wolf lately?

MR. D. SCOTT: Well, there is a common response. If those who want to eat the prey species, but don't recognize the role of the predator species in maintaining the prey species, you will not have a healthy population of prey species without a healthy culling factor of the predators. You had people there lying in wait shooting the wolves, which already it's amazing that the population has been able to maintain in that park because of the amount of predation along the edges of the park.

A MEMBER: Don, use smaller words. You are talking about the wolves in here.

MR. D. SCOTT: I don't expect to get there to entertain the Minister in great debate, I just wanted to get some of these comments aired publicly that we have spoken of privately.

I am very pleased to hear the Minister's comments at the start of this discussion when I came in the room, at least, and I think that we need to sit down and do a good policy analysis of what direction we want to go in the future.

Do we want to end up getting into emergency feeding programs? The feeding programs we have now, how beneficial are they? Should we be doing it, and what

is the basis for the feeding programs? Would it be better to put the additional effort, instead of into the feeding programs, into acquiring more habitat, even the zoning along rivers and streams to keep the tress and what not from being knocked down along rivers and streams, which would vastly increase the amount of habitat in the province if we allowed the streams to go back to treed perimeters alongside our rivers and streams?

With that, I will conclude that part. I've got one other question, and if the Minister wants to make a comment, and then I have another question on reintroduction of Native species.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, you know everyone is right on these arguments. I am advised by staff that one can have very credible credentials behind arguments that would go the other direction as well. So really, so really, when it comes down to it, it's a matter of opinion to a large degree.

But I could sum it up with one statement, and that is, things are never the same and they've been changing for thousands of years. If you were to apply the logic of the natural process of elimination and balance of nature and so on, then the Minister of Health's departmental Estimates could be cut by 50 percent by not applying the newly found methods of keeping people alive. It's the same scenario.

It is the same scenario to say let nature take its course with wildlife. It is a solution, but it ignores the fact that we're not living 2,000 years back; we're living today. The mechanics for doing things or solving problems are readily available which they were not available at that time. The mechanics of control of animal populations in North America, by and large, were determined by the activities of the North American Indian for a long time. The buffalo, I guess, were pretty well annihilated, if you like, by the uncontrolled practices there.

So, the biologists will argue that, yes, you can, if you decide as a policy that you want to sustain a larger deer and elk population, if that were the government's intent, that you can do it successfully, effectively, without the negative aspects that the Member for Inkster is alluding to. On the other hand, if you don't manage it properly, then the Member for Inkster is correct, and the case in point is our program here this last winter, versus a program started in another province much later, and that's where the problems arise when you don't come to grips with it early enough in the season. The animal has to be in a certain physical shape in order to be able to adjust to the artificial feeding program, if you like. If they are past that stage, then you can do them perhaps more harm than good, you see, and so timing is crucial. That's why, when we make these decisions, we have to really predetermine them at the beginning of the season, anticipating that you might have a program and gear up for it, even if you don't have to use the program.

To launch a program after the season is sort of halfway through and the animals are already showing starvation signs, then I guess it can be argued that we are wasting money and increasing the period of pain for the animals that are going to be demised anyway. I suppose that's the way one can put it.

Sir, I would have to say to the Member for Inkster that both arguments are right and it's a matter of how you do it. In the end, the public policy has to determine whether or not we want to make a commitment and how big that commitment should be. How large a herd do you want to maintain? Wild animals can be farmed like agricultural and domesticated animals if you decide to do that. I mean, the Russians do a great job at that, the Scandinavians and so on. They actually herd wild animals and they have a major meat industry as a result of their operations. You get all sorts of breeding and cross-breeding mechanisms that are employed. So there is nothing new about that. Whether it's a wise policy to do it or not is the question, and we have maintained a policy, which I think has been the right one, that we don't want to overstimulate increased populations throughout artificial means, but yet we want to be in a position to have the capacity to protect people who are out there who are going to be harrassed by these animals because of their hunger. So we have to have offsets for that, and that's essentially been the program, to try and detract or distract the animals from the farm hayfields, or haystacks, if you like, or whatever, grain bins, you name it. It was never a program to enhance the capacity of wild animal production in Manitoba.

MR. D. SCOTT: Just as a final comment on that and then I have another couple of questions, Mr. Chairman.

I always worry about our ability to manage, because to manage you have to understand, and I don't think anyone understands the natural economics, if you want to use that terminology, of the interrelationships between all the species. We're learning all the time, and the more we learn, the better chance then we have of being able to input. But, when we do manage, let us remember that our management has always had an incredibly strong bias towards the species that we like, the species that we sell hunting licences and whatnot on, and not on the predator species which are probably more important to the health of those herds than any other factor.

From my experiences a couple of years ago in Finland, I wasn't as far up as where the Laps herd the reindeer, but now the country has a national program on as a major treasure is a few, equivalent of our woodland caribou, that are coming back into the eastern side of Finland. There are only a few hundred of these animals and they are protected just the same as our cougars are, because the northern species is no longer any Barren Ground caribou. The Barren Ground are mixed blood now with the woodland and they have, in effect, lost one of their species and it's of significant concern to them, so now they've gone to that extent, they're trying to protect the other species as well for the sake of protecting species in gene pools, even though other people may not like the idea of protecting the broad base of gene pools, but it is essential to be able to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem.

Mr. Minister, are there any attempts being made, or any efforts, or any continuations of studies, whatsoever, for the reintroduction of the swift fox? I remember there was a chap from the NRI a couple of years ago who did his Master's thesis on the reintroduction of the swift fox. Unfortunately, job opportunities weren't the greatest

in Manitoba and he ended up in Frobisher Bay, I believe, and there is not too much habitat up at Frobisher Bay, to say the very least, for an introduction of swift fox. But, the swift fox, and I'm also wondering about the mule deer, the mule deer are deer that are the native deer to this area, not the white-tail. I would like to know what has been done to see if it would be possible to be introduced, and I understand the habitat that one has out in the Spruce Woods area is the ideal type of habitat that they need, both to imprint on, to calf on and, if it would be possible, to reintroduce that species in that area? What kind of research has been done into it?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the member raised a question about the swift fox and there is a program in the Spruce Woods area. They're not here yet, but we want to bring them in. We're working with the Canadian Wildlife Service to bring them back into Manitoba.

With mule deer, I'm advised that it's deemed to be a futile effort, costly and the white-tail deer simply outpace and outmaneuver them anyway, and it's not seemingly recommended by departmental people.

MR. D. SCOTT: First, with the swift fox, are you planning to start that reintroduction this year, or how far along are we getting on that? When can we expect the start of the program?

HON. S. USKIW: The projection is based about two years down the road for the introduction of the swift fox.

MR. D. SCOTT: With the mule deer, is not the greatest difficulty in hunting season their response to hunters very different from that of white-tailed deer? I wonder if we were to reintroduce them, we'd certainly have to cancel hunting seasons in the general area that they were reintroduced, because most hunters just aren't going to be able to tell the difference between a white-tail and a mule deer. And until that education process took place, they're just sitting ducks, because they wait until you move before they move whereas a white-tail scatters a heck of a lot quicker into the brush.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, just before I would like to respond to the Member for Inkster. I'm told that the mule deer were not killed off by hunters in Manitoba, but rather they've been sort of squeezed out of the province and you will find them in abundance in the Province of Saskatchewan in the Sandhills area, but it's really nothing that we have done by way of hunting that has depleted them in this province — (Interjection) — that's right, yes. They apparently are not a competing species and aren't able to challenge the white-tailed deer that are here.

MR. D. SCOTT: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I appreciate the time you've taken.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have two questions. There was a government press release in

March a year ago announcing some grants. One was 2,600 to the Department of Zoology to determine why there is an unusually low number of males in the Shilo-Spruce Woods elk population. This study will be completed in 1984. I wonder if the Minister could give us the results of that study.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take that question as notice.

MR. D. BLAKE: Sure.

HON. S. USKIW: We don't have a ready answer for the member. We don't have an answer to that one right now, but we'll take that under advisement.

MR. D. BLAKE: Oh. If that is true, they've been doing a pretty good job the ones that are left there by the complaints we're getting of the damage there, Mr. Chairman.

At the same time, there was one to the Department of Zoology for 3,000 to determine food preferences and habitat use of the wood bison introduced in the Waterhen area. I just wondered if they'd found, with the \$3,000, whether they still eat grass and small shrubs, or do they like oats and barley now better?

There was another one, \$2,400 to the Natural Resources Institute to determine the feasibility of reintroducing the greater prairie chickens in Manitoba, and I just wondered if there was anything happened on that study.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I think what we'll have to do is respond to the member, but not right now.

MR. D. BLAKE: That's fine, Mr. Chairman.

On behalf of my colleague, the Member for Turtle Mountain, who has to attend to other duties this evening, he's asked me to put on the record a communiqué he has from the Rock Lake Game and Fish Association affiliated with the Manitoba Wildlife, addressed to him re the casing of firearms.

"We of the Rock Lake Game and Fish Association feel that it is our duty as taxpayers and concerned citizens to bring to your attention the issue of casing all firearms. We feel that this law will be an encroachment on our rights and freedoms as Manitobans and Canadians.

"We as an association can find no plausible explanation for a mandate such as this. We feel that forcing all sportsmen to case their firearms is going to serve no purpose except increasing the income of sporting goods stores and giving the government one more issue to discuss using the taxpayers' money. There are far more important issues at hand, such as the state of the agricultural industry, unemployment and the deficit, to name a few.

"If the government feels that casing firearms will eliminate or reduce violent crimes and stop poaching of wildlife, they are sadly mistaken. Laws and gun cases will only keep the honest people honest.

"We have sent letters to the local papers, our municipalities and the Minister of Mines and Resources. We ask you, as our representative in the Legislature, to deal with this issue. Help us preserve some of our

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personal rights. We look forward to hearing from you on this issue."

It's signed by the "Rock Lake Game and Fish Association, Bruce Kinley, President, and Leonard Enns, the Secretary."

Now, Mr. Chairman, I know there have been some regulations introduced, and I support resolutions such as this. I have hunted in areas where it has been necessary to case your gun and in areas such as we have here where it is not required. It serves no useful purpose. All you do is snap out gun cases and a whole variety of methods so you can get your gun into use as quickly as you can, if it's not cased. So it serves no purpose whatsoever. It's like every law, there is a way around each one.

Also it has become pretty much of a way of life in the rural areas, people who are out a lot, to have the gun rack in the back of their half-ton, and the guns readily handy when they see one of Mr. Scott's wolves crossing the field and heading for the chicken coop, they're able to dispatch it quite rapidly.

HON. S. USKIW: I think there's a thing going on between those two gentlemen.

MR. D. BLAKE: If the government's interested in reducing the chicken herds to 99 chickens, Mr. Chairman, all you've got to do is introduce a few more swift foxes and let the coyotes run rampant, and you won't have any problem.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I have had an opportunity to discuss that issue during the dialogue meetings of recent days. I am of the opinion that the Member for Minnedosa is probably right. I'm not sure that we want to proceed with regulations in regard to - what is it? - cased firearms.

You know there may be a case made for them, but I would suspect that those incidents are probably rare. But for the moment, I think we have to accept that we're not going to proceed with that.

MR. D. BLAKE: Another one that may require some modification is the road allowance rule where you have to be so far off the road before you can take your gun out of the case. I'm sure the Minister and his whole approach to it, as he said earlier, was the common-sense approach. I'm sure that will prevail in this instance and he will listen to those who are knowledgeable in the field of sport hunting and maybe take a somewhat opposing view to the Member for Inkster.

A MEMBER: You don't have to take that, Don. Give him a list.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, just on that one, there has not been an attempt to impose that rule as well. So we're not even looking at that.

MR. D. BLAKE: Good. Too bad you didn't get this portfolio a year ago, Sam.

HON. S. USKIW: Pardon me?

MR. D. BLAKE: It's too bad you hadn't this portfolio a year ago. We could have avoided a lot of problems.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rupertsland.

MR. D. BLAKE: Okay, Elijah, you're on.

MR. E. HARPER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the resource priority for big game, from the government? I believe the first priority is given to Treaty Indians, then to sportsmen. Is that it?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I think the member is well aware that federal obligations apply to Native hunting universally and therefore that rule governs. We are not in a position constitutionally to alter that.

MR. E. HARPER: You mentioned about nightlighting. You said, they go in hand with poaching. Do you include nightlighting to the hunting out of season or hunting without a licence? Or is that considered poaching?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the Native community of Canada has certain privileges with respect to that question. When we talk about nightlighting, however, we look at it from a different perspective.

Nightlighting, as we perceive it, is a dangerous practice. Therefore, it's disallowance will be based on the fact that it's a dangerous practice and that would apply to everyone.

I don't think that one can say that it's dangerous for white or non-Native people to hunt at night, but not dangerous for others to do so. If it's dangerous, it's dangerous for everyone, and we will apply the law uniformly.

MR. E. HARPER: Mr. Chairman, I just want to clarify that in terms of the federal obligation, the Treaties that exist with the Indian people, that there might have been some misunderstanding when they hunt out of season, that they might be poaching and a lot of times, maybe members would feel that they are poaching and defying the law. I just wanted to put that on record, and also the Native people also see the problem of poaching as something that would have to be resolved. As a matter of fact, I've had several meetings with them and they would like to have some sort of resolution to this problem.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I would like to respond to that. We have had discussions with Native people, and there are a good number of leaders within the Native community that are very much concerned with poaching. It's not as if it's a Native, non-Native issue. It is an issue that everyone is concerned about. So I would expect that we will have a fair amount of co-operation from those Native leaders on that issue. I think they are taking a responsible position.

Now they have the same problem that we have and that is, if someone wants to break the law, you know you have to catch them in the act sort of thing. I guess they can't police their membership on the reserves any more than we've been able to police our membership in society with respect to hunting regulations. We're all equally guilty, if you like, when we do that — (Interjection) — that's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time being 10:00 p.m., what is the pleasure of the committee?

HON. S. USKIW: Committee rise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee rise.

SUPPLY - HEALTH

MR. CHAIRMAN, P. EYLER: Committee come to order. We are considering the Estimates of the Department of Health.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before beginning I would like to draw the attention of members to the gallery where we have a group of 10 Scouts from the 10th Transcona Scout Troup. They are under the direction of Mr. Dave Abel. They are from the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

On behalf of all members, I would like to welcome you here tonight.

I believe we have an agreement to begin with Item 5, Sport - Mr. Minister.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, the agreement is to begin and end with Sport, No. 5. To make it easier for the critic of the opposition, I would suggest that we go line-by-line and then roam all over the place just before we finish Sport Directorate. That might be easier. We'll see what we can cover on this, including of course the funds from the lottery that is spent on Sport, the share that comes to Sport.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item 5.(a)(1) Sport, Executive: Salaries - the Member for River Heights.

MR. W. STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the Minister has mentioned that perhaps going line-by-line would be the appropriate way of handling this section of his Estimates. That's fine with me.

I would just like to say, if this Minister's colleagues and other Ministers within the government could hold the expenditures in their departments the way that this Minister is successful in keeping the increases to a minimum within this section of his responsibilities, we would see very little in the way of increased deficit and so on within the provincial budget.

For the year ending March 31, 1984, the total amount spent in the area of Sport was \$635,000; for the year ending March 31, 1985, there was a slight decrease from the 635,000 to 632,600 for the year ending March 31, 1986, there is a small increase from the 632,600 to 654,000. When you go line-by-line, you can see that the only area that there is an increase in expenditures is really in the salaries of the employees and the increases in expenditures don't look as if they have created a new position because the increase is a total of 12,500 in Salaries. So, this would be the normal increase that employees who have stayed with the department would be entitled to.

So, it's all right with me, Mr. Chairman, if we want to cover the waterfront and the Minister would prefer to do it, we pass (a) Executive: Salaries; and get right down to (b) Sport Directorate, because I have about six or eight areas that I would like to discuss with the

Minister based on some questions from last year. They are just general questions in sports, and they're not line-by-line questioning of the Estimates.

So I am prepared to pass (a)(1) and (2), and we'll get on to (b), and try and cover the waterfront.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 5.(a)(1)—pass; 5.(a)(2)—pass; 5.(b)(1) Sport Directorate: Salaries - the Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I must simply rise after the opening statement of my honourable friend, because if anything was misrepresented in a very few words it was the money spent on sports. My goodness! It is true that there is very little increase that you see in front of you. There is very little increase, because we're talking about mostly salaries and some grants for the External Agencies. There is only one area, External Agencies.

Mr. Chairman, all one should have is check with the Sports Federation to see if they're not getting more money. I think that we're the only province that surrendered, and there's no other better word than that, a large portion which is as good as tax revenue when you're talking about the Lottery revenue. I might say that, to everybody's surprise in sports, just the share of the Sports Federation instead of going around \$1 million, \$1.4 million like last year, the Sports Federation and all the money that they allot to sports, we've been told at times that, fine, and I think my honourable friend was the one that certainly encourages the government to be less involved and to make it possible for the Sports Federation to run the association in the sports.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to turn this around. I would say, I would be very happy to have this kind of increase in the Department of Health, and I think I have the largest increase usually - well not I, I wish it were - but my department anyway, the Department of Health. The share of the Manitoba Sports Federation should be somewhere between \$3.5 million and \$4 million. So I consider that a pretty good increase from anywhere between \$3.4 million to \$4 million.

A MEMBER: 1.4 last year?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Roughly 1.4, 1.5 that they had last year, which was a transfer by the way, of a responsibility. They received money when my honourable friend was in government, but they had to accept the responsibility of running the Sports Administration Centre. In fact, they were practically on their deathbed. They had no money to promote any programs at all.

I can say that the Sports Federation is very enthused. I think it made the Sports Federation. The Sports Federation now is in a commanding position. If anything, the sports have been coming closer together, working together. I think that they're very happy with what they have. In fact, sometimes they can't believe their eyes, and they're talking about making sure that they keep what they have, and that's only part of it.

Although we haven't got this money yet, our programs are not all announced for the year, but the sports, also the government gets a share of it. The share of

government certainly was peanuts before making these changes in the Lottery. That should go between, besides what you see here, another \$2.3 million, \$2.7 million.

So I will pretend that my honourable friend was joking and let him start afresh because that wasn't a very good start when he talked about less money being spent in sport. They've never had it so good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate what the Minister said. I wonder if he could inform me and the House what guidelines or restrictions are placed on the funds used by the Sports Federation, by his department, or are there any?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, when this government took the responsibility of changing the set-up in the lottery, when I refer to lottery it is the bingo, lottery, casinos, the whole thing, we try to maximize the profits to the charities - we call them charities, or groups that would benefit by this - we try to make it as fair as possible and safeguard and get accountability, and we also try to have fairer distribution. Now all we're asking - we're not looking over the shoulder all the time, we have confidence in them. I think the chairman and executive director and all the executive, I think they've done an excellent job of getting their sports together. As I said, there's very little complaint. You'd think there would be, because the more money you have, the more expectancy there is out there. And all we want them to do is be fair.

Part of their revenue is used to finance the Sports Administration Centre and, of course, we have a signed agreement as the previous government had; in fact, it was the previous government who transferred the responsibility of the Sports Administration Centre. We've had no problem; everything has been working very well. We want to make sure that all the sports including the Special Olympics and the Wheelchair sports - in fact, maybe I should take this opportunity to say that the volunteer who won the most outstanding volunteer award in Manitoba, was somebody that's with the wheelchair sport and I certainly would want to congratulate her again - I did yesterday, and I'm talking about Peggy Hayes, I'm sure that my honourable friend knows. In that agreement that we have, they have to be represented and they have to run the place fairly.

There is an interchange between the government and the Sport Directorate. The Sport Director, Don Stone, sitting here to my right is on committees with the Sports Federation on many of their committees and it's working quite well and our Bill Crook also, who's sitting next to him is working on programs and working with them constantly and the President of the Sports Federation was suggesting to me yesterday that with some of these extra funds that we should share responsibility of certain programs. I certainly told him that we would welcome that. We should look at the situation.

It is true that in the last two years we haven't done that many changes because there was, as I say, a transfer of funds pretty well directly through the Sports Federation, but we've solidified what we had. There were some good programs there. We were familiar with them. Most of them had been, at least worked out,

during my previous term as Minister responsible for Sport. So there is very little condition where they have to abide by whatever condition all the umbrella groups have. They have to be representative. They can't decide, for instance, that the money will be theirs just to spend as they want, they must work with these sports groups. They are working mostly through the different associations, who then have the responsibility to look after their own sports and they have a large committee. A big part of their responsibility is the allocation of funds, so we're not putting any conditions, actually.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I would wonder if there are written directions and/or guidelines or restrictions on the Sports Federation that the Minister could provide us with. And could he also advise us whether there is any - I don't think there is, but he could confirm it - provision for appeals of decisions by the Sports Federation, sports associations, within the Manitoba Sports Federation to the Minister.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I think the best information that I can get - and I'm asking the Director of Sport to provide me for the members of the opposition - a copy of the agreement that we have with the Sports Federation re: the Sports Administration Centre, anything that governs any dealing that we might have, and I'll try to get from the Minister responsible for the Lottery Commission the agreement that they have signed between the umbrella group. I think this would tell us all.

Of course, as I said, they have to be representative. As long as we feel this is being done, we certainly wouldn't interfere.

As far as the appeal, they would appeal to the Sports Federation, as such, and it would be only at the last minute, of course, that we would get involved if there was something very wrong. We'll let them make the distribution of their own funds; after all, it is a very democratically set up association. It is a creation of the different sports associations and they appoint or vote the members representing different associations to the Sports Federation. The Sports Federation, also, whenever they've had people who weren't quite satisfied in the distribution of funds have involved these people in the committee.

So, from what I understand, I had a pretty good report. I happened to be at this function where the volunteer of the year was honoured and I had quite a discussion with the President of the Sports Federation and he tells me that things are going quite well. If there was something wrong that was brought to our attention, of course, we'll discuss it with them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for River Heights.

MR. W. STEEN: The Minister made reference to the agreement between the province and the Sports Federation. It's my understanding that this agreement hasn't been signed for one reason or another. Can the Minister enlighten us as to why it hasn't been signed? My understanding is that the Sports Federation are totally satisfied with it. I would take it that the Minister and his department are satisfied with it. Why has there been a delay in making it an official agreement?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: There is no special reason for that. We wanted some minor correction and that was done. I've had a couple of meetings, the Sport director and myself, and between the executive director also of the Federation and the president and myself, and I'm satisfied. It was just the question of signing. In fact, I was informed two seconds before my honourable friend made that known that it hadn't been signed. I thought it was signed. I'll see to it that it should be signed very soon.

MR. W. STEEN: The Minister made reference earlier that I perhaps belittled the Department of Sport when I made my opening statement about the slight increases and so on, and then he went on to mention about the Lottery monies that had been made available. Yes, he is correct that Lottery monies have become available and I compliment him for being a champion around the Cabinet table and making sure that sport gets its fair share from the Lottery monies when it's battling for much-needed money for community activities with so many other worthwhile causes.

The Sports Federation which was, as the Minister has said, the previous administration of which I was a member of that caucus was fully in support of having the Sports Federation being the volunteer group in many respects, a group representing some 70 sports with a limited number of paid personnel, running it. They run on a budget of - a year ago - \$1.3 million. Yes, if we didn't have them, they would be within his department and be on the government payroll in all likelihood. It would likely, in my opinion and I'm sure the Minister would agree with me, be costing the taxpayer of Manitoba more money if they were part of government rather than the unique and, I think, an excellent arrangement that the last two governments have been prepared to agree with the Sports Federation, and have them administer sport in the Province of Manitoba.

I think by having the volunteerism aspect, and the Minister made reference to the fact that last night the Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to a sportsperson, and I think this is something that we have got to try and encourage is greater volunteerism.

I can recall in the City of Winnipeg, and I know this has nothing to do with the Minister's jurisdiction, but when the late Charlie Barber was with the City of Winnipeg, he placed a professional recreation director in each one of the community clubs. That meant that Winnipeg had 36 community clubs, each with a professional recreation director. Then when Unicity came along, or the one-city concept came along, there were some 80 community centres and they couldn't afford to have a professional located in each one, and they had to go back to a regional system.

This is why I would agree totally with the Minister, and I compliment him for steering his department and his government along with the idea of maintaining a good working relationship with the Sports Federation, because I think it is an ideal recognized body carrying out sport in Manitoba. In talking to the people over at the Manitoba Sports Federation, many of whom I know - and I have served on that board some years back myself - they likely have the best system that exists in Canada. They are totally happy with the arrangement that they have with government.

In some other provinces, the government may fund the Sports Federation of that given province, but each time they write a cheque to them, they want to know what's this going to be spent on. They get involved in each and every aspect of sport, where this Minister keeps an arm's length away. Yet he is still responsible to the taxpayer, because he has staff members that sit in on decisions. They are in the minority on boards, but they are there to put their input in and to keep the Minister informed as to how the Sports Federation is guiding sport in Manitoba and how they are encouraging the volunteer aspect of it. The Minister mentions that there have been millions of dollars through lotteries spent on sport in Manitoba and spent through the good offices of the Sports Federation.

I have a list dated March 31, 1984 and it's trust fund statements from the Province of Manitoba Lotteries Foundation. This is lottery money spent for various sports. I would like to ask the Minister if the \$100,000 sum that is on this particular "paid for university athletic scholarships," if lottery monies increase, as I believe they are, if the universities are one of the first groups within the sports area receiving lottery monies that might receive an increase in the future?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, this evening I think that it could be practically a repetition of last year's Estimates. You will find very little increase, as I said, especially because of the large increase directly through sports of the lottery funds. That money is all expended but it's the same. In fact, when that was first started, we talked about that was supposed to be for a year or so, and we kept it on at their request. They were very pleased with it. We should remember that one of the conditions from Day One, that they would match it dollar-for-dollar, so that doubles that amount.

Now having said that we have very little increase, I want to say that what we are looking at now under the Sport Directorate and the people that are with Bill Crook and so on that are looking at the programs that we have, we are very satisfied the way it's going. It's not a large crew; it's a small group of people. I think there are five or six, — (Interjection) — oh yes, eight with the secretarial staff that's there. We are very pleased, but it's something that will be announced later, as I said, we haven't got all that money from the lotteries. They will be new programs and it will be some programs that will be increased, but so far, what I have to discuss today is pretty well nearly the same as last year. There has been very little change; that will come later on. We are not ready with that yet; we haven't got the money. We didn't know, when you are talking about revenue from the lotteries, it could change quite fast, but we will have a complete list and that will be announced as we develop programs. The staff is hard at work to develop these programs. As I say, there is a possibility that some of them will be joint programs with the Sports Federation also.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, just a question to the Minister.

In view of the fact that the Sports Federation really governs the activities of sport with the funds provided

from the government, could the Minister advise what, if any, decisions he's made with respect to sport in the last year other than with respect to the funding of the Sports Federation?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Last year, I guess my main contribution to sports was to pilot through some very meaningful changes under pretty difficult conditions, and I am talking about the reform of the lotteries, of course, which brought a lot of fun.

What we have tried to do, we certainly need some funds. We have, for instance, if you left it all to the Sports Federation - and I am not saying this in a critical way - they would be more interested in working with the sports associations. They are interested in having these associations progress and have good coaches and so on.

But we also have a responsibility. Our main responsibility is probably to make sure that there is mass participation. One of our important programs that takes an awful lot of time and efforts of our staff is working with the organizer. So there have been the regional games. We're talking about the possibility of getting this back to the Manitoba Games. That has not been decided as yet. That is something that we're looking at. We're working with the people that normally would not participate in sports.

I guess the supervision that we've done and the coaxing and the lobbying and whatever you want to call it, we want to make sure that all people in society have a chance to participate in sports. I'm talking about, of course, the seniors. I also, as you know, have the responsibility for the senior citizens and the Special Olympics and the Wheelchair and so on. We felt that, as we were doing in health, we're trying to get everybody involved.

For instance, if we have Manitoba Games, what we want to do is to make sure that this is not going to replace the Seniors' Olympics which has been a fantastic success. We're working with that. There is very little contribution from the Sports Federation. They'll help wherever they can. The Parks Board of the city has always been helpful and, of course, the Society of Seniors is getting better organized all the time, and they're working with that.

We would like to see at the Manitoba Games, if possible, I've had some discussions with the officers of the Special Olympics to make sure that they can participate also.

We have been watching to make sure that women's sports also have been progressing and we're satisfied with that, together of course with the Sports Federation.

We have also had the responsibility to recognize our athletes, including the professionals, since we were as happy as any other Manitobans when the Blue Bombers won the Grey Cup.

We felt that it was a fantastic year as far as being a good year for sports in general as far as participation, but the success that the curlers had last year was phenomenal. I think that you had two world championships in the one year from the same - world? — (Interjection) — No, two worlds. I'm having an argument here with my Sport Director. I say, two world championships because the junior men always play one year later, and they won this year. But I mean it was

the squad or the rink from last year, and then five Canadian championships. That was fantastic.

So in that area, I might as well say something about hockey here. I've been very perturbed by hockey. Hockey was one of my first loves, but I've had a chance to go and see some of my grandchildren play. I think it's awful the way some of the parents behave, and also the situation of what they get away with in high-sticking and cross-checking and so on.

Now we have a President of the MAHA who is, I think, a very interesting and interested person who used to work for the department at one time. We've had some talks, and that is being followed through now by the Director of Sport with him to see if we could - it's not our place to interfere in that, but we certainly can control the grants. I think that we, before taking a hard line because that would reflect on the organizer and that's the last thing we want to do, but we would want to promote some kind of a better behaviour with the parents, better officiating and maybe tougher rules that there is not so much cross-checking.

I'm very concerned because, as you know, for a certain age these hockey players here wear the face mask with a cage, and at the year when they don't have to wear it anymore, I would like to see them continue. But if anybody dares continue, well you know how their peers react, that they're a bunch of sissies and so on and then the sticks go up, and I think it's unfortunate.

Now that cage, if the referees are not careful, will encourage high-sticking. You figure you're protected. You can do anything you want, so you carry that stick pretty high. That has to stop.

Why I mention that, why I single out hockey, is because I think we have to be careful and start to clean it up a bit. The professionals can do what they want, but this is not professional hockey. So these are some of the things that we do.

Of course, there is the organizer of the games. The games keep us very busy also. As you know, the Canada Games will take place in August in St. John, New Brunswick. Our staff are holding meetings on that with the Mission. Also they are working with volunteers from the Mission. Actually, I consider them very busy. They're working mostly in mass participation, mostly for those that would be left behind, and very closely with the Sports Federation also.

Now their main task is to come out with some exciting new programs, because we will have new funds. We expect to, after the Estimates and after the Session, meet and to map out our programs for this year after we know exactly how much money we have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, if the truth were known, I suppose that during the past four or five years, whilst we on this side were in government and now with the Minister who's in government, we were often paired at many hockey rinks throughout the city, he watching his grandson and I watching my son when they played against each other in the league — (Interjection) — yeah, I married late in life.

But with respect to the Minister's comments about the state of hockey, Mr. Chairman, as reluctant as I

would ever be to involve the government in sport because I think it's certainly the last, last resort that should ever occur, but I would ask him whether or not, and I think he has already expressed some concerns, when you have as great a sport as hockey should be in this country and when he don't know, as well as I'm sure many members of this Chamber know, we have young boys quitting hockey at ages 13, 14, 15 because of the manner in which this sport is conducted, fearing frankly for their very health and safety.

I think, as reluctant as I am to see government interfere in a sport, I think it's about time that the Minister of Sport seriously considered, not personally getting involved because I don't think he would want to do that and I don't think either I would want to do that, perhaps considering the appointment of a well qualified task force or commission of people who have been involved in the sport and who have expressed concerns.

Mr. Chairman, I not only have boys who play the game, but I have had the opportunity, as I'm sure the Minister has, to talk to many parents of boys who play hockey. The truth of the matter is there are many parents who go to hockey games, not so much out of the enjoyment of watching their sons play, but out of a very real concern for their safety and a fear of their being injured. It seems to me that this is a situation that simply should not be accepted.

Young boys should be able to play the game. Certainly there is always going to be body contact in this sport of some kind, but I suggest to the Minister that the state of minor hockey is in a very poor condition once you advance past the age of 12 when bodychecking starts to occur. It concerns me, and I know it concerns many many parents throughout this city. There is no reason on earth, in my view, that boys of age 13, 14 and 15 should be virtually forced to quit playing hockey because of a fear of physical harm which is, in fact, what is happening to many young boys in this city.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased to see that we both agree, my friend and myself, and it's true. We have been at many hockey games, watching together, cheering for opposite teams, and we've seen that. At times, we've seen how the crowd gets involved; the parents of kids 12 years old, and they act worse than the kids. I think that's one of the reasons also. I would go along with everything that was said. I would have some hesitation only in one thing, it is a task force. I think we know what's wrong with hockey. I think that there have been enough task forces. I've seen the MAHA Task Force and all kinds of task forces. I think that it's the programs now and maybe the government's starting not to get involved to prohibit the sports, but maybe to withdraw any funding, including the funds coming from the Sports Federation.

It's a real costly sport - that's one of the other concerns I have - as I said, the joint recommendation from the directorate working very closely with the Hockey Association. By the way, the President of the Hockey Association, I'm sure that most of the members are aware of that, that worked for us at one time, for the government, and he was on loan exactly to do that, to beef up the referee a few years back and to change that, and he's very interested. So that is why I think

that we should go through them. I think they'd want to clean it up.

It might be that some very tough measures have to be taken. It might be that if, you know, you practically invent another game, that'll have the fun because I said, we're interested in mass participation, and let the professionals - those that want to just develop as professionals and play that style of hockey - you know, even in the professional, it is a damn disgrace the way our captain was hurt and not even a penalty. And I think we all saw that in the replay, if that wasn't a real intent to injure and knock off the most valuable player, I've never seen anything worse than that. You know, I don't mind the odd fights and I certainly like hard checks, but if they can only keep that stick down and if they can get away from the boards, I think it wouldn't be as bad.

Now when my friend was talking, what comes to my mind is the surprise that I had when I watched ringette. Some of the rules are fantastic. I think maybe that you know I'll be accused of being a sissy and so on after that, but some of those kids are fantastic skaters. They're not always looking behind to see or throwing ice to see who's going to ram them into the boards. And even the rules, they have to bring the puck in, it's a pleasure to watch. And again, I think we saw a tournament - if I remember right, my honourable friend was there also at the Festival du Voyageur Tournament - and I don't know if he was as pleasantly surprised or maybe he was exposed to that more, I had seen a few games. Now I'm not saying that we have to change that at all, but it's a fantastic sport. And it's played with ability, skating, shooting, passing the puck and it's a pleasure to watch. So, as I say, I'm pleased that we're all on the same side. I feel much better knowing that we can stick together on that and I certainly go on record saying we're going to do everything we can to convince people that we should change the attitude of the hockey players and so on, and make it the game that it should be.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to prolong this but I agree with the Minister that a problem sometimes comes from a combination of sources. It comes from parents who rant and rave at players and at hockey officials; who yell at players on other teams and who loudly berate hockey referees. That's one problem.

Let me just throw something out. Perhaps the referee of the hockey game should be given the authority to eject those parents from the rink. Officiating is sometimes a problem, a lack of skill or consistency. I would suggest, again, and I believe there are some steps that have been undertaken that if more funding is required to properly train hockey officials or to attract them to referee minor hockey games then that, perhaps, is a direction that the Minister or the Sports Federation should look at.

My third suggestion relates to the actual rules of the game. I think, perhaps, the Minister, the Sports Federation and the Hockey Association could consider changes in the rule which would limit some of the violence that is taking place.

I see no reason why, when a boy goes from 12-year-old hockey where there is supposed to be no

bodychecking, but there's certainly still some contact, to age 13 and then there is full-out bodychecking throughout the rink - it shows up very much in a complete deterioration of hockey as it goes from age 12 to 13 - that a change in rules couldn't be considered whereby, for example, there would be no bodychecking except between the blue lines for a couple of years. I see no harm whatsoever in that, Mr. Chairman, it would eliminate a lot of the injuries that take place in both ends of the rink.

Those are some of the suggestions I just throw out, Mr. Chairman. I tend to agree with the Minister that probably a task force is not required, but I think it's a problem that has to be addressed because hockey is a great game, it is probably the best game in my view in sports in Canada and it's enjoyed by many, many people. The vast majority of the people do enjoy the game and the kids do enjoy the game. There's a certain amount of violence that has taken place and some of these suggestions I would hope the Minister might somehow encourage to be considered.

One other aspect that I didn't mention was coaches are sometimes part of the problem too; players, coaches, referees and parents. I have a concern in that area because I have seen children and parents intimidated by coaches of a hockey team; afraid that if they say anything to the coach their son is going to be benched or isn't going to make the hockey team. Now, in my view, parents spend a great deal of time and energy and money and love in raising children and just because a kid makes the hockey team doesn't mean you're turning over the very life of that child to the hockey coach. Somehow there's got to be, in my view, a way of dealing with some coaches who act very arbitrarily in dealing with young boys who play hockey.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to prolong this. There's other things that we want to cover but, again, I welcome the remarks and suggestions of my honourable friend. It could be that he and I could discuss it further.

One thing, it reminded me it is that we also unofficially pledged more funds to help also. On the one hand, if there's no change it's not a threat yet because it is the wrong people that threaten because of the co-operation we have with them but that is something that could happen. Furthermore, if there's co-operation, there could be more funds.

One thing I want to recognize, that problem is not an easy one as far as the officiating and the coaches. There's hundreds and hundreds of games being played during a week. They play one after the other and they play short time and you see the kids, some of these kids are not much older, some of the referees. The coaches also, they are volunteers. I think it's mostly in the rules and when I mean rules of the ice and on the ice and the parents also strict enforcement of that. I don't know if you should saddle the conduct of the parents to the young referees who have a hard time with the game, but something should be done.

I say it's the rules. I've seen kids the first year that they've bodychecked get away with even more than they get away in the NHL. All you have to say is no boarding and really enforce that no high stick. These two, I think, will clean it up. These kids are so fast and

they're not mature enough yet that it'd be practically impossible for them to bodycheck at centre ice. There would be very few good bodychecks a games. You can get away from these boards because they run at each other. They have somebody on the board and they run at each other. It's a wonder there's not more people injured.

So anyway, as I said, I don't want to prolong that. We're certainly on the same wave length and I'm sure we can discuss it again. I'll keep you posted on the progress that we make.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for River Heights.

MR. W. STEEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to carry on along the same lines that the Member for St. Norbert and the Minister have been discussing, and I discussed two things with the Minister and that was the Ontario Report on Violence and Sport with him and ask him if his department ever did receive a copy of that, because I don't believe that if they put out a good report that it would be necessary for this government and this Minister to duplicate that, and if they do have a spare copy of that report, I would like to have an opportunity to have a look at it sometime.

The other area I would like to ask the Minister to comment on is, in the Province of Quebec, they have implemented what is called a Sports Safety Act and that deals with the safety of sports facilities as to whether they meet all the safety requirements. It also spends some time on the area that has been highlighted by the Member for St. Norbert, the roughness within sport. It talks about the liability, responsibility that is accepted and put on the shoulders of coaches and officials within sport and went into quite an in-depth study of boxing. That's another area that I'd like to ask the Minister perhaps next, to do with the Boxing and Wrestling Commission, but perhaps the Minister can: (a) comment on the study done in the Province of Ontario; and (b) shed some light on the legislation that was passed in the Province of Quebec referred to as The Sports Safety Act.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, the Director of Sports has heard the requests. We'll see that he gets a copy. I don't think we have any copies at this time. It wasn't circulated that widely.

Another thing that was mentioned is the Safety Council. I know that a few years ago there was some work, they had some kind of sports medicine, but it was more than sports medicine. It was people who were involved in looking at equipment which is, I guess, preventative, it's sports medicine. There is a keen interest here, but I don't think we're as organized as Quebec was except maybe in boxing. More has been done in boxing.

Now the third and last question I think was the state of the Boxing and Wrestling Commission.

MR. W. STEEN: I'll get into more detail.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: It has been disappointing up to a certain point. The Federal Government and the provinces, and I think that's probably on the agenda of every meeting that we've had with the Provincial

Sports Minister with the Federal Sports Minister following the - that survey, was it the Clay in that group that they had, in boxing, the recommendation. The intention of the Federal Government at the time was to set up a kind of a central, a Canadian Commissioner of Boxing that would be involved in professional and amateur boxing, make sure that the boxers would not be required, allowed or permitted to box unless they were in very good shape. Better records were to be kept and then there was to be some attempt - one of the directives was that there should be a pension set up. I'm talking about professional boxing now, and that is in abeyance. We've been waiting and waiting. That has been modified some. I think the provinces were a little leary in surrendering that responsibility to the Federal Government. I thought it was an excellent idea because they were going to pay the bills and we would have had to agree and pass the Order-in-Council to do anything anyway. Now, I think that's modified some and it's supposed to come back, though I don't know when it'll be ready.

I think we're not doing too badly here in Manitoba. I think we have some people very interested. We've got a gentleman, who I can't pronounce his name. I've set him up. I know his first name is Herb, but don't ask me for the second name, I can never pronounce it and he is well-known in boxing across Canada. He is now the Chairman of the Commission. I asked my Sport Director to accept the responsibility for a while, but it got a little too much, so it was supposed to be temporary and it lasted about three years. So, there have been some changes, now, and I'm fairly satisfied with the ways things are going. As I say, there hasn't been that much action. There's been a little bit in professional boxing. The amateurs seem to be flourishing and, as I say, I think that the question of what the Federal Government working with the provinces want has not been decided yet. That should be coming fairly soon and we're looking forward to participating and co-operating with other provinces and the Federal Government.

MR. W. STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the Minister was referring to professional boxing and I think it was on Sports Weekend on CBC. Within the last two weeks, they did a special on the Saturday afternoon professional boxing in Ontario and what they were driving at is they were having fighters coming up from the State of Ohio and fighting under phoney names and having been knocked out within a period of two weeks prior to their next fight, and how the Province of Ontario had to try and clean up the professional boxing, while, we, in Manitoba, have had our problems with the professional boxing cards that have been staged with fighters not showing up and inferior substitutions being placed on the cards in the place of advanced billed fighters who have supposedly had good records in other jurisdictions.

One other problem that appears to exist in current professional boxing is a bit of a race or competition between Promoter A and Promoter B and we don't seem to be able to get anybody who seems to be financially stable enough or has the proper connections with the professional boxing circuit that they can successfully stage boxing cards on an ongoing basis,

whereas, if you turn to professional wrestling, you'll see that they do almost as well as the Jets in selling tickets to the arena, and I would ask the Minister if he would firstly comment on professional boxing.

Have we got a promoter in the Winnipeg area who is financially capable and has the boxing connections to properly promote professional boxing? And secondly, from professional wrestling, is there a small percentage of the gate that is retained by the Boxing and Wrestling Commission for the advancement of amateur wrestling and, if so, because wrestling outdraws boxing by such large figures, does some of that promotional money for amateur wrestling also see its way to amateur boxing here in Manitoba?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I recognize the problems that were mentioned by my honourable friend. I think it is very difficult to get the kind of promoters because boxing is not that lucrative here, as we know; and that is why I am saying that I felt it was a mistake for the province to turn down the offer of the Federal Government, because if that work would have been done, there would have been a central registry. The equipment was going to be looked at to make sure that it wouldn't cause injury - or as little as possible - and as I say, the pension and also with the Central Registry being able to control the boxer much better.

Then probably rules would have been made even for the treatment for boxers because some of them are treated very poorly. They get bums that might want to make a couple of hundred dollars or so that shouldn't even be in the ring. Like my honourable friend said, they should be suspended, because they were knocked out somewhere else a few nights before, and that is not being done.

I think it is very difficult to say we're going to get a good promoter and so on, and I think our future in boxing is - I'm not saying that there should never be any professional boxing, but I think it's more to start working which is more the responsibility of our department than professional sports, by the way, and that would work with the young boxer and the amateur boxer as a sport more than just a way to get people to make a few hundred bucks and get their brains knocked out.

As far as the revenue coming in, yes, there is a certain percent. I think it's 3 percent from the professional wrestling. That is something we've been looking at and that is one of the things . . . I would agree that it should go, not only into wrestling and boxing though. That is a professional sport. It's the same as you might have an amusement tax from the Jets and so. It should go to sports and this is something else we're looking at, as a special thing, maybe what we were saying a bit for hockey, to better the games and more policeman or study of their rules, whatever, and that is being developed also at this time, so we should have something to announce fairly soon on that.

MR. W. STEEN: I'd like to ask the Minister, currently, is the 3 percent tax from wrestling and boxing being spent just in wrestling and boxing at the amateur level? Is that what it's being spent on now?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I don't think there has been that much spent on any sport, including wrestling, but

the intention is to have a special program with that fund, to not limit it; that would be my preference anyway. That hasn't been finalized yet and it would be on a special thing, not just grants like the other grants. It would be probably a program to clean up the sports or to help the sports and, of course, boxing would certainly have a share of that and wrestling also.

Now wrestling, there's no doubt that professional wrestlers are athletes. They've got to be in terrific shape for their age and their size, and so on, but I don't think it's a secret that professional wrestling is more of a show and exhibition than anything else and you've got a different class. You have many graduates from the university and so on, who are managing their own affairs, who are working together very closely. We know that they wrestle nearly every night, it's an exhibition, but it's something that the people seem to like. I say it's not comparable as you have a different kind of athlete in boxing and so on, and many of them are not the most capable people. They can handle their dukes. That's all they've had to do all their life, but they can manage their life and certainly their career as a professional athlete, as well as others, and I think they need more help.

MR. W. STEEN: Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that professional wrestling in Manitoba likely attracts about 100,000 people a year and 3 percent of the gate receipts would likely be a sizable figure and if that money were spent in amateur wrestling in Manitoba for the youngsters that are participating in that game, it would be money well spent.

Another area I would like to touch on with the Minister is that in the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Report that I referred to earlier, the one dated March 31, 1984, they had a sum of money for the Western Canada Games 1983 of \$125,000 and the Canada Winter Games. Is the Western Canada Games still a viable operation?

I know that Burnaby, B.C., hosted it one year; and Saskatoon has hosted it one year. Saskatoon received that \$5 million or \$6 million field house as a result of that province being the supporting hosts, and so on. I don't believe Manitoba has ever had the opportunity of hosting it and seeing one of our communities enhance their sporting facilities as a result of the Provincial Government being a supporter of some centre in Manitoba hosting the Western Canada Games.

Is the concept still alive, and if so, will Manitoba someday be bidding to host the summer games?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: There have been three games held. The first one was an idea of and was brought in by Saskatchewan. They held the first games - I don't remember exactly what year - in Regina and then there was another province, I think it was B.C. that was supposed to go ahead and they couldn't go ahead with it, so Saskatchewan did not want to let it die. They had it in Saskatoon again and then the last one, two or three years ago, was in Calgary. Again it was supposed to be B.C. In fact B.C., because of some centennial that they had, backed away and Manitoba tentatively accepted.

The situation was that some of the funding had come from the Federal Government, at least for the travelling

of athletes. Now there was no way that Manitoba can start - the funding was pulled away before the Calgary Games. There was participation of the Federal Government in the two games held in Saskatchewan. In the Calgary Games, which was the last one, the Federal Government, as I say, pulled away and they were saved only because of some decision.

Three of the four sports ministers of the Western Canada provinces were also responsible for lottery, so there was an arrangement made that there was some sponsorship or a certain amount of money to purchase the advertising for Air Canada and so on, and Air Canada then, in return, pretty well picked up some of the tabs for the travelling.

So it is something, as you know, the Federal Government then wanted to come back in the lottery and I'm not going to talk too long about that, because they weren't very successful and there should be a contract signed by the Minister responsible for Lotteries all across Canada fairly soon to again make sure - I think it's the third time in a row - that we'd buy them out for sure and they'd stay out.

Therefore one of the discussions - when I still had the responsibility - with Otto Jelinek was fine, if they're going to have a contribution, we expected to get our share. It wasn't going to be just for games that we probably would never compete with, such as the Olympics and so on, because it's going to be a while, I think, before we get the Olympics in Winnipeg. So that was a commitment that he made verbally to me and to the other Ministers. I hope he lives up to it.

Now as I say, tentatively, Manitoba was going to do it, but B.C. didn't, and then we felt that we didn't have the time to do a good job and it wasn't our first priority. Those games are good, but you can have - you know there's games and games and it's the same athletes that participate many times. Now you've had the Olympics and you've had the Olympics in Canada or you will have the Olympics in Canada. You have the university games, the Canada Games, and so on, so it was felt that it wasn't the first priority, the need. I think they were terrific. I certainly enjoyed the games, both in Regina and in Calgary. I wasn't fortunate enough to witness those in Saskatoon.

So it's just on hold for the time being, and of course I should mention that one of the partners in the Western Canadian Lottery Foundation pulled out. That complicated things also, so as I say that is on hold now for the time being. As I say B.C. wanted no part of it and they pulled out of the Western Canada Games. I should say that even the first one in Regina, there was quite a bit of money that came in.

We used to have what we called a Minister's pool at that time, to do things that would benefit Western Canada. Unfortunately that's gone. It was abused, because every province then wanted a bit of the revenue for a pet project. That was more parochial than something that would benefit the whole West.

So it's on hold; it's something that could come back, that I hope would come back, but it's not the first priority. Now we'd sooner spend money on good Manitoba Games or regional games at this time, where we have a lot of participation. One of the good things about Manitoba Games is not only the athletes and the coaches and the officials also, but the legion of volunteers - even small games, like when we had the

Manitoba Games in Neepawa, some of these people have remained leaders in their community in sports and otherwise. I think that's fantastic, because it involves so many people.

Of course, if we had the Western Canada Games here or the Canada Games, we know that the worth that there is in it. You have some volunteers that would have to work full time in that. Again you develop volunteers and you leave a legacy. I'd like to go back to the Manitoba Games to leave that legacy and I'd like to see if facilities that would stay. It's not the same as Canada Games and Olympic Games, but the format would be somewhat the same, that you have regional games and then you would end up with the games in one area.

It doesn't mean that much to Winnipeg, because they have so many leagues and so on, and that's one of the reasons why it was dropped. I'm not saying it was a bad decision; it was something that had helped the region, but I would like to see the Manitoba Games reinstated because it means a lot to the rest of the province, but you would have to make rules and that's being done now. I think we're working with Winnipeg to see that it would be a class of athletes that would fit in.

Now you wouldn't get the best athletes and furthermore, besides having mass participation, people of all ages and people that are also handicapped, and it gives us a chance to live together and to accept our responsibility toward all our fellow men, but it also, as I said, would leave a legacy and get the volunteers and so on, so this is one of the reasons that we'd like to see it, as I say, in Neepawa. I think they had a swimming pool, somebody else had something else and it means a lot to these small communities.

Of course, it would never be held in Winnipeg; some of the games should be held in the larger centres, like the Canada Games and so on. We have quite a few games, but I think it is the responsibility of the government to be involved more in something like the Manitoba Games.

If you waited for the association - and again, I don't say this to criticize - they would not be interested. They would sooner spend the money for the association and get better coaches and so on, but I think it is our responsibility to see that there's mass participation. It is not as glamorous maybe as some of the better athletes and better games, but I think it's important. Especially in the remote areas, in the North and so on, you'll discover athletes that would never have a chance. You might get a young Native person from the North that can throw a javelin a mile and all of a sudden you've got another Thorpe or something like that; so that is one of the reasons why I favour that, not because of the glamour.

MR. W. STEEN: I'm pleased to hear the Minister make his comments regarding the Western Canada Games and the Manitoba Games and I would certainly agree with him that if you left it to the individual sports, such as the Sports Federation, one drawback to running the games would be is they would go toward the more elite athlete rather than mass participation.

One thing I liked about the Western Canada Games was that you did get a better class of athlete

participating in it. One drawback that we have had in the Manitoba Games is we have had teams that really should be in a sport for recreation purposes and they go into a competition and they get beat by very lopsided scores and one of the drawbacks that we have in Manitoba is that we have the City of Winnipeg, with over 600,000 people, and some of our suburban areas have a better class of athletes to draw on than say the inner city area and the same goes for certain parts of southern Manitoba, have better athletes than perhaps some other remote areas.

One area that I'd like to ask the Minister some questions on is the former Minister of Health in the Conservative Government, Bud Sherman, went to the U.K. and attended a conference on preventative medicine and it has been brought to my attention that since 1979, school kids at the high school level aren't in the same degree of physical fitness that they were back in the late '70s. There has been less emphasis placed at the high school level, particularly on physical fitness and phys. ed. It's a compulsory subject in the elementary schools. In the high schools, you only have to take it for one of your three grades and it's not maintained to the extent it used to be; and the Minister, also having the very large portfolio of Health, knows the cost of medicine far better than I, and I am sure that in his Health Estimates he will or has discussed preventative medicine and means of people keeping shape and so on.

I would ask him if his Sport Directorate or the Health Department have had any statistics brought forward in recent years showing that there has been a slight decline in physical fitness, even though the Federal Government does run a fair amount of television advertising on "Keep Fit!" and so on, has he any statistics that would back up this claim that was given to me by an educator?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I'm surprised to hear the last comments. It was always my impression - and I have no statistics at this time - but it was always my impression that, in general, Canadians were in much better shape than they had been. In fact, a few years ago you didn't see the people jogging the way they are now. Most people were smoking; it was the exception that didn't smoke. It's remarkable, I think over 60 percent of Canadians don't smoke now, so I think that has improved.

Maybe in the schools it might be different. I think my friend was talking about schools. Since we revamped the department that my friend, the Minister of Culture took over, the responsibility for Recreation, we're working very closely together. The people at one time, in the region, were delivering his program and were reporting to me. Now they report to my honourable friend, but they also are very close. They used to be in our department and we have good rapport with them. They help in the Regional Games and although they report to another Minister, we work very closely with them.

I think we've improved. The "fitness" part of it was, as my honourable friend knows, Fitness, Recreation and Sport. Sport is part of the department, but the Director of Sport reports directly to me, not through an ADM, to give it the same importance, but it is part

of Sport, somewhat treated differently, whereas Fitness went directly - and I think that they have much more resources than they ever had before. At one time I think there were two, with a secretary, and they had some small programs, but they had nobody to fall back on. Now, these people are working together and they may be with a larger group. For instance, I don't think that you can talk about fitness, about exercise and so on, if you don't talk about nutrition. That is one of the things that is working. We're quite pleased. It's a small group, but in our group with prevention and so on, they are part of this, reporting to an ADM, Dr. Jack Wilt; and I might say that there is an effort to get the people involved in that.

There is a special meeting - and I congratulate the Federal Minister, Mr. Jelinek, for that, who's called a meeting on Fitness with all the provinces on the 30th and the 31st of May. I'm anxious to see what the discussion will be and certainly I intend to go, if my Estimates for Health are finished by that time. It's just another month; they might not be finished, and then I can report further. I think it seems interesting.

My feeling is that the people in general, Canadians are more fit than they were, let's say, 10 years ago.

MR. W. STEEN: To the Minister, he may recall that when Dr. Wayne Hildahl established his Sports Medicine Clinic on Taylor Avenue in the Kinsmen Reh-Fit Centre that at that time certain injuries that were being treated by the doctor and his staff were paid for through a sports grant.

Is that still the case or are those injuries now all treated on the individual's personal medical number and treated through his Department of Health and not through Sport, the financing of those treatments?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I remember even long than that, I remember this was first set up by the Sports Federation. It used to be at the Pan Am Pool and then they were in difficulty and the government took over the financing of sports medicine. Then there was a move when the Reh-Fit was built and, like my honourable friend says, that's the way it was financed.

My honourable friend will remember, I'm sure, when I remind him that there is now an insurance that sports, for instance, hockey players and so on, pay, and some of that are paid to that; and of course there's Medicare that people are covered by also, but there's certain services, physiotherapists and so on that are not covered. Some of the x-rays, I think, are not covered by the government.

MR. W. STEEN: I would like to take a few moments and discuss a pet subject area with the Minister, which is not directly involved with his Estimates, but he as Minister of Urban Affairs and as the Minister responsible for Sport, and the pet area is the possible return to Manitoba and, particularly, to Winnipeg of professional baseball. Some weeks back, an associate of mine and myself met with the Minister and a senior member of his staff. I'd like to report to the Minister that this group has met with the City and we've met with the Red River Exhibition people and we've talked to Molson's Brewery which are a principle owner of the Vancouver Canadians Baseball Team and we've talked to the Toronto Blue

Jays directly and also through Labatt's who are a principal owner of the Blue Jays.

As the Minister will recall from our discussion that if Winnipeg was ever to get back into professional baseball, what comes first? The team and the franchise or the facility in which that team would operate out of? As the Minister well knows and other members of the Committee that when the Blue Bombers built their field house at the Winnipeg Stadium and then after they needed additional space and they expanded the original field house in a straight projected line, that field house, therefore, took away the third base line of the existing professional baseball park and the existing baseball stands stood there for a 10-14 year period and deteriorated through weather conditions and so on as weather will work away at concrete. Then, the professional Blue Bombers wanted a major field house type facility and the baseball stands were an ideal location for them to build such a facility and they couldn't play baseball there anymore because the figuration of the baseball field just couldn't fit on the existing acreage.

So, the decision was made by the Winnipeg Enterprises to knock down the baseball stands and left Winnipeg, a city of some 600,000, without a proper baseball facility that would serve good amateur baseball or professional baseball at any level outside of a park in the Transcona area that has limited lighting in my opinion. The Winnipeg area doesn't have a proper facility for baseball that could played after sundown.

I'd say to the Minister that in our discussions with the Red River Exhibition people, and the Minister likely is aware that the Red River Exhibition has been a successful venture over the years and have compiled some nice profits from their summer fair and exhibition, and the Red River Exhibition being more than 25 years on the scene in Winnipeg without permanent exhibition grounds has always tried to get a facility of their own. In discussions that our group of 10 Winnipeg persons interested in acquiring a Triple A baseball franchise for Winnipeg, we have met with the Red River Exhibition people and they had always hoped that they could acquire the land at the current velodrome in Alexander Park which is used for soccer to the east of the Winnipeg Arena and the Winnipeg Stadium as a facility which they would like to erect a 30,000 square foot building, which is approximately the size of a Safeway Store, to be an exhibition building and a small outdoor amphitheatre. The amphitheatre for their purposes would seat in the neighbourhood of 7,000 to 9,000 persons and they would use it for their major entertainment that would be brought in for their summer exhibition as well as their mass band concerts and other events that are held during the 10-day exhibition.

When our group approached the Red River Exhibition people, we said well 7,000 to 9,000 is exactly what is needed in the Winnipeg area in the way of seating for professional baseball of Triple A or lower level or standard, would you be prepared to allow the amphitheatre area or the grounds area to be of the size and dimensions to suit professional baseball and amateur baseball? They said perfect, it would be great, we'd love to do it. They have the monies and did indicate that they would be prepared to invest their monies in that area.

The problem is we have a velodrome that was built for bicycling for the 1967 Pan Am Games and it's used

by a handful of enthusiastic cyclists, but being concrete in structure and with the winter conditions that Manitoba enjoys, that structure is falling into bad disrepair and really it serves as a facility for about 45 minor football games a year and ends up costing the Winnipeg Enterprises some \$70,000 a year to maintain for those games.

The soccer people have a very outdated facility and have made overtures to the City to perhaps move up on to the northwest corner of the city up in the Keewatin area and so on.

Another suggestion that the Minister might be interested in is the Red River Exhibition people owning land to the west of the race track, and the baseball and soft ball people talking constantly about the great shortage of ball diamonds, particular for slow pitch and for soft ball in the Greater Winnipeg area and many of the people that are now participating in this particular sport are what I call recreation people. People that are doing it for recreation purposes, in most cases, own their own cars and can go to outlying areas to participate in this form of recreation.

I would wonder if the Minister, both from the sports point of view, from an urban point of view, from the point of view that I know that he is a baseball fan and I know that he would like to see professional baseball come back to Manitoba and, particularly, Winnipeg as much as I would, if he would think that it would be appropriate for him as Minister of Urban Affairs to perhaps see if the City would turn over the land under discussion to the east of the arena and the Stadium which is now occupied by the velodrome and the Alexander Park in exchange for the land owned by the Red River Exhibition people to the west of the race track and perhaps between the Red River Exhibition, the City, maybe some provincial funds, maybe some lottery funds, over a period of time softball could be accommodated with a number of diamonds out there.

Soccer could perhaps be accommodated with an excellent facility out west of the race track and the exhibition has to be where the Winnipeg Arena is because they need the arena as well for the exhibition and they need the parking lot that surrounds the Stadium, in order to house their midway. To pave their property west of the race track to house the midway for 10 days would cost them \$2 million-plus just to pave it. It's already there now at the Winnipeg Stadium and can be used as it has been for the last 25 years.

The Exhibition, and it is a tourism factor, Winnipeggers and Manitobans want to see that Winnipeg retains an exhibition. The Exhibition people see no reason why a baseball park, as I said, to seat enough people for professional baseball with the proper lights could be constructed there, and that amateur baseball could use it for 50 to 70 dates, get in all their playoff games in the fall when we do have the short days in relation to daylight hours and maybe we could see professional baseball brought back to Manitoba.

Yesterday, on the air I heard where the owner of the Pittsburgh hockey team and the same family who owns the Pittsburgh Pirates Baseball Team has said, enough is enough when their fan support has been declining in recent years, that they're prepared to sell those franchises. Vancouver, through Senator Perrault, who was the Minister of Sport in the Trudeau Administration, who is a director of the Vancouver Canadians

Professional Team, says that the business community and baseball community in Vancouver is very interested in having a major league team located in Vancouver to play out of their new indoor sports facility and, if so, would be very interested in seeing their Triple A franchise team transferred to another Canadian city. Well, the only logical one would be Winnipeg because both Calgary and Edmonton now have Triple A baseball franchises. I would think Regina and Saskatoon are far too small. So, Winnipeg could, if Vancouver ever got major league ball, obtain a Triple A franchise.

On the other hand, if Winnipeg wasn't to go that route, through Labatt's and through persons such as John Robertson - who the Minister will remember used to be here in sport and who now writes for a Toronto newspaper - indicates to us that the Blue Jays, because of the Labatt's strength, would just as soon have their Triple A franchise team located in a city like Winnipeg, rather than Syracuse, New York.

Mr. Chairman, in my view there does appear that there is some interest in obtaining professional baseball back into the Winnipeg community. It's now a case of where would it play and who has the responsibility of coming up with a facility?

Well, as I say, I'm one who would dearly love to see the private sector built it, but we know that the private sector can't make money in semi-professional or professional baseball of Triple A calibre and own a park. But we have what I consider a sugar daddy, and that is the Red River Exhibition component which I have spent some time on mentioning to the Minister. If the Minister wishes to comment on my comments, I'd be glad to hear them.

I know, as I have said - and I'm repeating myself - that he, just as much as I, would love to see professional baseball return to Winnipeg and I do see a way of it being done if we could acquire that land from the exhibition people in exchange for their land west of the race track.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank my honourable friend for his comments. I found them very interesting. He has shared some of his concerns and his ideas and his hopes with me before, but he's just brought me up-to-date today.

There is no doubt that I personally would love to see professional baseball back in Winnipeg and Manitoba, but my first responsibility of course, as Minister of Sport, is mostly amateur sports. That doesn't mean that they can't work together. I can think that can be done.

I also remember when the Enterprises decided to take the lights out - I think they were transferred to Transcona. That's about the best, close to Winnipeg. It's about the only baseball diamond that we have, or the best one anyway for hard ball. I remember it so well because I have never seen anybody as mad as Alec Turk and Curly Haas on that. They came to see me in my office, when I happened to be Minister responsible for Sport at the time, and they were ready to kill someone. So of course they left and that kind of gave the last blow to baseball. Even amateur baseball has suffered since then, compared to all the leagues we used to have.

Now another thing, as I say, the first responsibility certainly would be mass participation, more people

playing, and amateurs before pros. But that doesn't mean that we're anti-pro, but we felt that a professional team especially with the salaries that are being paid now - I don't think the government has any business getting involved in professional teams. I think that wouldn't be accepted too well.

Now I've always committed full co-operation. They formed a committee that I attended for a while and then I couldn't do it justice, I couldn't be there, be present at all these meetings, so I delegated Don Stone and they're meeting quite often. I know the amateurs are meeting also, the Baseball Federation. I was brought up-to-date tonight, but I knew that my honourable friend was involved with a group that was very interested and I think the leadership has to come from there. The government could not and should not push something like that. I think they should be ready to assist and help, but you have to have a team.

You're not going to start building facilities until you're sure of getting a team and there is no way that you're going to get a team here, in my humble opinion - and I think that was recognized by my honourable friend - without first of all having some connection with a major league baseball team and then have strong sponsors, and apparently that has been done. There has been some discussion with the Triple A ball team and the Blue Jays and also with Labatt's and other groups, and I think that's quite interesting.

Now they're certainly in no position to make any commitment at this time and although we haven't been involved - except when we have some special programs - in providing facilities especially when all the revenue from the lotteries or such a large part is going to sport. You know, somebody was telling me what they were doing in Quebec; they help in building this and building that, but all the money from the lotteries will go directly to consolidated revenue and it makes the government very popular to cut ribbons and open facilities like that and we've relinquished all that. We've already turned it over to sports and other groups as culture and so on.

That doesn't mean that nothing can be done. We've helped in the past. We've had programs. We helped build pools and some facilities and there is no doubt that I would be only too pleased to discuss this with my colleague when I felt that it was advanced quite a bit, and it could be. I kind of suspected that something would happen. We would want to be part of it, either through some special lottery funds or something. That is certainly a possibility as far as I am concerned, but you will understand, Mr. Chairman, that I have no authority and no mandate to make commitments, especially at this time. But I suspect that something could be done. If everybody else was in and it was only the government missing, I think we'd want to be part of it.

One thing that I found very interesting because I've been somewhat critical - not openly - of the Red River Ex, because I've been very disappointed in it. I've heard - and I hope my friend is right this time - in fact the government wanted to nudge them and remind them that they were making a lot of money. My friend forgot to say that much of their revenue came from the casinos. They have had a casino every year since we've had casinos here. They were the only organization. I think we wanted to remind them that casinos were not there

to help associations salt money away because that's what this association was doing.

Now I don't say that they didn't have good intentions, but I heard the same thing about the building at one time. They were going to buy the race track at one time to salvage it, to save it. They were talking about getting involved in a covered stadium near the race track at one time and there was these facilities. I'm not saying they haven't made a contribution, but I'd much sooner see them get involved in sports than just have the midway and that for a week or 10 days a year. I don't know if that's the greatest contribution to the City of Winnipeg and I think they've got the people and the prestige of that organization to put it to good use and maybe get involved. So that is good news. I'm not jumping for joy yet; I've heard that before and I'd like to see a little bit of results, but we certainly would want to co-operate with them.

Now as far as the property, I find it difficult to be an official spokesman as the Minister of Urban Affairs with the city because the city is, as my honourable friend knows because he was a member of the Enterprises - I think it is the Enterprises that owned that property in question - and I think you'd have to discuss it with them. But I'd have no hesitation of getting a group together and talking in a friendly way to the mayor and the members. I have good rapport with the members of the Enterprises, and if that could be helpful when it's a little more advanced, I would be very pleased - and my friend can tell me - and maybe we can get a group together and try to advance it some more.

MR. W. STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the property that I was discussing, that I am sure the Minister was also making reference to, is not owned by the Enterprises. It's maintained by the Enterprises and that is the velodrome. The Alexander Park is leased to a soccer group for \$1 a year. It's owned by the city as is the velodrome. The Enterprises is like a Crown corporation with the city and they just maintain it for the city, but it's owned by the city.

The big reason and the real reason why the exhibition doesn't want to move out to the race track is that enormous cost of putting pavement in in order to house a midway for 10 days of the year, where that facility does exist right now at the Winnipeg Stadium and they have had that facility over the last 25 years.

If we could see amateur sport and professional sport accommodated by the fact that the Exhibition people could construct a facility for their use that would have a use for baseball, I think that it would be what we would often refer to as killing two birds with one stone and they would also want to have additional display facilities over there. If they had to go out to the race track and start from scratch in building an Exhibition and having the square footage that exists today in the Winnipeg Arena that is used during Exhibition Week for various booths and other display areas, it would cost them a fortune.

I think that if we could, as interested parties, see the Exhibition stay in that general west-end Winnipeg vicinity and have their facilities enhanced, spend some of this money that they've been banking over the years, because they are a public corporation, and if amateur sport can benefit because of putting some heads

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together from the City, the province, the Exhibition Board, interested baseball parties, I think that such a facility someday down the road could perhaps be there.

I wanted to bring the Minister up to date as to where our group of 10 citizens who are interested in acquiring a franchise, we're not asking that the government buy it for us. It would be privately owned, but we couldn't privately own a ball facility. We would have to either be tenants the way the Bombers are and the Jets in a public facility in order to make it a viable operation. We have made overtures to parties, the Vancouver people and the Toronto people. We've also talked to Del Maxwell who is the new general manager in St. Louis of the Cardinals, who is a former Goldeye and has a soft spot for the City of Winnipeg, said to us in telephone conversations that he would do anything he could to give us any information, give us names of anybody in major league baseball that we would ever want; make introductions, do whatever he could.

So, Mr. Chairman, one of the first items that I mentioned this evening was the agreement between the province and the Sports Federation, and as the Minister said, he had forgotten that it hadn't been signed. If I could remind him of that and I'm pleased that I was able to have a discussion with the Minister referring to professional baseball because he was kind enough to give us an appointment some weeks back so that we could meet with him, I'm prepared to support his Estimates in this regard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item 5.(b)(1)—pass; 5.(b)(2)—pass; 5.(b)(3)—pass;

Resolution No. 87: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$654,000 for Health, Sport for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1986—pass.

Mr. Minister.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I move committee rise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the understanding that it is 10:00 o'clock. Committee rise.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Call it 10:00 o'clock please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ten o'clock. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, P. EYLER: The Honourable Member for Wolseley.

MS. M. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the the Honourable Member for St. Johns that the Report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Speaker, on the assumption that it's 10:00 o'clock in this committee and the other committee will continue sitting as provided by Rule 65(14), I move, seconded by the Minister of Health that the House do now adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried and the House adjourned and stands adjourned until 10:00 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).